UPDATE ON CORE 24 IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE AND MHSD-RELATED RESEARCH PROJECTS

SUMMARY OF POLICY ISSUE/STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION (SBE) STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

One of the Board's three goals is to improve student preparation for post-secondary education and the 21st century world of work and citizenship. Revision of graduation requirements needed for a meaningful high school diploma is a primary strategy to accomplish this goal.

BACKGROUND

Since 2006, the Board has been considering the components of a meaningful high school diploma, including revising the purpose of a diploma (January 2008) and approving a proposed framework of CORE 24 graduation requirements (July 2008). The Board approved a charter in November 2008 to establish the CORE 24 Implementation Task Force (ITF). The charter asks the ITF to advise the Board on strategies to implement the proposed requirements. The ITF met for the first time in March 2009, and has met three times to date. At the same time, the Board is continuing to address the unfinished policy issues related to the meaningful high school diploma.

Board members, Steve Dal Porto and Jack Schuster serve as co-leads for the twenty-member ITF. The ITF has met once since the Board was last updated on its work in May 2009. The ITF will meet again on: August 14, September 28, November 2, and a date to be announced in February 2010. Board members who cannot attend the meetings of the ITF can access all meeting materials at: http://www.sbe.wa.gov/CORE24Dates&Materials2.html.

May 18, 2009 ITF Meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to explore the Board's charges to the ITF around schedules and credits. Specifically, the Board asked the ITF to make recommendations about: 1) scheduling approaches to 24 credits that can meet the required 150 instructional hours and 2) ways to operationalize competency-based methods for meeting graduation requirements.

To set the stage for small group discussion on the key issues, staff reviewed an analysis of Washington district graduation credit requirements and bell schedules and showed that schools requiring 27 credits or fewer tended to be on standard schedules (six or seven period schedules), and those with graduation requirements between 28 and 31 credits tended to use block schedules. When the approximate minutes per period were calculated to determine how close districts might be coming to the 150 instructional hour requirement per credit, the

instructional hours ranged from 135 (for a four block with four or eight periods) to 165 (for a six-period schedule).

Staff also reviewed a synopsis states' definitions of credit, taken from states' administrative codes. Twenty-seven (27) states, including Washington, define credits in terms of time; 17 states do not include a time requirement; and six states do not define credit at the state level. Among the 12 states that require 24 credits, the definition of a credit ranges from unspecified (three states) to 177 hours for a six-period day (Louisiana). Louisiana is the only state whose time-based requirement exceeds Washington's.

The ITF also heard representatives of districts (Evergreen, Lake Washington) and the state (OSPI) provide tangible examples of competency-based approaches. Staff talked briefly about states' approaches to competency-based credit.

This foundation provided the impetus for the following discussion questions:
- What will it take to move the state toward more competency-based approaches to credit?
- What are the benefits and drawbacks of a state-specified, seat-based credit requirement?
- Assuming that a seat-based requirement is maintained, suggest a definition for what should "count" as an instructional hour, and what number of hours you believe to be appropriate and why.
- What policy guidelines are needed to assure that the proposed CORE 24 graduation requirements framework will work with different types of schedules?

Co-chairs named. Jennifer Shaw, Principal, Franklin Pierce High School, and Mark Mansell, Superintendent, La Center School District, graciously agreed to co-chair the ITF, and will assist with the planning and implementation of all future meetings.

Interim Draft Report. Staff will bring forward to the Board in September, an interim draft report of the recommendations, with advantages and disadvantages, on the topics that the ITF will have discussed up to that time:
- Career concentration, "two for one/credit plus" policy.
- Competency-based approaches.
- Scheduling and credit-based approaches.
- Phase-in.

Update on CORE 24 and MHSD-related Research Projects. Staff is working on four related research projects, using Gates funding to support them.

1. **World Languages Competency-based Credit.** Staff convened a meeting of the World Languages Advisory Group, including representatives from both higher education and K-12, on June 4, 2009 to discuss the feasibility of developing a model competency-based policy in world languages. The group heard from representatives of three states (Utah,

New Jersey, and Connecticut) that have processes for awarding competency-based credit in world languages.

The Advisory Group's work will be informed by the reading, writing, and speaking assessment results of college students who have completed two quarters/ten credits of world language in college (generally considered equivalent to two years/two credits at the high school level), and high school students who have completed two years/two credits in a world language. Assessment data in French, Spanish, German, Chinese, and Japanese has been collected and will be reviewed by the Advisory Group in a webinar scheduled for August 26. The Advisory Group will meet again on October 1 to draft recommendations concerning: 1) the level of competency (i.e. language proficiency) students would need to attain in order to earn credit, 2) the manner of assessment that would be appropriate; and 3) the areas (e.g., speaking, reading, writing, and/or listening) in which competency may be expected. After the recommendations have been vetted in an outreach process, staff will bring them to the SBE for consideration.

2. **Transcript Study Follow-Up I.** Staff is reviewing the research briefs prepared by the BERC Group after the researchers took a more detailed look at the data from a CORE 24 perspective. Representatives of the BERC Group will make a presentation at the Board's September 2009 meeting.

3. **Transcript Study Follow-Up II.** Staff will pursue a second follow-up study to track the postsecondary choices made by the 2008 graduates in the original study, and will match data with those attending community and technical colleges (CTCs) to determine the performance and curriculum of students in their first year of CTC study i.e., what courses (particularly in math) did they take, and how well did they do? The CTCs are interested in knowing what courses students took in high school. Data about the first year of postsecondary study will not be available until August 2009, so this study will be conducted in fall 2009.

4. **Algebra II-based Career and Technical Education (CTE) Course.** SBE, OSPI, and TMP (Transition Math Project) staff have collaborated to convene a meeting August 12-14 in Yakima to explore the feasibility of developing a mathematics class that would demonstrate the practical application of Algebra II concepts in different CTE career clusters. Twenty mathematics and CTE teachers will be attending the meeting.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

Recommendations and ideas emerging from the CORE 24 Implementation Task Force, Meaningful High School Diploma Committee, and various research projects will ultimately inform the Board as it:

- Continues to refine the proposed CORE 24 graduation requirements framework and move toward implementation, and
- Begins to work with the Quality Education Council created by SHB 2261 to recommend and inform the ongoing implementation by the Legislature of an evolving program of basic education and the financing necessary to support the program.

EXPECTED ACTION

Information only; no action required at this time.