

Dear partner in education:

Greetings!

We are entering the time of year when colorful caps and gowns will be donned by the graduating class of 2009. The Board congratulates all graduating seniors and their families for reaching this important milestone.

In many ways, graduation is also a commencement, a symbolic step forward to a future full of potential and promise.

Our K-12 system also took a step forward this year with the passage of [ESHB 2261](#). In [ESHB 2261](#), we are providing a roadmap to all day kindergarten, the opportunity to earn 24 credits in high school, increased instructional time for all students, additional hours for struggling learners, and steps for a stronger accountability system.

The potential benefit this could have on generations of Washington students is profound. Through our efforts and those of our fellow stakeholders, our K-12 system has evolved.

And so our vital work has evolved as well. We face some important projects in the remainder of the year (the competition for the Race to the Top funding, devising implementation strategies for [CORE 24](#), and finalizing a [system of accountability](#) that will ensure an excellent and equitable education for all students).

We have the tools and the will to forge ahead. I'm confident that we'll get the work done and continue to have a great impact on our students.

And what's more, we'll do it all with a little brighter and sunnier weather.

Cheers!

Edie Harding

Learn more about our key initiatives

[A Meaningful High School Diploma](#): preparing students for life after high school no matter what path they choose.

[World-class math](#): providing students with the math foundation they need to succeed.

[Exemplary science](#): fostering science education to expand students' minds and broaden horizons.

[Accountability](#): providing assistance to schools and districts so that no student falls through the cracks.

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CORE 24 Task Force and the Meaningful High School Diploma

The Board's [CORE 24 Implementation Task Force](#), comprised of 20 education practitioners, continues its work on pioneering strategies that schools/districts can use in implementing the opportunity for a 24 credit graduation requirement.

On [May 18](#), the [Task Force](#) met to review recommendations about how schools might develop schedules to meet the 24 credit graduation requirement and ways they might also utilize competency based requirements for graduation.

Four [CORE 24/MHSD](#) related research projects are underway.

1. Strategies for determining proficiency levels equivalent to a world language credit.
2. Two transcript follow-up studies with the BERC report:
 - One regarding students' course-taking patterns relative to the [CORE 24 framework](#).
 - A second that tracks the postsecondary choices made by the class of 2008 relative to the courses they took in high school.

The viability of a math class that would demonstrate the practical application of Algebra II concepts in different CTE clusters.

An interim report of the [Task Force](#) and the MHSD Advisory Committee will be made available at the Board's September 17-18, 2009 meeting.

La Center Adopts New 24 Credit Graduation Requirement

The La Center School Board has adopted a new [24 credit graduation requirement](#) that is a close adaptation of the Board's [CORE 24 framework](#).

La Center School District administrators developed a multiple-pathways approach to a 24 credit graduation requirement. Dr. Mansell believes that these revised graduation requirements "will better prepare our students for a future they are creating, thereby increasing student ownership of their learning in the process."

The La Center School District's revised graduation requirements include:

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- The opportunity to earn 24 credits in high school.
- An additional math credit.
- An additional science credit.
- An additional arts credit, making La Center the first district to require 2 credits of art.
- A decreased physical education requirement from 2 credits to 1.5 (while retaining the .5 health credit).
- A decreased free elective credit.
- Pathways that mirror the choices available in [CORE 24](#).

Although 128 districts currently require at least 24 credits for graduation, La Center is ahead of the curve with their implementation of a framework similar to [CORE 24](#).

2009 Common Core Standards Memorandum of Agreement

In May, Governor Gregoire and Superintendent Randy Dorn signed the Common Core Standards Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), joining forty-nine other states and territories.

This state-led process, endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education and the Obama Administration, is designed to create national, common core math and English/language arts standards that ensure high school graduates are equipped with the skills and knowledge to be college and work ready.

[Washington's content-area standards](#) are outstanding, and we are confident that our standards will likely meet or exceed those that are produced from this coalition of participating states.

The development of national core standards is a state-led process, one that institutes a framework for our advocacy in their development. Furthermore, we are empowered as a state to accept or reject the final standards as written; the MOA is not a contract for the standards' acceptance but rather an acknowledgment that the pursuit for common standards is an important and timely cause.

More information about the MOA for Common Core Standards is available [here](#).

The New Provisional Accountability Framework

At the May Board meeting, the Board adopted the new provisional [Accountability Index](#). This fall, the Board and the

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction will use school/district data from the new [Accountability Index](#) to recognize successful schools.

The purpose of the Board's [Accountability Framework](#) is to ensure all students receive an excellent and equitable education. One of our primary goals in this regard is to help schools target areas for improvement, with the ultimate goal of closing the achievement gap that is prevalent in many of our schools today. The Board is working with OSPI and other education stakeholders to design effective programs that build district capacity to improve student learning.

A [recent report](#) on Washington state's success in closing the achievement gap shows that we've made some improvement, but there is work to be done. The new [Accountability Index](#) should help us in this regard.

Get to know your Student Board Representatives- Anna Laura Kastama (Tacoma), Elected

Anna Laura Kastama, a sophomore student leader at the Tacoma School of the Arts, joined the Board at our May meeting as the newest student representative.

Anna is very excited to be one of the two students on the Board, and she is devoted to sharing not only her opinion on important educational issues but also the concerns of her peers and community as well.

Her involvement in Associated Student Body Leadership, theater arts, the Puget Sound Juniores, and the robotics and science teams is reflective of her diverse interests.

Anna has big plans for her future, including a possible stint in the Peace Corps, a longer stay in college, and maybe even a lengthy career in research medicine.

The Board is thrilled to welcome Anna to the team, and we look forward to the fresh perspective she will bring to her two-year term.

Biographies of the other board members are available on the [SBE Web site](#).

SBE Elections

The State Board of Education will have three open positions for elected representatives. Two positions are available as a result of expiring terms. A third position will be open as a result of an immediate vacancy. The current four elected members of the Board hope to fill that position by the September 2009 Board meeting.

The filing dates for the two elected positions will be from July 23, 2009 - August 30, 2009. School board members will have from October 30, 2009 - November 25, 2009 to place their votes. OSPI will be conduct the elections, and move information will soon be available on the [OSPI Web site](#).

A detailed explanation of the election's process, including relevant dates, is available [here](#).

Upcoming Board Meeting

July 17, 2009
The Inn at Gig Harbor
Gig Harbor, WA

For meeting agendas, click [here](#).

E-mail your thoughts and questions to SBE at sbe@k12.wa.us.