

Dear partner in education:

Greetings!

Despite the tough economy, there are great things happening in the classrooms across our state. School district administrators, board members, teachers, and staff continue to provide an exemplary education for our students.

The Board was fortunate to have its March 12-13 meeting at the [New Market Skills Center](#), a career and technical based center providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to enter into employment after high school and/or preparation for entering college or an apprenticeship program. The Skills Center serves 25 high schools throughout 10 districts in the Olympia area, offering programs such as DigiPen Computer Science AP, Pre-Veterinary Technician, Alternative Energy Technology, Professional Medical Careers, Construction Trades and lots more!

In addition to supplying a free education and the opportunity of a high school diploma for its junior and senior students, the [New Market Skills Center](#) also prepares students to enter the workforce through industry standard certifications. Our proposed CORE 24 graduation framework supports the work of students attending Skills Centers through its career concentration component.

Talk about an exciting place to learn!

There was also some exciting news from Olympia recently, with the passage of [HB 2261](#). It includes a definition of a meaningful high school diploma, one that prepares students for the opportunity to be successful in postsecondary education, gainful employment and citizenship. The Bill also includes a required 24 credits for graduation, with an additional hour of instruction that the state will pay as funding is phased in.

I hope you enjoy these tidbits of good news. It certainly strengthens our motivation to continue our most important work - to ensure an excellent and equitable education for all of our students.

Cheers!

Eddie 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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2009 Federal Fiscal Stimulus Package

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Washington State may receive \$1 billion, and approximately \$819 million of those funds is designated for education. These funds will likely help some districts lessen the blow felt as a result of reduced revenues. Specifically, the funds are designed to:

- Maintain support for schools and colleges at the FY 2006 level
- Take actions to address the inequities in the distribution of highly qualified teachers
- Improve education data collection
- Enhance the state's academic standards and assessments
- Take actions to turnaround schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring under Title I

An overview of the potential educational impact of the 2009 Federal Fiscal Stimulus Package is available [here](#).

CORE 24 Task Force

The Board's [CORE 24 Implementation Task Force](#), comprised of 20 education practitioners, met for the first time on March 2. They began formulating the questions and information strategies they will pursue to address the key implementation issues identified by the Board, including:

- phase in (What is the optimal strategy for phasing in CORE 24?)
- scheduling (What scheduling approaches assure sufficient opportunities for students to earn 24 credits?)
- flexibility (What flexibility is needed to make CORE 24 requirements work for all students?)
- career concentration (What should the career concentration requirement look like in practice?)
- middle school connections (What issues need to be considered to determine the viability of satisfying some requirements in middle school, including initiating the High School and Beyond Plan?)

The ITF will work on these issues throughout 2009, meeting again on: April 13, May 18, August 7, September 28, and

November 2.

Staff is also working on several research projects that will inform the CORE 24 work, including:

1. initiating the development of an interdisciplinary, CTE-based Algebra II course
2. advancing a conversation about competency-based world language standards
3. exploring the postsecondary pathways of the class of 2008, including their course-taking patterns at community and technical colleges

The Meaningful High School Diploma (MHSD) work committee will continue to develop policy recommendations to clarify and strengthen CORE 24 requirements. The next [MHSD work sessions](#) are scheduled for March 24 and May 5.

Third Math Credit Options

SBE is working to create a meaningful high school diploma, and an essential component of this endeavor is ensuring that all students graduate from high school with a stronger math education.

Currently, students must complete two credits of high school level math (algebra 1 and geometry or integrated I and II) to earn a diploma. SBE adopted a rule requiring students to take a third credit of math, algebra II, or a mathematics equivalent credit tailored to their career path in order to graduate (beginning with the class of 2013). Class of 2013 students who are taking algebra I this year in eighth grade and choose not to record the credit on their high school transcript will have several options in ninth grade.

This policy creates a variety of mathematics pathways, allowing students to take a third math credit that best suits their interest and prepares them for success in post-secondary training or career options.

The choice to pursue an alternative credit to Algebra II should be made after consultation between the student, parents, administrators, and counselors.

For more information about the third math credit option, please click [here](#). The Board is exploring the possibility of seeding the development of an interdisciplinary CTE-based Algebra II course.

Get to know your Board Members - Amy Bragdon, Newman Lake (Spokane), Governor Appointed - Through 2013

Recently reappointed, Amy Bragdon will resume her important work with SBE through 2013.

Amy has served 33 years in education, and truly is grateful for the opportunities to work with the Board. "To be at the policy level," said Amy, "is a whole new experience that I really appreciate. I never dreamed I'd have that opportunity to make a difference on a larger scale."

The work in front of the Board is significant, but Amy is ready for the challenge. "We have to forge ahead, especially with CORE 24 and accountability." She acknowledges the difficulty that today's economic climate poses but also recognizes that the Board must continue to strive forward on behalf of all Washington students.

More information [about Amy](#) and the other board members is available on the [SBE website](#).

Upcoming Board Meeting

May 14-15, 2009
Yakima Valley Community College
Yakima, WA

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

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