



THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Governance | Accountability | Achievement | Oversight | Career & College Readiness

Title:	Student Attendance and Graduation Requirements	
As Related To:	<input type="checkbox"/> Goal One: Effective and accountable P-13 governance. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Two: Comprehensive statewide K-12 accountability. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Three: Closing achievement gap.	<input type="checkbox"/> Goal Four: Strategic oversight of the K-12 system. <input type="checkbox"/> Goal Five: Career and college readiness for all students. <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Relevant To Board Roles:	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy Leadership <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> System Oversight <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication <input type="checkbox"/> Convening and Facilitating
Policy Considerations / Key Questions:	The Board may wish to discuss the development of policies aimed at reducing absenteeism as a means to narrow achievement and opportunity gaps. The Board may also wish to discuss and further study how the policy of granting Basic Education Waivers contributes to the lost instructional time for some students.	
Possible Board Action:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt <input type="checkbox"/> Approve <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Materials Included in Packet:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Memo <input type="checkbox"/> Graphs / Graphics <input type="checkbox"/> Third-Party Materials <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint	
Synopsis:	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Attendance Data</u></p> <p>Students need to attend school regularly to succeed. The research shows that missing any school has a negative impact (negative correlation) on learning and other measures of educational outcomes. In Washington, as many as a quarter of a million students are identified as truants or chronic absentees. The memo included in the board packet will show the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absenteeism is negatively correlated with educational outcomes, which is to say that educational outcomes decline as absences increase. • Unhealthy attendance patterns are evident throughout all grade levels and across the entire state. However, poor attendance is more prevalent in areas and schools characterized by higher levels of poverty. <p>The memo includes seven elements that have formed parts of successful interventions in other states and districts.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Graduation Requirement Data</u></p> <p>This section of the packet also includes a summary of graduation requirement data for the Class of 2015 from the 2014 Basic Education Compliance Report. These findings offer information on the implementation of the 24-credit graduation requirements and other credit requirements including the culminating project, digital technology, community service, and personal finance.</p>	



ABSENTEEISM AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Policy Considerations

The State Board of Education has as Goal 1 of the Draft Strategic Plan to develop and support policies to close the achievement and opportunity gaps. The Board may wish to consider policies aimed at reducing absenteeism as a means to narrow achievement and opportunity gaps. The Board may wish to discuss and further study how the policy of granting basic education waivers contribute to the lost instructional time for some students, which has a demonstrable negative impact on student outcomes.

Summary

Compulsory education laws support the idea that students need to attend school regularly to succeed. Educational research shows that academic achievement from kindergarten, through high school graduation, and post-secondary enrollment are all highly sensitive to absenteeism. Missing even a little instructional time can have negative impacts for any student, but is especially harmful for students who live in or near poverty.

A mounting body of evidence indicates that it is the number of days of absences that matters in education, not why the absences occur. In other words, educational outcomes would be lowered when absences increase, regardless of the reason for the absence. Missing a lot of school, at any time, has the potential to contribute to students' getting off track to educational success.

Given the strong connection between absenteeism, academic achievement, and poverty, one of the most effective strategies for closing the achievement gap might be a concerted effort to enable and ensure that high-poverty students attend school regularly from pre-k to grade 12. This could form part of a broader strategy to reduce the number or hours and days of lost instructional time for students.

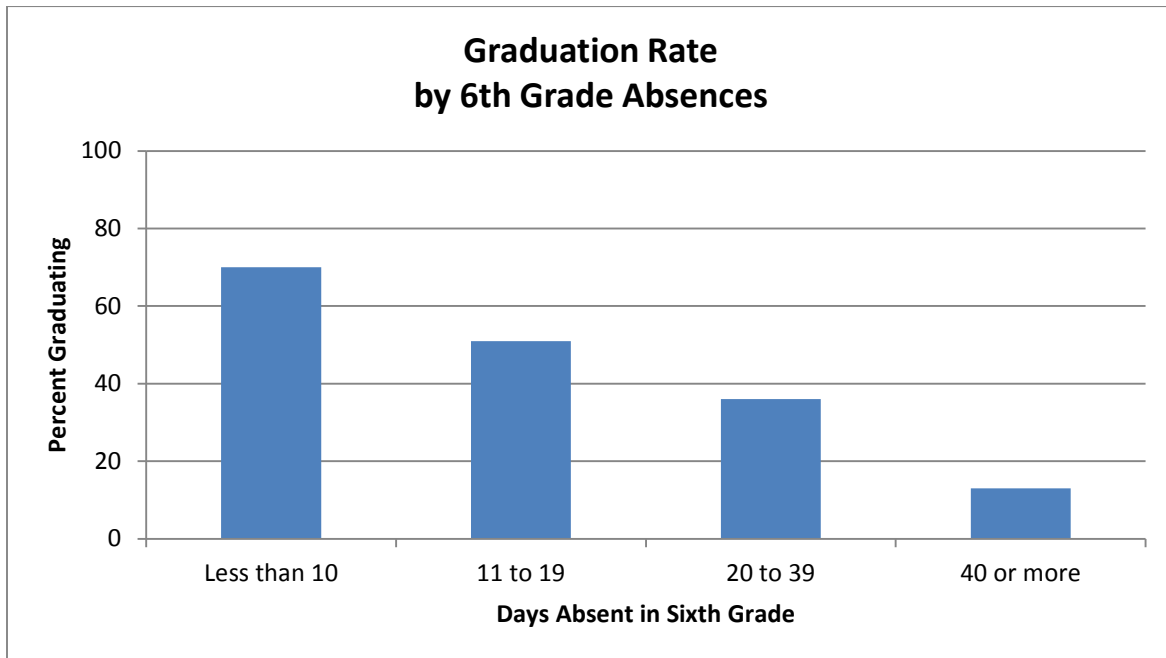
Findings and Results

While the current trend in educational research is to report on chronic absenteeism, this work will report on unexcused absenteeism, truancy, and chronic absenteeism. The 2012-13 unexcused absence rate data used in this work were collected and reported by the OSPI through the AMO accountability measures. These data were merged into the Index file so that school absenteeism could be readily compared to school academic measures. Unless otherwise stated, the Washington unexcused absence data describe elementary, middle, and combined (K-8) public schools only. A portion of the data included in this memo was provided by the OSPI, which is in the process of assembling additional attendance data for additional years and for all Washington public schools for analysis.

Absenteeism and Educational Outcomes

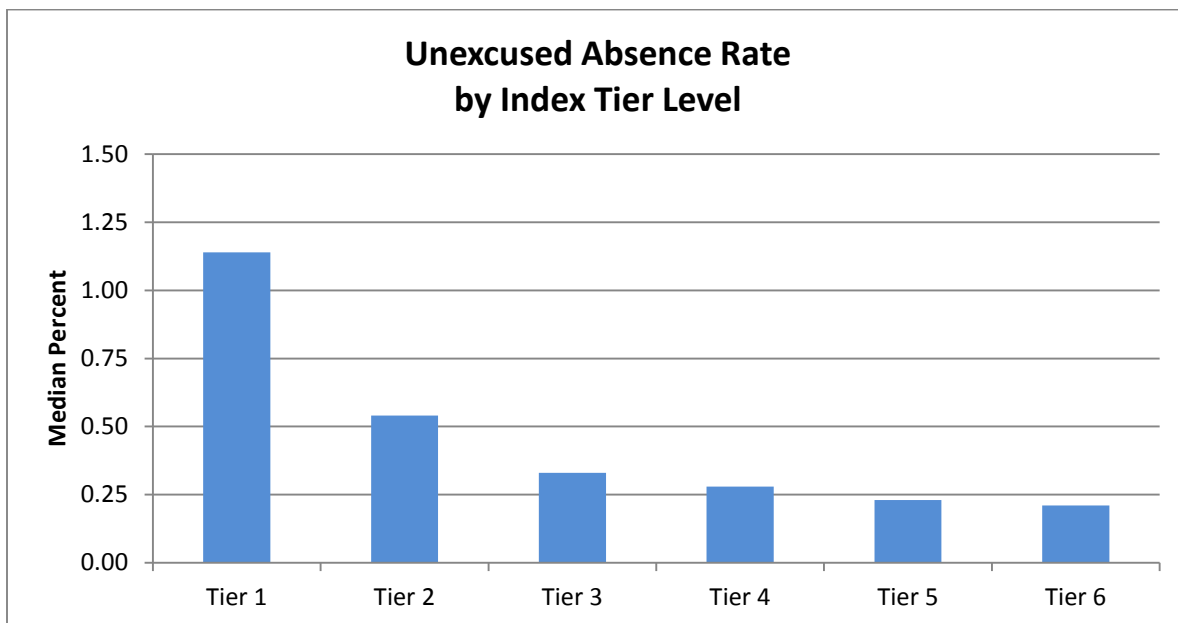
The chart below from a longitudinal study conducted in Baltimore shows how the total number of absences during the 6th grade is related to graduation outcomes. The chart shows that the graduation rate systematically changes as the number of absences increase. This is compelling evidence showing that patterns established by the end of elementary school can have a profound effect on high school outcomes. Once established, chronic absenteeism is a difficult

pattern from which to escape without deliberate intervention. Chronic absenteeism has an additive effect in that each year, the student falls further and further behind making it extremely difficult to attain the required credits and demonstrate proficiency on high school exit exams.

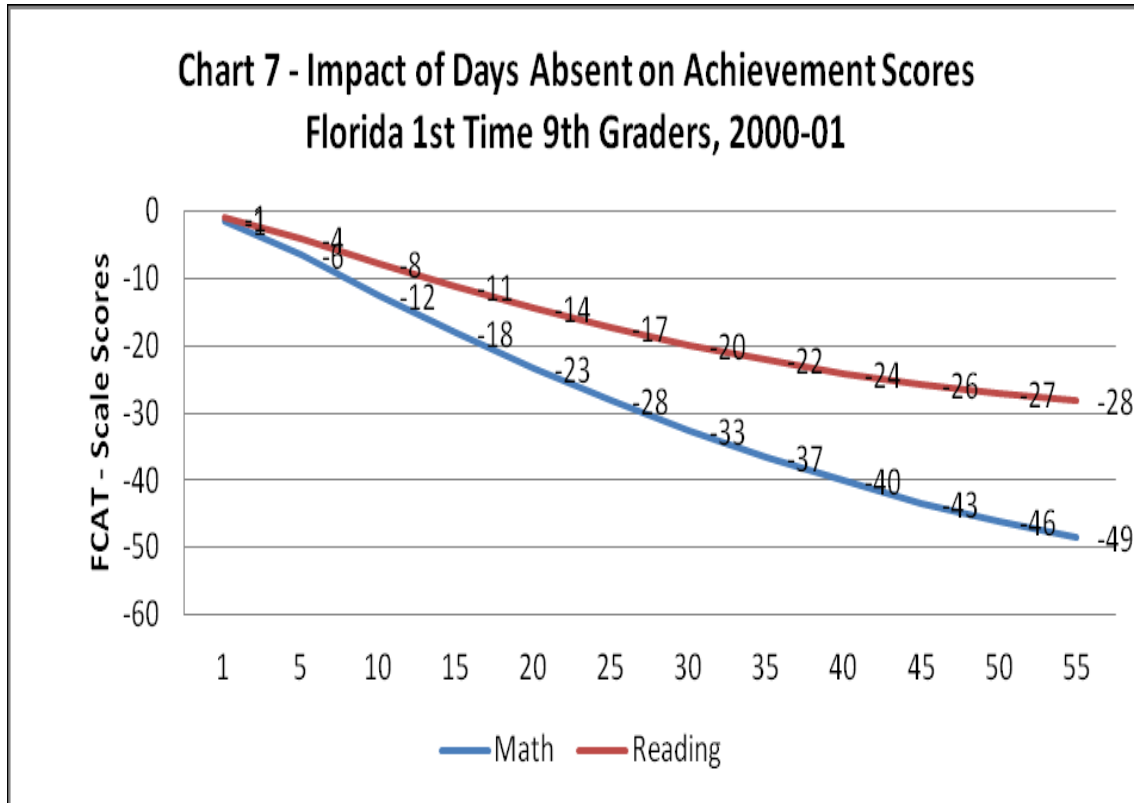


Source: (Baltimore Educational Research Consortium, 2011). *Destination Graduation: Sixth Grade Early Warning Indicators for Baltimore City Schools: Their Prevalence and Impact*. Find the full report at: <http://baltimore-berc.org/pdfs/SixthGradeEWIFullReport.pdf>.

The chart below shows the relationship between the number of unexcused absences and the Washington Achievement Index ratings. This chart shows that the unexcused absence rate systematically decreases from the lowest performing tier (Tier 1) to the highest performing tier (Tier 6). In other words, the highest performing tiers are characterized by the lowest unexcused absence rate.



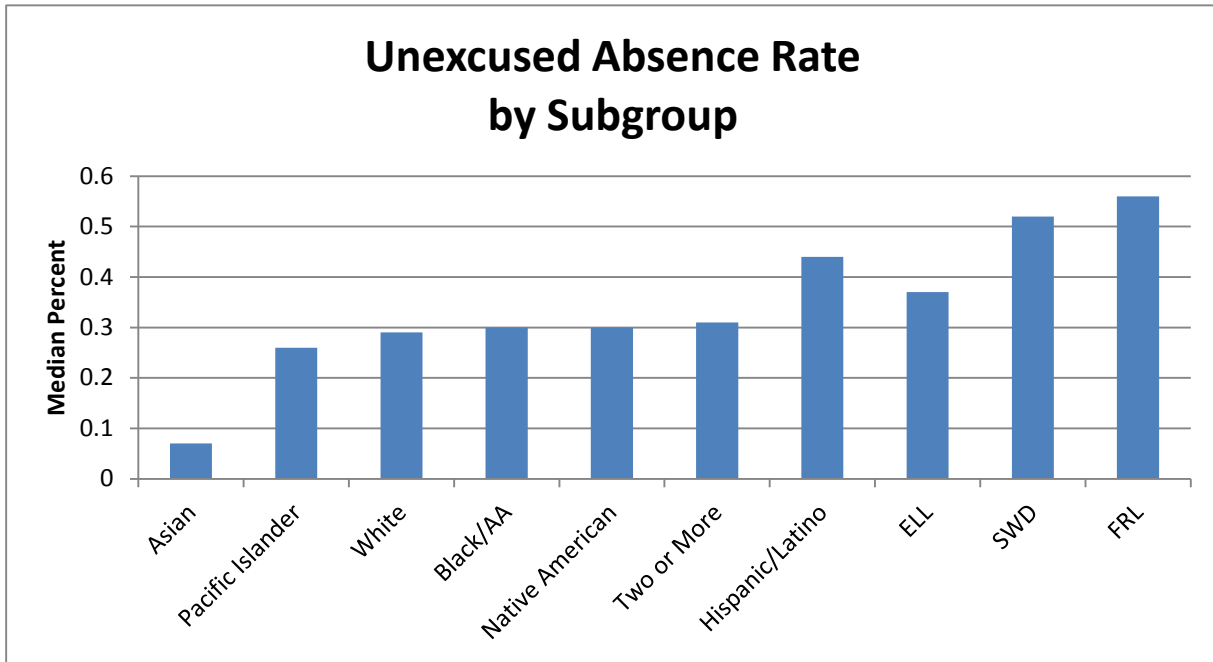
In an inferential study using assessment data from the Florida summative state assessments, the researchers computed the negative impact of absences (for any reason) on reading and math scaled scores. The chart shows that the negative impacts are greater for math as compared to reading, and that the negative impacts systematically change as the number of absences increase. For the Florida math assessment, any student's scaled score would be predictably lowered approximately one scaled score point for every day absent, regardless of the reason for the absence. In other words, a student missing 10 days of instruction for any reason would be expected to score approximately 10 points lower than a student peer who did not miss that instructional time.



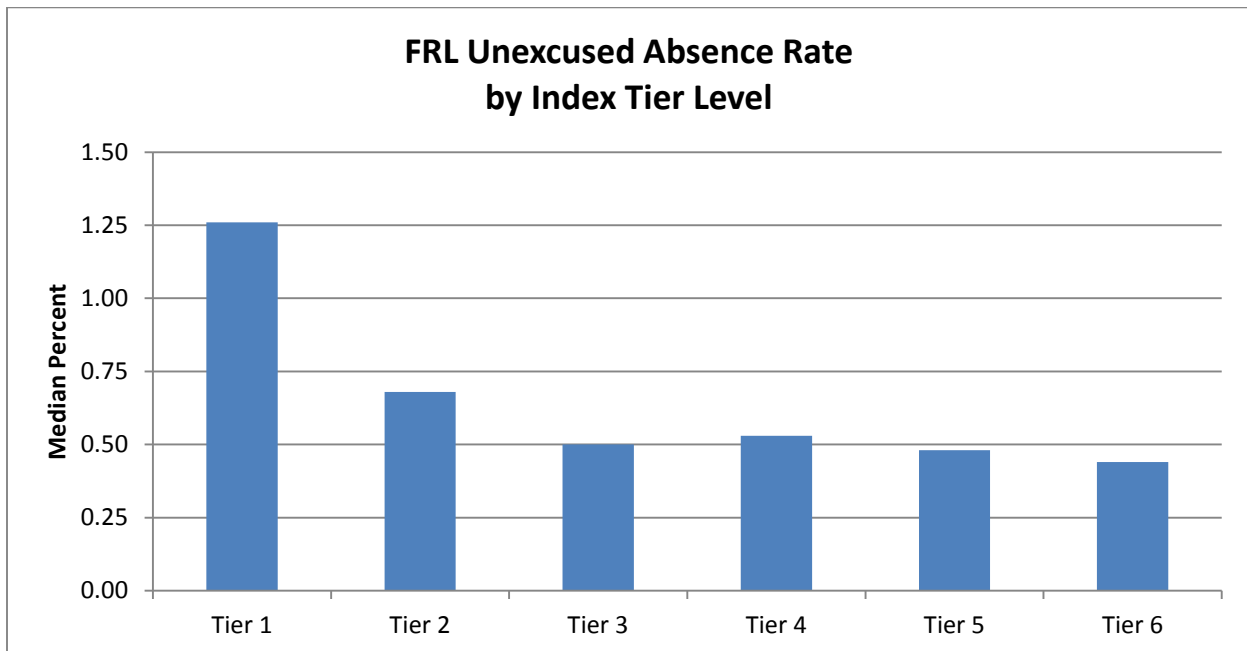
Source: (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012) *The Importance of Being in School: A Report on Absenteeism in the Nation's Public Schools*. Find the full report at http://www.sia-us.com/uploads/FINALChronicAbsenteeismReport_May16_executivesummary_withcover_20_1_.pdf

Absenteeism and ESEA Subgroups

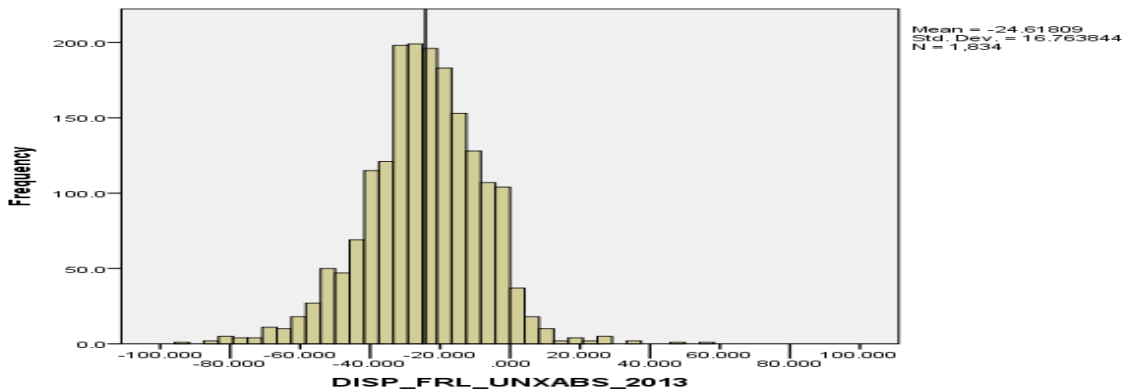
The chart below shows the 2013 unexcused absence rate for ESEA subgroups in Washington schools. The All Students unexcused absence rate (0.33 percent) is represented by the horizontal red line. The chart shows that the unexcused absence rate for Pacific Islanders/Hawaiian, White, Black, Native American, and Two or More race/ethnicities are approximately the same (0.26 to 0.31 percent). However, see that the unexcused absence rate for the Asian subgroup (0.07 percent) is far lower than the other groups, while the unexcused absence rate for the Hispanic/Latino subgroup (0.44 percent) is substantially higher than the other race/ethnicity groups. Finally, the chart shows that students qualifying for Free and Reduced Price Lunch post the highest unexcused absence rate when all of the ESEA subgroups are considered.



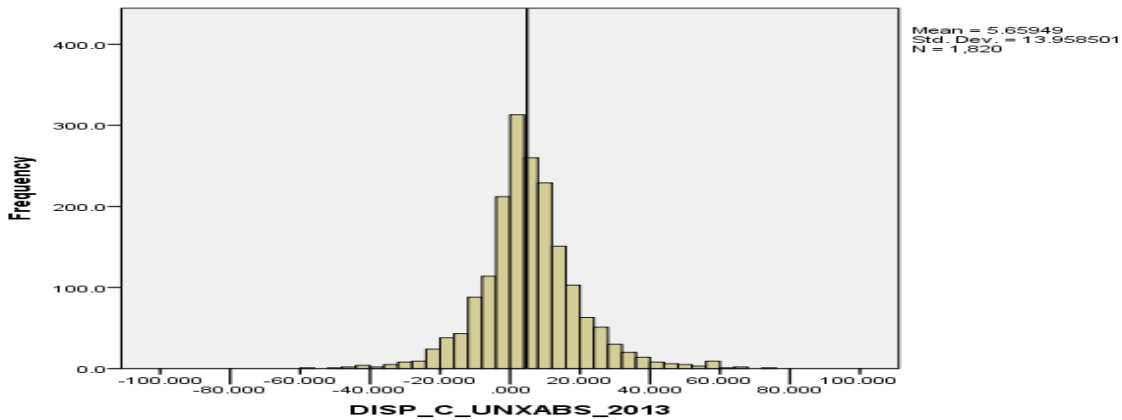
Knowing that the unexcused absence rate for FRL subgroups is the highest of the ESEA subgroups, it might be interesting to know how FRL unexcused absence rates vary by Index tier levels. The chart below shows that schools in the lowest performing tiers (1 and 2) exhibit the highest median rates for FRL unexcused absences.



The relationship between poverty and unexcused absences in Washington is also evident in the disproportionality charts below. In this disproportionality measure, we compare the percentage of FRL students at a school to the percentage of unexcused absences by the FRL students. A negative value means that a disproportionately high number of absences are attributed to the particular group. As an example, if the FRL students at a school account for 70 percent of the unexcused absences and the FRL percentage at the school is 45 percent, a disproportionality value of -25 would be reported. A negative value would be viewed as undesirable because (in this example) 45 percent of the students are accounting for 70 percent of the unexcused absences.



Compare the disproportionality chart for the FRL group (above) with a median disproportionality value of -24.2 to the disproportionality chart for White students (below) with a median disproportionality value of 4.9. This provides evidence that students living in poverty are more likely to miss more instructional time due to unexcused absence from school.



It is evident that unexcused absences are disproportionately high for children living in poverty, but one may wonder whether the relationship between poverty and unexcused absences changes with respect to school characteristics and school level. In summary, yes, unexcused absence differences are evident from t-Tests based on school level and school characteristics.

As a reminder, a t-Test is conducted to determine whether the mean or average value of a measure for one group differs from the mean value of another group. In the first analysis below, we seek to determine if the unexcused absence rate for FRL students at elementary schools is statistically different from the unexcused absence rate for FRL students at middle schools. T-tests do not establish causality – merely that a difference exists.

As stated above, a t-Test was conducted to determine whether the unexcused absence rate for All Students group and the FRL subgroups was different for elementary schools as compared to middle schools. For the All Students group, the unexcused absence rate for elementary schools was 0.42 percent and 0.75 percent for middle schools. For the FRL subgroups, the unexcused absence rate for elementary schools was 0.60 percent and 1.15 percent for middle schools. The results show that unexcused absence rates differ by school level and are higher in middle school as compared to elementary school. This conclusion supports other research showing that absenteeism is greater in upper grades as compared to lower grades.

A t-Test was conducted to determine whether the unexcused absence rate for FRL subgroups differed by school poverty level. Each school was characterized as high poverty if the FRL percentage at the school was ≥ 47.04 percent and not high poverty if the FRL percentage at the school was < 47.04 percent. The mean FRL unexcused absence rate at the Not High Poverty schools (n=629 schools) was 0.68 percent while the mean FRL unexcused absence rate at the High Poverty schools (n=729 schools) was 0.85 percent. This test tells us that the school a child living in poverty attends is related in some way to the FRL unexcused absence rate.

T-tests were conducted as above and separately for elementary and middle schools. For elementary schools, the mean FRL unexcused absence rate at the Not High Poverty schools (n=418 schools) was 0.57 percent while the mean FRL unexcused absence rate at the High Poverty schools (n=501 schools) was 0.63 percent. This is not a statistically significant result, so in other words, we cannot say that the elementary school a child living in poverty attends has an influence on the unexcused absence rate.

For middle schools, the mean FRL unexcused absence rate at the Not High Poverty schools (n=161 schools) was 0.97 percent while the mean FRL unexcused absence rate at the High Poverty schools (n=169 schools) was 1.33 percent. We can report that the middle school a child living in poverty attends is related to the FRL unexcused absence rate.

		Number of Schools	Unexcused Absence Rate	
			All Students	FRL Students
All Schools	Elementary Schools	919	.42*	.60*
	Middle Schools	330	.75*	1.15*
	Not High Poverty	629	.34*	.68*
	High Poverty	729	.68*	.85*
Elementary Schools	Not High Poverty	418	.29*	.57*
	High Poverty	501	.52*	.63*
Middle Schools	Not High Poverty	161	.45*	.97*
	High Poverty	169	1.05*	1.33*

*Note: significant difference at the 0.001 level.

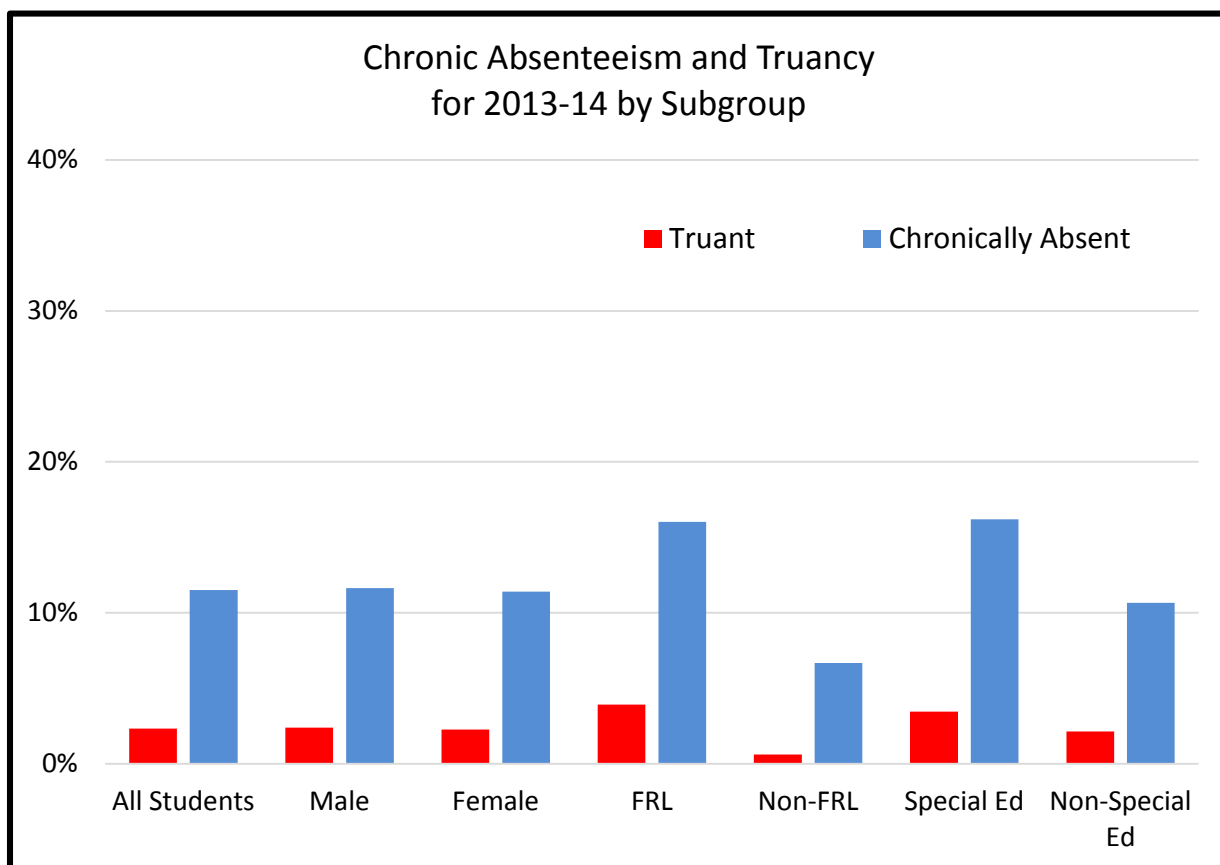
+Note: no significant difference at the 0.05 level.

Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy in Washington

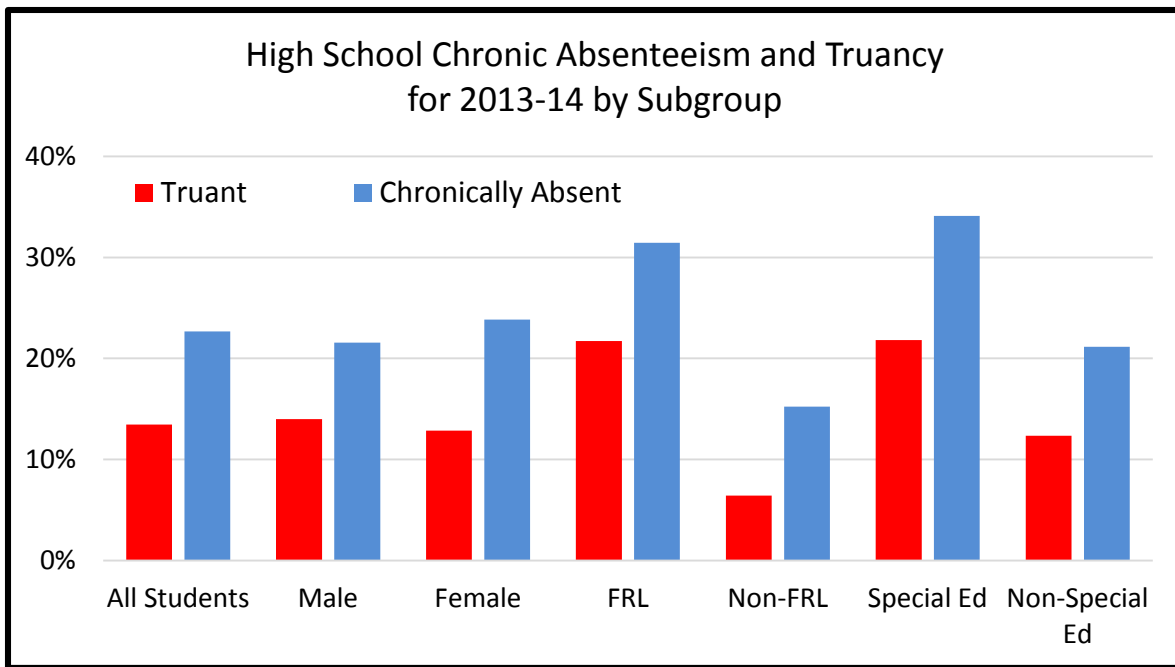
The OSPI provided a couple of graphs regarding Washington chronic absenteeism and truancy. To better interpret the charts:

- Truancy is defined as a student who has five or more unexcused full-day absences with a 30 (school) day period or ten or more unexcused full-day absences in a school year.
- Chronic Absenteeism is when a student misses 10 percent of the scheduled instructional time, which is 18 days for a 180-day school calendar.

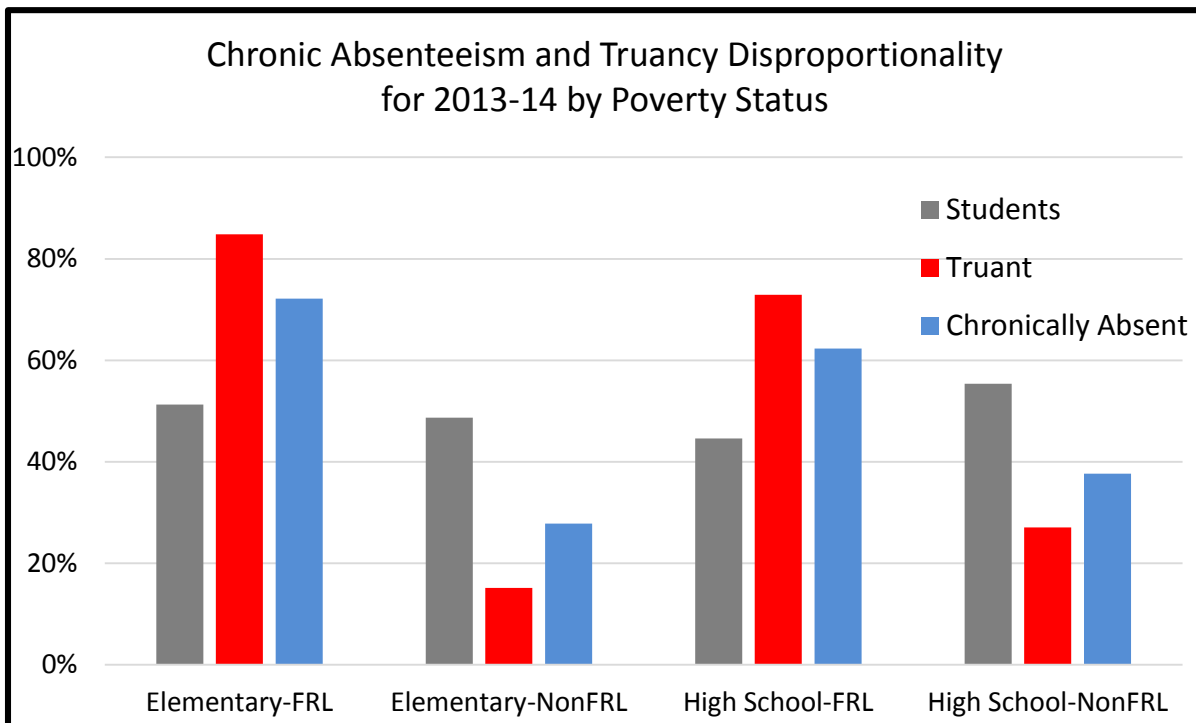
The chart below is for Washington elementary and middle schools and shows that the greatest chronic absenteeism is associated with students living in poverty and students with disabilities. As discussed earlier, the high number of absences associated with these groups contributes to the lower overall groups' performances on state assessments.



The chart below shows the percentage of high school students classified as truants or who are chronically absent from school. Notice that chronic absenteeism nearly doubles from elementary and middle school to the high school level. Also, see that truancy becomes a much more prominent issue in high school as compared to the lower grades. The data presented here are similar to data reported for other states.



The chart below is another example of subgroup disproportionality for chronically absent and truant students at the elementary and high school levels. For the elementary schools, the statewide FRL rate portrayed here is a little over 50 percent and the chart shows that about 83 percent of all truants participate in the FRL program. Also, see that approximately 72 percent of all chronically absent students participate in the FRL program.



Synopsis

The research shows that missing any school has an impact on learning and outcomes. The OSPI reports that approximately 180,000 Washington students were categorized as chronically absent in the 2013-14 school year and another 60,000 or so as truants. This group totals nearly a quarter million students and constitutes 20 to 25 percent of the total public school enrollment, so this is an issue that extends across the state and into every school. However, chronic absenteeism and truancy are most prevalent in impoverished school settings and the students who benefit the most from being in school every day are the students more likely to be out of school more often.

Successful efforts to address destructive attendance patterns often include elements of the following components:

- At least weekly monitoring and close tracking of absenteeism
- Developing the capacity to understand why students are missing school instructional time
- Problem solving ability to address the causes of absenteeism
- Building and sustaining relationships with the students and families who are engaging in unhealthy attendance patterns
- The development of an internal and external infrastructure and personnel to meet the scale of the challenge
- Provide recognition and awards for good attendance
- The commitment to learn what works, replicate, and expand effective programs.

As a policymaking community, we continue to emphasize the need for extended learning opportunities and increased instructional time. However, the analyses quantifying the amount of and reasons for missed instructional time within the existing school calendar on a statewide and local basis are limited.

Action

No action by the Board is anticipated.

Please contact Andrew Parr at andrew.parr@k12.wa.us if you have questions regarding this memo.



Summary of Graduation Requirement Data for the Class of 2015 From the 2014 Basic Education Compliance Report

Background

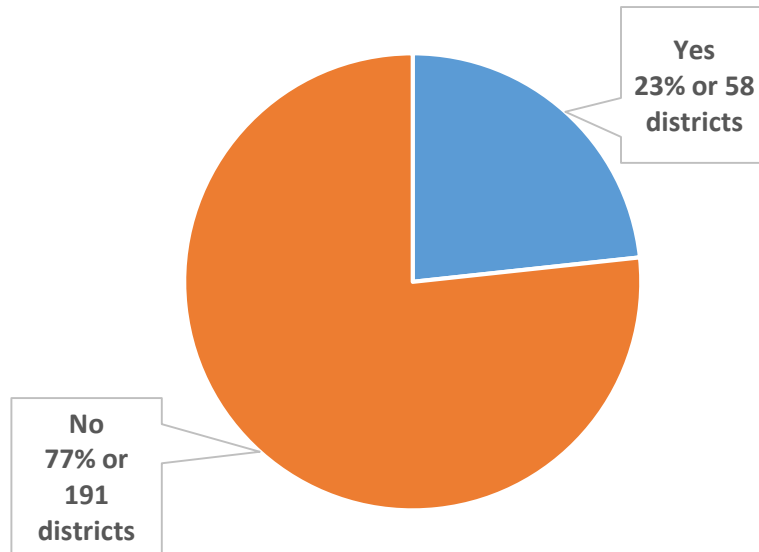
District graduation requirements are reported on page two of the minimum basic education requirements compliance report so that SBE may respond accurately to questions about district requirements from other school districts, the Legislature, and OSPI. The report was updated for the 2014-15 school year to collect data on Career Technical Education course equivalencies and other credit and non-credit district graduation requirements. The other credit and non-credit district graduation requirements include the High School and Beyond Plan, culminating project, computers and digital technology, community service, and personal finance. Unlike other surveys of districts that have partial response rates, the basic education compliance report receives a 100% response rate.

Findings

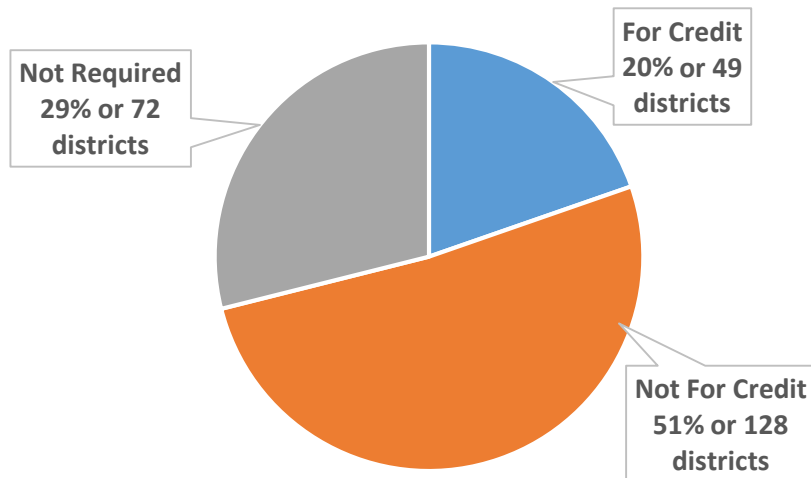
The following findings are based on responses from the 249 high school districts in the state:

- 83% of high school districts report that they are already offering CTE course equivalencies for the Class of 2015.
- 58 high school districts report that they are requiring three credits of science for the Class of 2015, up from 50 for the Class of 2014.
- One-third of high school districts report that they offer competency-based crediting for the Class of 2015.
- 43% of high school districts report that they require 24 or more credits for the class of 2015.
- Only three high school districts report that they require the minimum number of credits mandated by the state for the Class of 2015 – 20 credits. All other districts reported that they require more than 20 credits for graduation.
- 84% of high school districts report that they are requiring both four credits of English and 2.5 of Social Studies for the Class of 2015. This shows that most districts already offer enough English and Social Studies credits to meet the 2016 graduation requirements.
- 71% of high school districts report that they still require the culminating project for the Class of 2015, even though it is no longer a state requirement after the enactment of E2SSB 6552 in the 2014 Session. Twenty percent of high school districts require it for credit.
- 39 high school districts report that they require the High School and Beyond Plan for credit. The rest of the high school districts reported that they require the High School and Beyond Plan, but not for credit.
- 51 high school districts report that they require Technology for graduation. Of those districts, 41 require it for credit.
- 23 high school districts report that they require Personal Finance for graduation. Sixteen of those districts require it for credit.

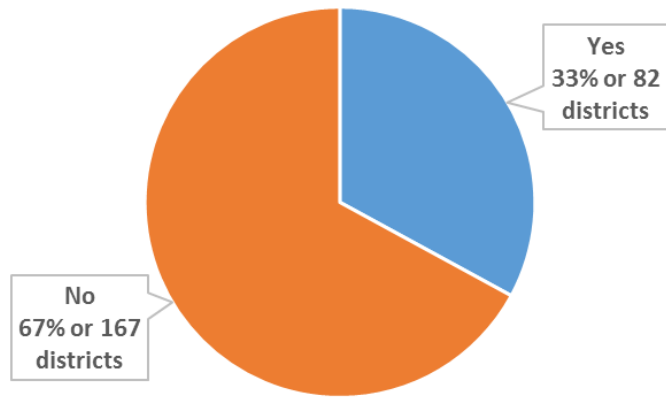
Districts reporting that they require three credits of Science for the Class of 2015



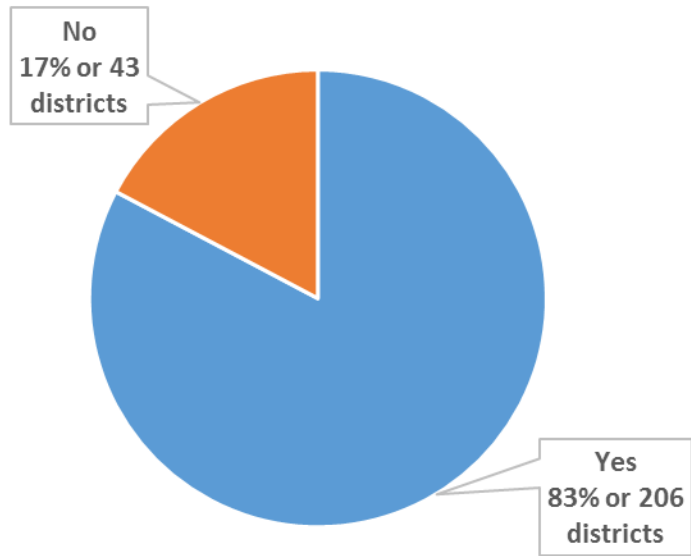
Number of Districts Requiring Culminating Project for the Class of 2015

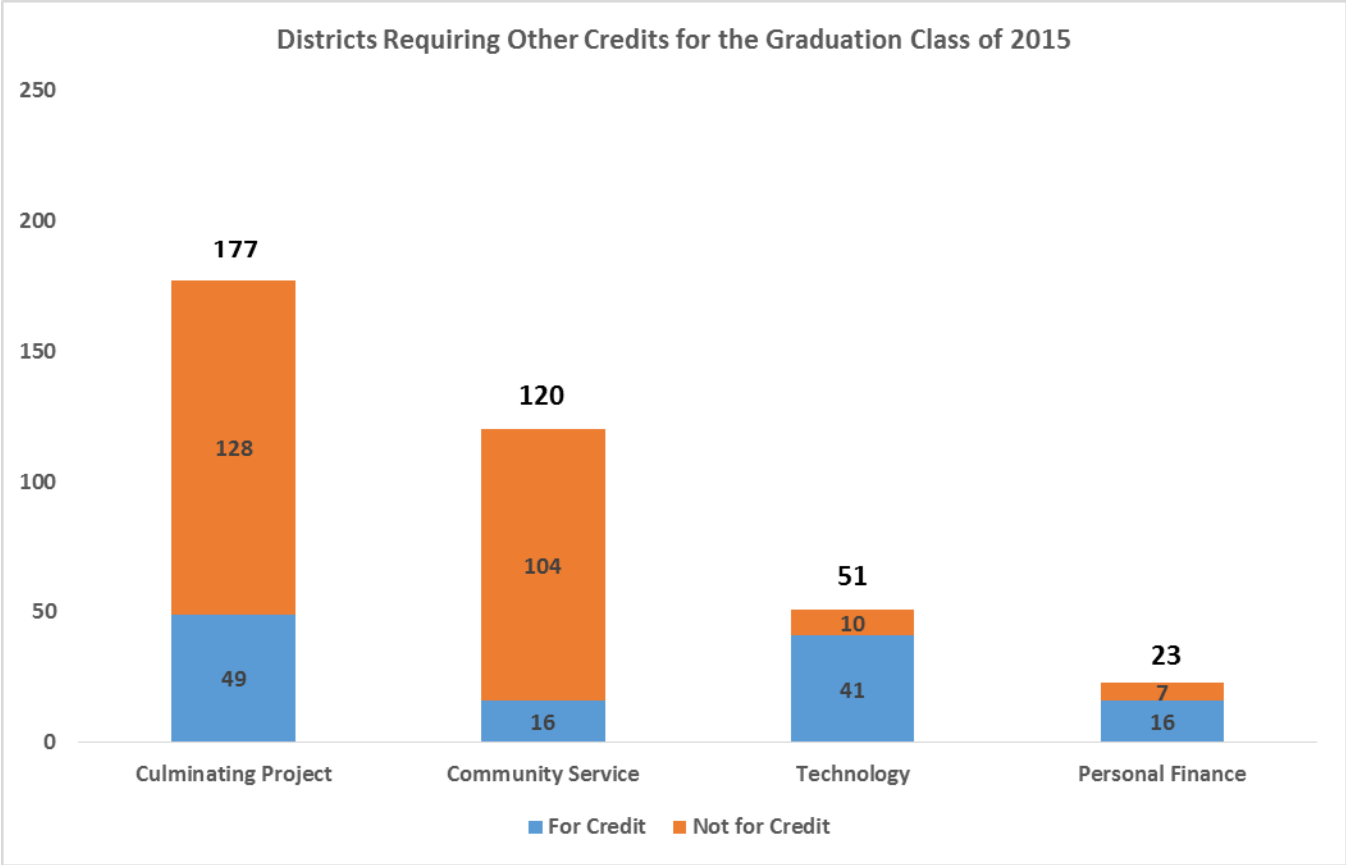
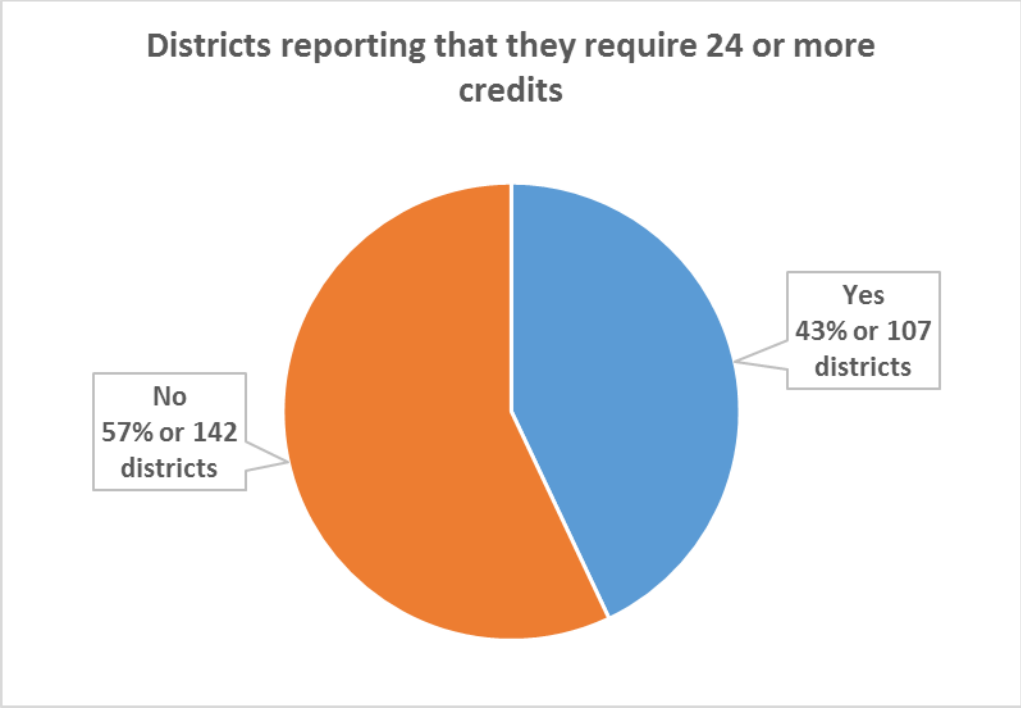


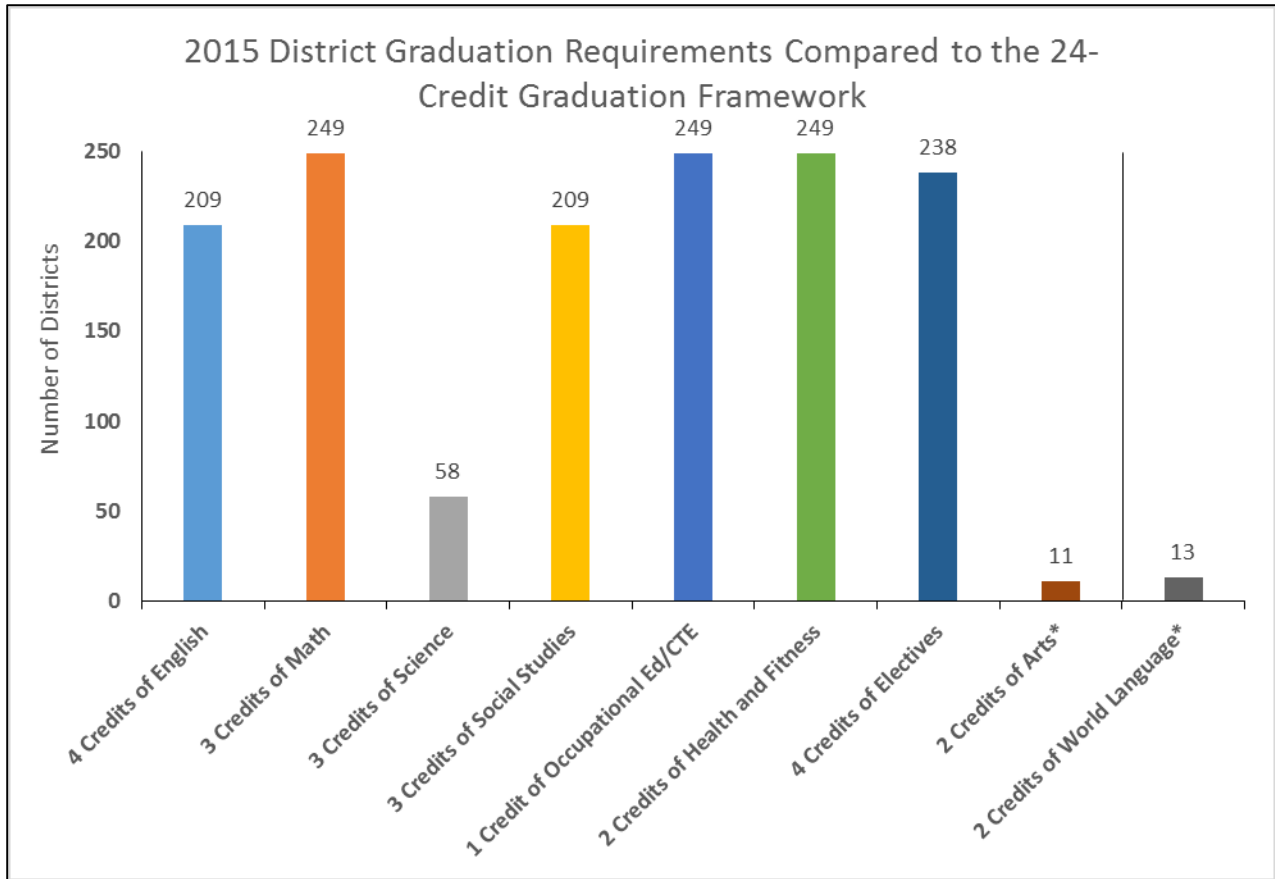
Districts Offering Competency-Based Crediting for the Class of 2015



Districts reporting that they offer CTE Course Equivalencies for the Class of 2015







*One arts credit and both world language credits may be Personalized Pathway Requirements in the 24-credit graduation requirements. Personalized Pathway Requirements are credits required to pursue a postsecondary pathway, including completing a CTE program of study, an industry certification, or 2 or 4-year college preparatory coursework. Personalized Pathway Requirements are identified in a student's High School and Beyond Plan, and are locally determined.

Total Number of Districts with High Schools = 249

Data: Annual district report to SBE on basic education compliance, I-Grants Form Package 600, October 2014. Compilation of district responses by SBE.