

WASHINGTON STATE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: CAREER AND COLLEGE READY

BACKGROUND

At its September 2010 meeting, the SBE gave provisional approval to a revised framework of career and college ready graduation requirements. The revisions took into consideration stakeholder feedback the SBE received on its original 2008 Core 24 proposal, and the policy recommendations forwarded to the SBE from the Core 24 Implementation Task Force. Since September, the SBE has reached out to stakeholders in numerous ways, through face-to-face and webinar presentations, online materials (PowerPoint presentations, handouts, meeting highlights), and an online survey. The survey has generated over 4,000 responses to date, and will not be taken down until November 1. Although it is not a random survey, the responses provide a snapshot of issues on the minds of those who took the time to complete it.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

For the purpose of making a decision on the final graduation requirements framework, board members will be asked to come to agreement on:

- Clarifications/refinements to the core graduation credit requirements and policy recommendations approved in September 2010.
- Changes to the high school and beyond plan.
- Changes to the culminating project (time permitting).

EXPECTED ACTION

Approve the final high school graduation requirements framework resolution, including changes to the credit framework and accompanying policy recommendations.

SECTION ONE: GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS CREDIT FRAMEWORK CLARIFICATIONS

Since publication of the proposed graduation frameworks, several issues have emerged that require clarification.

Automatic enrollment: The SBE expressed its intent for students to be automatically enrolled in all of the career and college ready requirements, unless their educational and career goals, as expressed in their high school and beyond plan, would be met more effectively with different courses. The SBE also specified which credit requirements were flexible, and which were not. For purposes of discussion, two statements are contrasted below. Which statement best describes the process the SBE envisions for students electing courses other than those in the automatic pathway?

Process prescribed by state: Stipulate in rule the same type of consent process currently in place for the third credit of math: Student, parent, and high school staff meet to agree that the choice to change from the automatic enrollment requirements better fits with the student's educational and career goals as expressed in the student's high school and beyond plan. Each party signs off. This process may be initiated as early as the end of the eighth grade year, but must be initiated by the end of the tenth grade year.

Process prescribed by districts: Stipulate in rule that districts will establish written policies/procedures outlining a process for students to change from the automatic enrollment requirements to courses that better fit with the student's educational and career goals as expressed in the student's high school and beyond plan. This process may be initiated as early as the end of the eighth grade year, but must be initiated by the end of the tenth grade year.

Health and Fitness. The SBE listed fitness among the student choice requirements because current statute¹ allows individual students to be excused from participation in physical education for a variety of reasons. In addition, another statute² stipulates that "Beginning with the 2011-2012 school year, any district waiver of exemption policy from physical education requirements for high school students should be based upon meeting both health and fitness curricula concepts as well as alternative means of engaging in physical activity, but should acknowledge students' interests in pursuing their academic interests." Health and fitness is unique, among the basic education act learning goals,³ in having statutory provisions allowing waivers for high school students, and those waivers apply only to fitness (physical education).

For this reason, the SBE did not list fitness as a "mandatory" course because the statutory language suggests that while all students are held accountable for meeting health and fitness standards, students do not necessarily need to have fitness credits to graduate. The SBE listed .5 credit of health as a mandatory course because the statute does not permit students to be excused from health.

Concerns have been expressed by some stakeholders that the portrayal of fitness as a "student choice" will lead more students to be excused from physical education courses.

Language in the SBE's current rule⁴ reads as follows:

(e) Two **health and fitness** credits that at minimum align with current essential academic learning requirements at grade ten and/or above plus content that is determined by the local school district. The assessment of achieved competence in this subject area is to be determined by the local district although state law requires districts to have "assessments or other strategies" in health and fitness at the high school level by 2008-09. The state superintendent's office has developed classroom-based assessment models for districts to use (RCW [28A.230.095](#)).

(i) The fitness portion of the requirement shall be met by course work in fitness education. The content of fitness courses shall be determined locally under WAC [180-51-025](#). Suggested fitness course outlines shall be developed by the office of the superintendent of public instruction. Students may be excused from the physical portion of the fitness requirement under RCW [28A.230.050](#). ***Such excused students shall be required to***

¹ [RCW 28A.230.050](#): All high schools of the state shall emphasize the work of physical education, and carry into effect all physical education requirements established by rule of the superintendent of public instruction: PROVIDED, That individual students may be excused from participating in physical education otherwise required under this section on account of physical disability, employment, or religious belief, or because of participation in directed athletics or military science and tactics or for other good cause.

² [RCW 28A.210.365](#)

³ [RCW 28A.150.210](#)

⁴ [WAC 180-51-066](#)

substitute equivalency credits in accordance with policies of boards of directors of districts, including demonstration of the knowledge portion of the fitness requirement.
[emphasis added]

(ii) "Directed athletics" shall be interpreted to include community-based organized athletics.

For purposes of discussion, two statements are contrasted below. Which statement best describes the SBE's intent for fitness?

Fitness intent #1: Retain the spirit of the SBE's current rule language which requires excused students to meet fitness standards and substitute equivalency credits in accordance with policies of district school boards.

Fitness intent #2: Retain the spirit of the SBE's current rule language which requires excused students to meet fitness standards, but permit students to substitute courses other than fitness for the fitness credits, as long as the courses substituted are consistent with the educational and career goals expressed in a student's high school and beyond plan.

Local waivers of up to 2 credits: In order to give students every opportunity to learn required knowledge and skills, the SBE provided flexibility for students to retake classes, if necessary, within the context of a regular school day by giving local administrators flexibility to waive up to two of the required 24 credits. In effect, this means that some students may graduate with as few as 22 credits. Because students cannot graduate without the "mandatory"⁵ credits, practically speaking, this means that students who failed mandatory courses will not take 1-2 "student choice" classes in order to create room in their schedule to recover the failed classes.

Clarification of the SBE's intent will help direct the language for the rule. For purposes of discussion, two statements are presented below. Which statement best describes the conditions that would enable students to graduate with 22 or 23 credits? Or would both statements apply?

Waiver Rationale #1: Local administrators may waive up to 2 of the required 24 credits for students who failed 1-2 courses and retook them for credit. Students may not graduate without earning credit in the mandatory courses.

Waiver Rationale #2: Local administrators may waive up to 2 of the required 24 credits for students who failed 1-2 "student choice"⁶ courses, but didn't retake them for credit. (For instance, if a student fails a student choice class, does the student need to retake that same class? Can the student take another class of interest as long as it is consistent with his or her high school and beyond plan? Or can the student just graduate with 23 credits?)

Quantitative class in the senior year: The SBE has deliberately structured the career and college ready requirements to more closely align with Washington's minimum four-year public college admission requirements, or College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs). One of the CADR requirements is a quantitative credit (math or science) earned in the senior year. The SBE

⁵ Mandatory credits are English, math, science, social studies, arts, occupational education, and health.

⁶ Student choice courses are arts, world languages, fitness, career concentration, and electives.

has made no mention of a quantitative credit in the senior year. Is it the intent of the Board to include this expectation in the rule when describing the automatic enrollment requirements?

SECTION TWO: HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND PLAN AND CULMINATING PROJECT

The Meaningful High School Diploma (MHSD) Advisory Committee recommended changes to the High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) and culminating project to increase consistency in implementation across districts, and explicitly connect the high school and beyond plan and the culminating project. Both requirements went into effect for the graduating class of 2008.

Reactions to the proposed changes to the HSBP and culminating project were solicited as part of the online survey, which will remain available until November 1. Staff will provide a summary of the responses at the November meeting.

High School and Beyond Plan. The HSBP proposal is presented below. In response to a Board member's request, a few examples of current high school and beyond plans are included in the SBE's "FYI" folder.⁷

High School and Beyond Plan⁸ Proposal

The student's post-high school goals and interests, as expressed in the high school and beyond plan, shall become the basis for the student's culminating project. All students shall be required to complete a personally-relevant high school and beyond plan that includes reflective practice and shall include documentation (evidence) of a student's:

1. Personal interests and career goals.
2. Four-year plan for course-taking that is related to the student's interests and goals.
3. Research on postsecondary training and education related to one's career interest, including comparative information on the benefits and costs of available choices.
4. Budget for postsecondary education or training and life based on personal and career interest.
5. Participation in a postsecondary site visit(s). (The committee talked about including the possibility of "virtual tours" of postsecondary institutions in lieu of actual visits).
6. Completion of an application for postsecondary education and training.
7. Completion of a resume.

Although not explicitly part of the HSBP proposal recommendation, the list of events reinforces an expectation that the SBE has discussed repeatedly, and may want to reinforce: The HSBP is a dynamic *process*—rather than simply a checklist *product*—revisited, and if needed, revised regularly over the course of a student's secondary experience.

Culminating Project. The SBE's intent for the culminating project is expressed currently in rule, which states:

Each student shall complete a culminating project for graduation. The project shall consist of the students demonstrating both their learning competencies and preparations related to

⁷ Thanks to OSPI staff Mike Hubert and Danise Ackelson for collecting the example plans.

⁸ Each student shall have an education plan for their high school experience, including what they expect to do the year following graduation.(WAC 180.51.066)

*learning goals three and four*⁹. Each district shall define the process to implement this graduation requirement, including assessment criteria, in written district policy. (WAC 180-51-066)

The MHSD Advisory Committee proposed the following changes to the culminating project. The SBE is asked to consider the recommended changes and, time permitting, come to agreement on them. If time is short, the discussion can be tabled until January.

Culminating Project¹⁰ Proposal

1. All students shall be required to complete a project or series of projects for graduation that is related to the student's post-high school goals and interests per their high school and beyond plan.
2. The project(s) shall include a portfolio, a presentation, and a product. The project(s) may also include, for example: a research or reflective paper, community service, job shadowing, internship, or other components deemed appropriate by the district.
3. The project(s) shall demonstrate the application of core academic skills and learning competencies from each of the following categories:
 - Learning and innovation skills (creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem-solving, communication and collaboration).
 - Information, media, and technology skills.
 - Life and career skills (flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability, financial literacy, leadership and responsibility, perseverance).
4. Assessment of skills and successful completion of the project shall be determined by the local school district.

NEXT STEPS

⁹ Think analytically, logically, and creatively, and to integrate different experiences and knowledge to form reasoned judgments and solve problems; and (4) Understand the importance of work and finance and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future career and educational opportunities.

¹⁰ Culminating project current rule: (i) *Each student shall complete a culminating project for graduation. The project shall consist of the students demonstrating both their learning competencies and preparations related to learning goals three and four. Each district shall define the process to implement this graduation requirement, including assessment criteria, in written district policy. (WAC 180-51-066)*

The following table summarizes the anticipated actions the SBE will take in the next six months to move the graduation requirements framework through the legislative¹¹ and rule-making process.

Time Period	Action
November-December 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review OSPI fiscal analysis. • Approve final graduation requirements framework resolution. • Advocate with Quality Education Council (QEC) for graduation requirements to be included among the priorities that the QEC agrees on December 14-15 2010 to forward to the 2011 Legislature. • Meet with Higher Education Coordinating Board and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to discuss common priorities and legislative strategies. • Meet with key legislators to discuss SBE proposal. • Draft legislation for introduction into 2011 session.
January-May 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with legislators on proposed SBE bill to authorize graduation requirements changes and appropriate funding for those with fiscal impact.
March 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and approve draft rules for graduation requirements changes.
May 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold public hearing on draft rules; give final approval, subject to legislative action.

EXPECTED ACTION. Adopt the resolution (Attachment A).

¹¹ The Legislature has the opportunity to act on SBE changes to the high school graduation requirements before SBE adopts its administrative rule. Changes that have a fiscal impact on school districts will have a fiscal analysis conducted by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Graduation requirements that have a fiscal impact shall take effect only if formally authorized and funded by the Legislature (RCW [28A.230.090](#)). The SBE is committed to no additional, unfunded mandates, and will develop its administrative rule based upon Legislative action in 2011. The SBE will receive a fiscal analysis from OSPI at the November meeting.

**RESOLUTION TO APPROVE WASHINGTON STATE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS:
CAREER AND COLLEGE READY**

WHEREAS, Washington's Basic Education Act has stated that school districts must provide instruction of sufficient quantity and quality and give students the opportunity to complete graduation requirements that are intended to prepare them for postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship, and

WHEREAS, Preparation for postsecondary education, gainful employment and citizenship requires a systemic effort on the part of all levels of education, and

WHEREAS, The State Board of Education has the authority to establish high school graduation requirements, and

WHEREAS, Despite the evolution to a greater global society in the past 25 years, Washington students in the graduating class of 2011 are graduating under the same credit requirements expected for the graduating class of 1985, and

WHEREAS, The State Board of Education has determined over a three-year period of study that Washington's current state graduation requirements need to be strengthened so that students are prepared for the education and training needed to earn a credential beyond high school considered necessary for most living-wage jobs in the 21st century, and

WHEREAS, Washington State is in the bottom 20 percent of all states in participation of students ages 18-24 in education beyond high school, particularly low-income students, and Washington State American Indian, Black and Hispanic high school graduates are less likely to go directly to college, and

WHEREAS, Washington State graduation requirements for English, science, and social studies are significantly lower than the majority of other states, and

WHEREAS, The State Board of Education has listened to stakeholders and the recommendations of its Core 24 Implementation Task Force and revised its graduation credit requirements proposal in response to the feedback received,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT The State Board of Education is approving a new set of career and college-ready graduation requirements in which all students will be automatically enrolled:

English: 4
Math: 3
Science: 3 (2 labs)
Social Studies: 3 (including .5 credit of civics)
Health: .5
Occupational Education: 1
Arts: 2* (substitution allowed for one credit)
World Languages: 2*
Fitness: 1.5*
Career Concentration: 2*
Electives: 2*

Subjects that are asterisked have flexibility for substitutions, either because of state law (e.g., fitness) or because the SBE is allowing students to make choices that will enable them to pursue courses more consistent with the educational and career goals expressed in their high school and beyond plans. Up to two of the 24 credits may be waived by local administrators if students need to retake courses to fulfill the state requirements. It is the SBE's intention, after the 2011 legislative session, to put those policy changes with no fiscal impact into effect by the graduating class of 2016, and to put those policy changes with fiscal impact into effect pending legislative approval and funding.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT The State Board of Education will make changes to the high school and beyond plan and the culminating project to assure greater consistency of implementation across districts, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT The State Board of Education will enact additional policies to create more flexibility for districts to help students meet the graduation requirements:

1. Remove the 150 hour definition of a credit and permit districts to establish policies that specify how they will know students have successfully completed the state's subject area content expectations sufficiently to earn a credit.
2. Establish a "two for one" policy to enable students to take a CTE-equivalent course and satisfy two requirements
3. Start the high school and beyond plan in middle school.
4. Make Washington State History and Government a non-credit requirement that must be successfully passed and noted met on the student transcript

Jeff Vincent, Chair

Date