

## STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**HEARING TYPE:**     \_\_\_X\_\_\_ ACTION

**DATE:**             March 26-27, 2008

**SUBJECT:**         **MEANINGFUL HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA**

**SERVICE UNIT:**    Ms. Edie Harding, Executive Director  
State Board of Education

**PRESENTER:**        Mr. Eric Liu, Board Lead  
Dr. Kathe Taylor, Policy Director  
State Board of Education

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Board established July 2008 as its target for action on proposed graduation requirements for two reasons. First, the Board needs to have sufficient time to prepare its recommended budget request for local district implementation of graduation requirements by September 2008. This budget request will be submitted to the Governor for the 2009 legislative session. Second, the Board would like to provide budget information to the joint Basic Education Funding Task Force, as well.

In order to meet that July target, the Board is asked to approve a draft credit framework that can be presented to stakeholders for feedback.

The credit framework is presented as two options that could be considered independently or together. For the purpose of this draft, the options are labeled "Core 24" and "Core 24 Plan A." Either option can stand alone. Alternatively, Core 24 could become a "default" set of requirements in which all students are automatically enrolled, with Core 24 Plan A as an alternative set of requirements that *some* students elect under clearly defined circumstances.

### **EXPECTED ACTION:**

Staff recommends that the Board take the following actions:

1. Amend the credit frameworks, if needed.
2. Approve one or both draft credit framework options to be considered for public feedback.
3. If both options go forward, declare whether they are to be considered independently of each other, or as a package, with Core 24 as the default curriculum and Core 24 Plan A as an alternative set of requirements available to students under certain circumstances, yet to be defined.
4. Clarify whether the third credit math option to choose an alternative to Algebra II applies to both the Core 24 and the Core 24 Plan A requirements.
5. Agree to convene a work session on April 22, 2008 to consider policy questions associated with the High School and Beyond Plan, Culminating Project, competency-based credit and essential skills.



Washington State  
Board of Education



*Working to Raise Student Achievement Dramatically*

## Meaningful High School Diploma

**Please see separate document for revised draft credit framework released by the Board March 27, 2008.**

### BACKGROUND

In 2006, the Legislature<sup>1</sup> directed the Board to develop and propose a revised definition of the purpose and expectations for high school diplomas issued by public schools. The Board expanded this task to a review of all graduation requirements, including the credit requirements that had not changed since 1985. Building upon 2003 rule language that affirmed the Board's commitment to "high, meaningful and fair requirements every student can meet,"<sup>2</sup> the Board established a Meaningful High School Diploma committee of Board members and an advisory committee of stakeholders to assist with the work, which began in early 2007.

An initial discussion of credit requirements came before the Board in July 2007. The draft became a catalyst for conversation about the principles that the Board would use to drive its reconsideration of graduation requirements. The Board extended its internal timetable to complete its work on proposed new graduation requirements to the summer of 2008, and gathered feedback on the guiding principles during public outreach in fall 2007. Those guiding principles included the concept of one diploma for all, and the consideration of essential skills; competency-based learning and equivalency credits; alignment with postsecondary education requirements; and an integrated package of requirements.

Three themes emerged from the public outreach, including support for: 1) one diploma for all; 2) flexibility within the curriculum for students to choose different pathways; and 3) funding for new requirements.

All of these factors informed the Board's thinking about the purpose of a diploma and directions for the meaningful high school diploma work.

### PURPOSE OF A DIPLOMA

In January 2008, the Board approved a statement of purpose for a diploma, which will guide its review of the current high school graduation requirements.

<sup>1</sup> E2SHB 3098 of the 2006 Legislative session

<sup>2</sup> WAC 180-51-003 -- see appendix A for entire rule

*The purpose of the diploma is to declare that a student is ready for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship, and is equipped with the skills to be a lifelong learner. The diploma represents a balance between the personalized education needs of each student and society's needs, and reflects at its core the state's basic education goals. The diploma is a compact among students, parents, local school districts, the state and whatever institution or employer the graduate moves on to—a compact that says the graduate has acquired a particular set of knowledge and skills. How the student demonstrates those skills may differ. Whether a student earns credit by participating in formal instruction or by demonstrating competency through established district policies is immaterial; they are equally acceptable.*

## **TIMETABLE**

The Board established July 2008 as its target for action on proposed graduation requirements for two reasons. First, the Board needs to have sufficient time to prepare its recommended budget request for local district implementation of graduation requirements by September 2008. This budget request will be submitted to the Governor for the 2009 legislative session. Second, the Board would like to provide budget information to the joint Basic Education Finance Joint Task Force, as well.

In order to meet that July target and allow time to gather critical feedback from stakeholders, staff recommends the timetable outlined on the following page.

## **RETHINKING GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

State-mandated graduation requirements, supplemented by local requirements, can be viewed in two ways: *minimum* requirements that establish a floor—the least a student needs to do—or *fundamental* requirements that signal what is essential to prepare a student for the world beyond high school.

The concept of one diploma for all supports the idea that *all* students should be held to common, high expectations, a viewpoint more in keeping with the view of graduation requirements as fundamental. Research indicates that “a student's chances of completing high school and enrolling in and completing a postsecondary program of study improve when the student completes a rigorous high school curriculum.”<sup>3</sup> While graduation requirements do not address curriculum, they call attention to critical areas of study.

That said, they do so within an imperfect framework—credits that are commonly (although not exclusively) defined as seat time. In Washington, 150 instructional hours equals one credit. Most states use the Carnegie unit-based framework, which means that the array of graduation requirements looks very similar across states. There is a set list of subjects that includes in every state English, mathematics, science and social studies, and in some states arts, electives, health and fitness, occupational education, and world languages. A designated number of

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<sup>3</sup> Courses Count: Preparing Students for Postsecondary Success. ACT Policy Brief. 2004.

## Proposed Timetable: March – July 2008

Dates	Task	Board Action	Policy Questions
			<i>These policy questions pervade all discussions of graduation requirements. Staff will provide background on these issues in the coming months.</i>
March 26-27, 2008	Consider recommendations for credit frameworks; discuss personalization, competency-based opportunities	Approve one or more credit frameworks to vet with stakeholders	<p>What package of credits will maximize opportunities for students post high school?</p> <p>What mechanisms would support greater personalization?</p> <p>What would encourage more competency-based learning?</p>
April- May 2008	Feedback from key stakeholders: superintendents, school board directors, principals, counselors, teachers, students, parents, and business (group meetings, web-based surveys)		<p>What implementation factors should the Board consider?</p> <p>What policy levers would help middle school students prepare for high school more intentionally?</p>
April 22, 2008	Work session on high school and beyond plan and culminating project; competency-based opportunities; middle school connections	No action	How does the culminating project and high school and beyond plan help students meet the purpose of a diploma? How do they help students personalize their educational experience?
May 15-16, 2008	Review of public feedback, consideration of revised credit frameworks, and consideration of high school and beyond plan and culminating project		<p>How do we connect graduation requirements into an integrated, comprehensive package?</p> <p>How are essential skills reflected in an integrated package?</p>
July 23-24, 2008	Make any final revisions	Approve graduation requirements	

credits (Carnegie units) is assigned to each subject. States require as few as 12 total credits to as many as 26, with the majority (39) requiring 20 credits or more.<sup>4</sup>

### **WORK SESSION ON CREDIT FRAMEWORKS: FEBRUARY 25, 2008**

The February 25, 2008 work session was structured to provide guidance to staff about what the Board would like to see in the credit frameworks brought forward at the March meeting for the Board to discuss and approve for public feedback. A comprehensive packet of materials was sent, in advance, to provide background information on each graduation requirement subject area. The meeting was attended by nine Board members, advisory committee members, and Office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) staff. Notes from that meeting are appended to this document (see Appendix B).

After discussing policy levers and subject matter requirements, the Board considered two draft options for credit frameworks. Members directed staff to bring back a 24-credit version that would incorporate suggestions that had emerged from the discussion, particularly the placement of arts (because it is one of the eight essential subjects) as a separate requirement and the addition of flexibility, where possible, with electives.

### **DRAFT CREDIT FRAMEWORK**

The Board is asked to take action on a draft credit framework that can be reviewed by key stakeholders in the spring. The framework does not consider the role of two current requirements, the high school and beyond plan and the culminating project, nor does it speak to the concept of essential skills, all topics to be addressed at the next Board work session in late April and meeting in May.

Embedded in the framework are key decisions that will need to be made to establish the policy framework for graduation requirements. Those decisions are raised in a series of questions posed after the framework is presented.

Within this framework are two options that can be viewed independently, or as a package.

Viewed independently:

**Core 24** maximizes postsecondary opportunities by assuring that all students follow a pathway that keeps all of their options open.

**Core 24 Plan A** directs electives so that students follow a postsecondary pathway that best meets their interests, educational, and career goals.

Viewed as a package:

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<sup>4</sup> Colorado is an exception, as it has only a .5 credit state history requirement. However, Colorado is currently studying the possibility of adding a full slate of requirements. The median total credits required by states are 22.5.

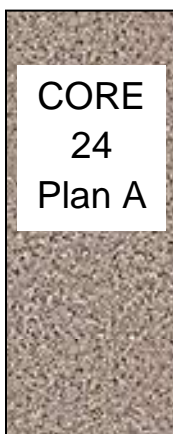
**Core 24 Default + Core 24 Plan A** enrolls all students automatically in Core 24, putting them on a trajectory to meet all public four-year minimum admissions requirements, with the stipulation that, under certain conditions (yet to be defined, but similar to the process the Board is following for the math election), students could choose Plan A. The term, “default,” is widely used around the country to signal requirements that are selected automatically unless an alternative is specified.

Thus, the frameworks coming before the Board look graphically like this:



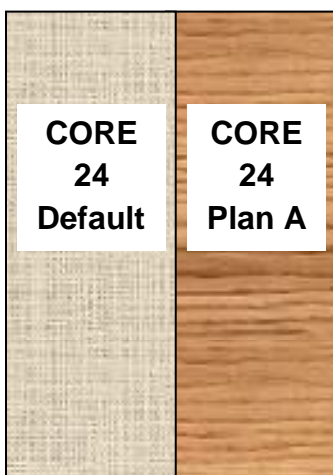
Core 24 enrolls all students in courses that will put them on a path to meet minimum entry requirements of all Washington public postsecondary institutions, if that is a direction they choose; electives provide opportunity to pursue career or academic interests.

- Advantage: Requires no specialized knowledge of college entry requirements—all students are automatically enrolled; maximizes opportunities—students are prepared for two- and four-year college entry, and workplace
- Disadvantage: May raise expectations beyond what some students or systems are capable of or interested in.



Core 24 Plan A enrolls all students in courses that *could* put them on a path to meet minimum entry requirements of all Washington public postsecondary institutions, if that is a direction they choose; directed electives in CTE, world language, and arts provide opportunities to pursue different pathways (apprenticeship, two- and four-year colleges, etc.).

- Advantage: Provides more flexibility to pursue different educational or career interests
- Disadvantage: Students may realize too late that the pathway they are on has not prepared them for their educational or career goals; relies more heavily on effective and timely career guidance



In this “package” scenario, Core 24 is the default set of requirements in which all students are enrolled, with the stipulation that, under certain conditions (yet to be defined, but similar to the process the Board is following for the math election), students could choose Core 24 Plan A.

- Advantage: Requires no specialized knowledge of postsecondary entry requirements—all students are automatically enrolled; potentially maximizes opportunities—students are prepared for two- and four-year college entry, and workplace; allows for individual student choice, within parameters
- Disadvantage: Puts greater responsibility on student, parent, and school to elect a pathway tailored to a student’s goals

## **DECISION POINTS EMBEDDED IN CREDIT FRAMEWORK**

Embedded in any credit framework are decision points that will “determine the parameters of the graduation policy.”<sup>5</sup> Many of these questions have been discussed at previous Board meetings and at the Board’s February 25 work session. The questions are listed below to review prior to considering the draft framework, and then are revisited in the context of the framework.

1. Will the new requirements be mandatory for all students, or will there be provisions for students to meet alternative requirements? If so, under what conditions can students opt for the alternative requirements?
2. In what subjects must all students earn credit in order to be well prepared for success in postsecondary education, work, and citizenship?
3. How many credits should be state-mandated?
4. What is the role of competency-based credit?
5. What ways are there to connect high school graduation requirements with middle school preparation?
6. What possibilities for multiple pathways do the graduation requirements allow, in order for students to personalize their experiences?
7. What implementation issues need to be considered?

## **EXPECTED ACTION**

Not all of the above questions will need to be acted upon at the March meeting. Staff recommends that the Board take the following actions to move the work forward:

1. Amend the credit frameworks, if needed.
2. Approve one or both credit framework options to be considered for public feedback.
3. If both options go forward, declare whether they are to be considered independently of each other, or as a package, with Core 24 as the default curriculum and Core 24 Plan A as an alternative set of requirements available to students under certain circumstances, yet to be defined.
4. Clarify whether the third credit math option to choose an alternative to Algebra II applies to both the Core 24 and the Core 24 Plan A requirements.
5. Agree to convene a work session on April 22, 2008 to consider policy questions associated with the High School and Beyond Plan, Culminating Project, competency-based credit and essential skills.

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<sup>5</sup> *Aligning High School Graduation Requirements with the Real World*. December 2007. Achieve, Inc.

## DRAFT GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS CREDIT FRAMEWORK

Subject	Current 19 Credits	HECB Min. 15 Credits <sup>6</sup>	Core 24	Core 24 Plan A
English	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Math	2.0	3.0 (1 in senior year)	3.0 (1 in senior year)	3.0
Science	2.0 (1 lab)	2.0 (2 lab)	3.0 (2 lab)	3.0 (2 lab)
Social Studies	2.5	3.0	3.0	3.0
Fitness**	2.0	0	1.5	1.5
Health		0	.5	.5
Arts	1.0	1*	1.0	1.0
Occupational Education	1.0	0	0	0
World Language	0	2.0	2.0***	7.0
Electives	5.5	0	5.0	<b>Directed Electives (4):</b> <i>Choose credits from CTE, World Language, and/or Arts, consistent with High School and Beyond Plan</i> <b>Free Electives (3)</b>
Culminating Project/High School & Beyond Plan	0	0	1.0	1.0

\*The HECB permits students to substitute any other CADR for the arts credit. However, the University of Washington and Western Washington University require .5 credits of fine arts.

\*\*Health and fitness credits are separated to reflect current practice in many districts and the recommendation of OSPI Health and Fitness staff. In part this is an implementation issue: current statute (RCW 28A.230.250) permits physical education—but not health—to be waived, making it more difficult to define what percentage of the credits can be waived when the credits are combined.

\*\*\*Students could earn credit beginning in middle school, either through formal instruction or by establishing competency.

<sup>6</sup> Higher Education Coordinating Board minimum core course entry requirements to four-year public colleges in Washington. These requirements are known as College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs).



## DECISION POINTS EMBEDDED IN CREDIT FRAMEWORK

Many of the following questions have been previously discussed, and are revisited in the context of the draft credit framework presented below.

### 1. Will the new requirements be mandatory for all students, or will there be provisions for students to meet alternative requirements? If so, under what conditions can students opt for the alternative requirements?

In the draft credit framework presented above, the two options could be considered separately or as a package. In the “package” scenario, Core 24 could be the pathway in which all students would enroll automatically, with the stipulation that, under certain conditions (yet to be defined), students could choose Plan A. If the Board approves the “package” scenario, it will need to consider whether the option for the third credit of math applies to both pathways, or only to Plan A.

Eleven of 17 states<sup>7</sup> that have raised graduation requirements have instituted a default set of requirements in which all students are automatically enrolled, with an alternative set of requirements that some students can pursue under certain circumstances. Each state describes these options differently. Here are three examples.

- South Dakota enrolls students in the **advanced graduation requirements** unless students, with parent and school permission, opt for the **standard graduation requirements**. Students are automatically enrolled in the advanced course of study, but students can change to the standard requirements at any time. Parents must give permission in writing for students to take the more basic requirements. Although the total credit requirements are the same for both options, students take less rigorous math, one less credit of science, and one credit more elective.
- Texas enrolls students in the **recommended high school program** unless “the student, the student's parent or other persons standing in parental relation to the student, and a school counselor or school administrator agree that the student should be permitted to take courses under the **minimum high school program**.”<sup>8</sup> The recommended curriculum has more credits (26 vs. 22), more—and more rigorous—math credits (4 vs. 3), more—and more prescribed—science credits (4 vs. 2), and required world language (2 credits).
- Michigan will enroll students in the **Michigan Merit Curriculum** unless the student opts for a **personal curriculum**. “Before it takes effect, the personal curriculum must be agreed to by the pupil's parent or legal guardian and by the superintendent of the school district or chief executive of the public school academy or his or her designee.”<sup>9</sup> The personal curriculum could allow a student to take one semester less of Algebra II, and substitute, within limits, other academic courses for credits in social studies, health and fitness, and the arts.

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<sup>7</sup> *State College- and Work-Ready High School Graduation Requirements*. December 2007. Achieve, Inc.

<sup>8</sup> Texas Education Code. Chapter 74: Curriculum Requirements. Subchapter F. Graduation Requirements, Beginning with School Year 2007-2008.

<sup>9</sup> Michigan Law. MCL 380.1278b(S)c.

Generally, the rationale for an alternative slate of requirements is that it provides a choice, but not a choice that students can make impulsively. States that select this option generally intend for the majority of students to enroll in the default curriculum. In Oklahoma, 13 percent of students opted out of the **College Preparatory/Work Ready Curriculum** and into the **Core Curriculum** in the first year of implementation; ten percent of Arkansas high school students opted out of the **Smart Core Curriculum** for the **Common Core Curriculum**.<sup>10</sup>

One concern is that alternative requirements could become a track that certain groups of students are more likely to pursue—or are encouraged to pursue. If a default approach was adopted, and the Board was to conduct a study on the impact of revised graduation requirements, patterns of participation would be an important area of consideration.

## 2. In what subjects must all students earn credit in order to be well prepared for success in postsecondary education, work, and citizenship?

At the February 25 work session, the Board reviewed information specific to each subject area. Differences in the ways the two options treat the different subjects are outlined in the table below.

Subject	Difference Between Options
English, Science, Social Studies, Health, Fitness, Arts, Unrestricted Electives	No difference
Math	The Board would need to decide if students could elect a math alternative other than Algebra II or its equivalent in both pathways, or only in Plan A. HECB minimum college requirements specify math through Algebra II and math in the senior year.
Occupational Education	Students could choose occupational education or career and technical education courses in either option. However, students could also choose <u>not</u> to take any occupational education or career and technical education courses in either option if they could make a case that the choices available in their school were not consistent with their High School and Beyond Plan.
World Language	All students would earn two credits or establish competency under the Core 24 option. Students could elect to earn credit or establish competency under Plan A.
Electives	Two different approaches are presented, and a third could be considered. The Core 24 option allows students free choice of electives. Plan A allows some free choice, but also directs students to choose electives from Career and Technical Education, World Languages, and/or Arts—whichever are most consistent with the academic and career pathway outlined in their high school and beyond plan. A third approach would be to limit free choice in Core 24 and specify that some electives should be consistent with the academic and career pathway outlined in students' high school and beyond plans.

<sup>10</sup> *Aligning High School Graduation Requirements with the Real World*. December 2007. Achieve, Inc.

## Tribal Leader Congress on Education Resolution

The Board has been asked by the Tribal Leader Congress on Education to consider requiring .5 credit of local Tribal history. Some discussion about this issue took place at the February 25 work session, and discussion will continue at the Board's May meeting; no decision has been made at this time.

## Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan

Staff is in the process of analyzing districts' approaches and perspectives on the Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan, and will present them to the Board at the work session in April. A cursory review indicates that views differ widely on the issue of credit for these requirements, in part because some districts have already incorporated the requirements into existing classes. As the Board seeks input on the credit framework, the pros and cons of assigning credit to these currently non-credited requirements should be sought.

### **3. How many credits should be state-mandated?**

At the February 25 work session, Board members discussed a 24-credit option. Twenty-four credits is:

- The average number of credits Washington districts currently require.
- The number of credits typically earned by students attending schools that have a six-period day.
- Required by 11 other states (AL, FL, HI, LA, MS, MO, ND, OR, SC, UT, WV) and the District of Columbia.
- Exceeded nationally only by Texas, which requires 26 credits for the recommended high school program.

The 24 credits raise two issues. First, although the state does not fund by credits, a twenty-four credit requirement will have a fiscal impact on local districts (see table on next page for a primer on funding and graduation requirements). The median number of credits required by Washington's 246 districts with high schools is 22. Second, graduation requirements cannot be waived unless specified in rule. *In order to graduate on time, and within the academic year, students would need to earn every credit; there is no safety net for failure.*<sup>11</sup>

Background materials presented for the work session provided information about national and local credit trends in each subject area. Notes from that meeting, appended to this document, summarize the recommendations of OSPI subject matter experts for credits in each area, many of which are reflected in the number of credits specified in the draft framework.

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<sup>11</sup> Students who lack credits can participate in credit retrieval opportunities during the regular school year, during the summer, before or after school, or online.

**Table 1**  
**Funding and Graduation Requirements**

Calvin W. Brodie, Director of School Apportionment and Financial Services  
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

*In response to questions posed by SBE staff, Cal Brodie provided the following information.*

**1. What is the relationship between high school graduation credit requirements and funding? For example, the state requires 19 credits; some districts require 20 credits; others require 30. How can these all co-exist?**

- *State funding for K-12 is based upon the number of hours a student is enrolled. For high school students, 25 hours a week enrollment equals 1.0 FTE. Student FTE is based on “seat-time.” OSPI does not allow for credit hours earned in the high school to be converted to an enrollment hour basis—with a single exception. Credit hour conversion is provided solely for college programs like Running Start or other programs provided under contract by a college. What this means in practice is that students who earn credit by “testing out” of a class are not counted toward the total student FTE. (see question #4) It also means that a school cannot use the credits that a class generates as a basis for claiming FTE. It is always going to be seat-time based. A class that generates one credit is assumed to be one hour a day all year. With the variances in schedules that is not always accurate. One class could be 55 minutes, another would be 65 minutes. Although each may generate a single credit they would generate a different result in the FTE calculation.*
- *State funding is based upon the quantity of time a student is enrolled. The State Board of Education requirements for credits and other areas speak to a minimum quality standard. An analogy would be a 40 hour work week standard (quantity) versus a job description of what must be done during the 40 hours (quality).*

**2. People say the state funds a five period day: What does that mean and is there any truth to it?**

- *The state Basic Education Allocation (BEA) funding is maximized based upon student enrollment for five hours a day. The state funding formula provides 46 FTE Certificated Instructional Staff for each 1,000 student FTE. The state does not define class size or other factors that would limit the utilization of these funds, and the underlying staff units provided, to only five hours a day.*
- *Each local district defines the contract hours for a teacher FTE in their district.*

**3. If the state raises graduation requirements from 19, what implications does that have for local districts?**

- *For districts that would have to provide additional course offerings/credits beyond what they are currently requiring, it would require them to extend or modify the current school day. These changes could result in additional costs for the districts for staff by way of additional teachers, contracting for a longer teacher work day, or buying out current teacher planning periods.*
- *For districts that are using local option to already require these additional credits then there may be no change or impact to the current district schedule and costs.*

**4. What is the relationship between funding and competency-based credits?**

- *There is no funding provided for competency-based credits. Actual staff time spent with the student for testing and evaluation may be included in the determination of a student’s FTE. On a practical basis this would apply only to part-time students that are not being fully claimed.*

#### 4. What is the role of competency-based credit?

Competencies are generally perceived to be a cluster of knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes that can be measured against well-accepted standards. The concept of awarding credit for competencies is attractive because it can help students:

- 1) Demonstrate expertise they have already gained.
- 2) Free time in their schedule to pursue other interests.
- 3) Apply learning (depending upon the nature of the assessment used to demonstrate competency).

Some subjects may lend themselves more readily to the award of competency-based credit because standardized assessments are widespread. World language is an example of one such subject.

Thirty-four states, including Washington, have policies about competency- or proficiency-based credit. The Board has supported the concept of competency-based credit for at least five years, as described in rule in the Board's education reform vision<sup>12</sup>, intent of graduation requirements<sup>13</sup> and high school credit definitions.<sup>14</sup> (See appendix A for copies of the first two rules). Credits earned by demonstrating competency must be in keeping with local district policies.

However, earning credits for competencies is easier said than done, for a variety of reasons. Competency-based credit:

- 1) Is resource-intensive.
- 2) Requires reliable and valid assessments aligned with standards.
- 3) May be costly to districts (if students use competencies to accelerate their learning and finish more quickly, schools lose funding).
- 4) Is complex to define, communicate, and transcript.

**Course equivalencies.** Similarly, what Washington calls course equivalencies, and what other states call "interdisciplinary courses" (KY), or "contextual academics" (TN) opens up the possibility that students could take courses in applied settings (e.g., career and technical education or CTE) and earn credit either for the CTE content or for the traditional academic content contained in the course. Both Kentucky<sup>15</sup> and Tennessee have established curriculum

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<sup>12</sup> WAC 180-51-001

<sup>13</sup> WAC 180-51-003

<sup>14</sup> WAC 180-51-050

<sup>15</sup> The 2003 Kentucky high school graduation requirements allow for interdisciplinary or applied courses to substitute for specific academic courses. Kentucky has developed a Construction Geometry course. For students to receive a required math credit for the geometry core content taught in the construction technology program, an interdisciplinary construction technology/geometry course has been developed. Curriculum is posted on the Department of Education website to indicate the alignment of the 23 required Geometry Core Content Standards with the Construction task list. See <http://education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Career+and+Technical+Education/Interdisciplinary+Courses/>

at the state level for courses that combines theory and practice.<sup>16</sup> Course equivalencies are determined, in part, on the basis of competencies.

Washington is in the process of reviewing identified CTE curricula to determine “enhancement” or “equivalent” status, with the goal of developing criteria and creating a list of recommended CTE curricula (enhancement and equivalency).

Staff will prepare a policy brief on states’ approaches to competency-based credit for the April work session.

## **5. What ways are there to connect high school graduation requirements with middle school preparation?**

From the onset of discussions about graduation requirements, Board members have acknowledged the importance of connecting middle and high school experiences in meaningful ways. Several ideas have emerged and deserve to be explored more deeply with practitioners.

Are there courses required for high school graduation that could be completed in middle school?

**Middle school credit-earning courses.** Washington statute currently permits students to earn high school credit for middle school courses if:

(a) The course was taken with high school students, if the academic level of the course exceeds the requirements for seventh and eighth grade classes, and the student has successfully passed, by completing the same course requirements and examinations as the high school students enrolled in the class; or

(b) The academic level of the course exceeds the requirements for seventh and eighth grade classes and the course would qualify for high school credit, because the course is similar or equivalent to a course offered at a high school in the district as determined by the school district board of directors.<sup>17</sup>

The Higher Education Coordinating Board will accept math courses and world language courses taken in eighth grade if they were taught to high school standards. Could competency-based world language credits be earned even earlier? Whether it is feasible or practical for more students to earn credit in middle school is an issue the Board could explore with stakeholders.

**Middle school non-credit earning courses.** The Board could also consider identifying non-credit graduation requirements to be completed in middle school. Two suggestions for

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<sup>16</sup> For example, Tennessee has a course called Biology for Technology. This course presents biology concepts in the context of major life issues - work, home, society and the environment. About 40% of instructional time is spent in activities that allow students to have experiences in laboratory and field situations. The standards for this course have been aligned with the standards for Biology I. Teachers must be biology certified. Five days of state training are required. Biology for Technology is awarded a laboratory science credit for high school graduation requirements. Biology for Technology students must pass the Gateway exam in Biology to meet high school graduation requirements. See <http://www.state.tn.us/education/cte/ca/>

<sup>17</sup> RCW 28A.230.090

“completion requirements” were made at the work session. The first was to require that Washington State History, which is usually taught in middle school at a seventh-grade level, be completed, but not for credit. This action would require the Board to amend the rule<sup>18</sup> that stipulates .5 credit of Washington State History. The second was to require a course in the arts of all middle school students. Other subjects (e.g., world language) could be considered, as well.

**Other middle school connections.** The High School and Beyond Plan might present another opportunity for connecting to the middle school.

## **6. What possibilities for multiple pathways do the graduation requirements allow, in order for students to personalize their experiences?**

From a graduation requirements policy perspective, personalization is generally about creating opportunities for students to choose courses or learning strategies (e.g., online, competency-based) that enable them to tailor an educational program that suits their interests and goals. It is also about requirements that signal the importance of connecting school work with educational and career goals; a high school and beyond plan and culminating project can serve that purpose, depending on how they are implemented.

Twenty-five percent of the credits in Core 24 and 33 percent of the credits in Core 24 Plan A are assigned either to electives (five credits in Core 24; seven credits in Core 24 Plan A) or to the High School and Beyond Plan and Culminating Project (1). All provide opportunities for students to personalize their experiences.

## **7. What implementation issues need to be considered?**

Timing, funding, and system support issues will need to be considered.

**Timing.** When will the requirements take effect, and how will they be phased in to ensure equitable access and participation?

Once the Board has settled on the graduation requirements, it will need to determine whether all of the requirements will become effective at the same time (2013, at the earliest) or will be phased in.

**Funding.** Under what conditions will the Board support increased graduation requirements?

As mentioned earlier in this memorandum, stakeholders who attended the public outreach sessions in the fall expressed concern about unfunded mandates and the fiscal impact that increased graduation requirements would have on local districts. The Board has expressed its intent to put together a budget package for local district implementation of graduation requirements by September 2008. This budget request would be submitted to the Governor for the 2009 legislative session. The Board would like to provide budget information to the joint Basic Education Finance Joint Task Force, as well.

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<sup>18</sup> WAC 180-51-061

**System support.** What specific support will be needed to address different requirements?

At a minimum, the following issues will need to be considered.

**Effective career guidance systems.** Board members discussed at the work session the importance of effective career guidance systems like Navigation 101 that could help students personalize their experiences. Current statute<sup>19</sup> “encourages each middle school, junior high school, and high school to implement a comprehensive guidance and planning program for all students.” Per the Workforce Board’s recent report,<sup>20</sup> Navigation 101 is an intensive further education and career preparation and planning program that involves students, teachers, and parents. It usually starts in middle school and goes through the high school years but can start earlier. OSPI allocated \$6,440,000 of funding appropriated by the Legislature for the 2007-2009 biennium to increase the use of Navigation 101 in school districts across the state. The Navigation 101 curriculum is being implemented in 103 school districts and 221 schools. These include:

- 100 High Schools
- 15 7<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> Grade Programs
- 18 Alternative Schools
- 77 Middle Schools
- 11 Elementary Schools

These figures indicate that Navigation 101 is reaching students in approximately 22% of schools that include grades 9-12, and 22% of middle schools.<sup>21</sup>

**Recruitment, education, and training of additional math and science teachers.**

**Science lab support.** If an additional lab credit is required, what impact will that have?

## NEXT STEPS

Staff will meet with stakeholders in the next couple of months to solicit feedback and ideas on the seven policy questions listed in the decision points. A work session is planned for April 22 to explore issues related to the high school and beyond plan, culminating project, competency-based credit, and essential skills. Discussion about the TLC resolution will take place at the May meeting.

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<sup>19</sup> RCW 28A.600.045

<sup>20</sup> *High Skills, High Wages, the State Strategic Plan for Workforce Development*. Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board 2007 Annual Progress Report to the Legislature. Olympia, WA.

<sup>21</sup> These figures are approximate. The high school figure is based on the 354 high schools, 140 combination middle/junior/high schools, and 107 schools that serve most grade levels through high school (N=601). The middle school figure is based on the 357 middle/junior high schools. However, it is unclear how many of those middle/junior high schools include 9<sup>th</sup> grade.



**WAC 180-51-001 Education reform vision.**

(1) The state is shifting from a time and credit-based system of education to a standards and performance-based education system. Certain ways of thinking about time must shift in order to support the ongoing implementation of school reform. The board's long-term vision of a performance-based education system includes:

(a) No references to grade levels or linking a student's educational progress to a particular age. Instead, learning is viewed in terms of developmental progress, academically and vocationally, so that while the curriculum may be sequential the student moves through it at her or his developmental pace, regardless of age;

(b) An understanding that in the absence of other important information, a student's grade point average and performance on the Washington assessment of student learning do not provide a complete picture of the student's abilities and accomplishments;

(c) An understanding that our concept of school needs to expand and take into account that education and learning are about connected learning experiences, which can and do occur inside and outside the physical boundaries of a school building; and

(d) An understanding that students do not all learn in the same way (there are multiple learning styles), that teachers do not all instruct in the same way (there are multiple teaching styles and strategies), and these facts suggest that it should be possible to assess students' performance and achievement in multiple ways while maintaining common, high expectations and standards for learning.

(2) Long-term, as the performance-based education system continues to evolve, the state board of education believes that there should be an on-going review of assessment administration issues. The state board envisions a time when state assessments are administered during one or more assessment windows annually. During these times, students are allowed to take the appropriate norm-referenced or criterion-referenced state assessment based upon the collective determination by the student, the student's parent(s), teacher(s), and counselor that the student is developmentally ready to take the assessment, rather than because the student is a particular age or is in a particular grade.

## **WAC 180-51-003 Intent of graduation requirements.**

(1) The state board of education is responsible for establishing minimum high school graduation requirements that appropriately balance:

(a) Statewide public expectations for all graduating students;

(b) High, meaningful, and fair requirements every student can meet;

(c) The unique characteristics of and differing resources among all school districts and high schools in Washington; and

(d) Recognition that some students' educational plans may not include college or may include application for admission to a postsecondary institution one year or more after being granted a high school diploma.

(2) In order to support the continuing refinement of the standards and performance-based system of education, encourage and facilitate local innovation, and realize the vision under WAC 180-51-001, it is the intent of the state board of education to enact changes that will:

(a) Align the statewide minimum high school graduation requirements with the goal of the basic education act under RCW 28A.150.210 and the mission of the common school system under WAC 392-400-210;

(b) Allow districts the optional discretion to define and award high school credit based on demonstrated performance that is not tied to a state minimum number of hours of instruction or instructional activities;

(c) Assure that the essential academic learning requirements developed under RCW 28A.655.070(2) are taught in the high school curriculum;

(d) Assure that students are aware of the connection between their education and possible career opportunities as referenced in RCW 28A.150.210(4) and WAC 392-415-090; and

(e) Assure that students are provided the opportunity to effectively prepare for the secondary Washington assessment of student learning and earn the certificate of academic achievement required under RCW 28A.655.061(2) recognizing that the certificate of academic achievement, along with other state and local requirements, represents attainment of the knowledge and skills that are necessary for high school graduation.

(3) It is the state board's view that the creative development and application of integrated curriculum within existing resources will significantly facilitate the implementation of the graduation requirements under WAC 180-51-061. The board strongly encourages districts to:

(a) Implement curriculum that includes courses that incorporate the best applied, theoretical, academic or vocational features as authorized under RCW 28A.230.010;

(b) Emphasize the integration of academic and vocational education in educational pathways as required under RCW 28A.655.060 (3)(c); and

(c) Consider using the model curriculum integrating vocational and academic education as it is developed by the superintendent of public instruction under RCW 28A.300.235.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28A.230.090. 07-07-051, § 180-51-003, filed 3/14/07, effective 4/14/07; 00-23-032, § 180-51-003, filed 11/8/00, effective 12/9/00.]



Washington State  
Board of Education



*Working to Raise Student Achievement Dramatically*

## Meaningful High School Diploma Work Session Notes

February 25, 2008

**Board members present:** Terry Bergeson, Amy Bragdon, Steve Dal Porto, Bunker Frank, Linda Lamb, Eric Liu, Mary Jean Ryan, Jack Schuster, Warren Smith

**Advisory members present:** Arcella Hall, Bill Moore, Toni Pace, Ricardo Sanchez, Shep Siegel, Maureen Trantham

**OSPI staff present:** Lexie Domaradzki, Karen Hall, Denny Hurtado, Brian Jeffries, AnnRene Joseph, Mary McClellan, Lisa Rakoz, Barbara Tobias, Pam Tollefson

**Board staff present:** Edie Harding, Kathe Taylor

After a welcome and introductions, Board Lead Eric Liu asked Kathe Taylor to summarize the MHSD-related work accomplished since the last meeting of the Advisory Committee in October 2007. She highlighted three items:

1. Fall 2007 Public outreach. Three themes emerged: one diploma for all, no unfunded mandates, flexibility within the curriculum.
2. Board approval of a revised purpose of a diploma in January 2008.
3. Board progress on the legislative directive to add a credit of math and prescribe the content of those credits.

Eric affirmed that “words matter,” the importance of beginning with the end in mind, and beginning clearly with the purpose. He noted that the debates and discussion the Board had regarding the purpose of the diploma were substantive and meaningful, and framed the purpose of the work session as an opportunity to:

1. Sharpen our thinking as a Board and give staff clearer direction as to credit frameworks.
2. Tap the expertise of the advisors to help Board members think about changes, revisions, and additions that will have ripple effects through the system.

## LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

Eric posed the question: What are the broader, cross-cutting policy levers that could make ripple effect changes throughout the graduation requirements? For example:

- Competencies.
- Extending focus back to middle school.
- What would it mean to personalize learning?

*Following are running notes of the conversation, with a caveat that all details were not captured due to the limitations of the typist. Individuals are identified by the initials of their first and last names.*

LL: Would like to hear about subject-based examples of competencies; understand that one reason why competencies aren't pursued is that seat-time is funded.

BJ: There are more reasons why competency-based credits aren't pursued: 1) If students move forward on an accelerated pace, and therefore finish more quickly, schools lose funding; 2) Staff must take time to review curriculum and determine competencies and methods to assess; 3) In order to develop district-wide competencies, communication needs to take place across schools, not just within them; 4) How competencies are transcribed is a challenge. When Truman High School first started, the University of Washington wouldn't accept their competency-based transcript for the first two years.

MJ: How do we establish that students have met the minimum requirements?

TB: That's kind of contradictory.

BF: I think we should have a working definition of competency-based credit--how difficult or easy it is to define. Some principals have used competency-based credit as an opportunity to create a seminar to help students earn credit for graduation.

SDP: Current SBE policy on graduation requirements allows districts to create local policy to award credit based on competency. As a former superintendent, I really liked that. But it's very time-consuming to determine what you mean by competency.

TB: If we go with an EOC test in Algebra I, and allow districts to define competency individually, there will be considerable variety. Once you have a standard, and a way to measure it, it's easier. Need the measures to go with the goals, with a well-established core of competence established.

WP: Probably the most important disincentive to competency is financial. Second is assessment. We would need a series of state-approved classroom assessments that districts could pick from. Until the state invests in a sophisticated kind of support system—assessments that people could pick off the shelves as recognized to have validity—people don't have the time to develop resources at the local level.

MJ: What is the purpose of doing this from a student's standpoint? Is it to take fewer credits and get through faster? Say a student wants to meet minimum credit requirements and not take a class, e.g., they know another language and want to earn credit. Michigan is requiring world language—student could take a test and perhaps take two less credits in high school. It should

be about increased flexibility for the student—not about getting out of stuff, but rather an opportunity to take a more appropriate course load.

If students use a competency-based system to get through faster and take fewer courses, than the money issue is more of a big deal.

EL: If you assume that there are purposes for exploring this that would benefit the student, what policy changes could or should the SBE undertake—what could the SBE change or do differently—to move this issue forward?

TP: For students, who have an IB program, the minimum requirements decrease students' flexibility to take other courses—the IB program is very prescriptive in the junior and senior years. Students have to be creative to meet all the required state courses—IB requires world languages, which eats a lot of electives. Health and fitness, arts, occupational education requirements are difficult for IB students to complete.

KH: Some students need well-designed competencies in core courses because they don't have time in their life for seat-time.

MM: I did this kind of thing with my 9<sup>th</sup> graders in Issaquah—had to design a rigorous exam. I support the idea of state competencies because it becomes an opportunity-to-learn issue.

BJ: Two roles that SBE has: 1) establish definition of credit, and 2) establish content areas—units—of the requirements (e.g., align with state standards or GLEs). The SBE can advise the Basic Education Funding Task Force on apportionment. It's OSPI's role to define apportionment rules.

WP: If you don't have jurisdiction on the financing, but want to influence process, make recommendations to the Finance committee. Explore SBE rules around assessment. Tie competency to assessments.

JS: With the Basic Education formula—if a student is just taking a competency exam to get credit for a requirement so they can take something else—it's not a financial issue.

TB: Need to look at interface. What is a student's perception about the purpose of a competency?

EL: Relates to another lever—ways to more fully personalize learning. What if, in addition to the scheme of credits, the SBE would say, "x" number of those credits must be project-based learning (PBL). What would the impact of such a change be?

AH: If everything we discussed was in place, and all teachers were developed to the point that they were prepared to teach using PBL, I wouldn't be so sick to my stomach. It would need to be very slowly implemented so that we would be sure that students would benefit. For example, schools that have been doing culminating projects for some time now are very comfortable. Those that are implementing it for the first time are stressed.

EL: That's partly how the conversation even emerged—the culminating project (CP) is on the books. What could you do to beneficially backfill so that students in 9<sup>th</sup> grade begin to think about doing projects and the culminating project is truly a PBL requirement? If you assume that

in the next five years every district is going to get used to the idea of CPs, is this a lever that we should get behind? Why would we do it? What difference would it make for students?

WP: I think we underplay the value of the CP. Current regulation regarding the CP is designed to address goals 3 & 4; there is value to the things you are supposed to be learning in the CP with respect to standards. It's an opportunity to make learning relevant to kids. Also, it's an application. There are schools where the whole curriculum is PBL.

EL: So how do you feel about PBL as a requirement?

WP: Need to first establish a standard for PBL.

JS: When it comes to competency-based, the primary issue is the one that Toni Pace brought up. Most of the kids who are pursuing competency want to take other things, or challenge something they've already had. If they can take a test and pass to the next level, then they want to be excused from that requirement. PBL is a separate issue—another set of skills we might want to explore.

BJ: Eric, you tied PBL to personalization. I assume you're trying to create a policy lever to better personalize learning. Definitions for PBL and competency-based are loose; some are doing the CP well, while others are asking for a term paper and presentation. What is absent in the conversation is the HS and Beyond Plan. If the CP is tied to the HS and Beyond Plan, it personalizes education. Washington schools would be encouraged to create a master schedule after student-led conferences that establish student interests and course needs. What gets lost sometimes is the High School and Beyond Plan is a plan for the high school experience PLUS a 13<sup>th</sup> year.

BF: PBL is a particular form of pedagogy; very risky as a Board to identify particular pedagogy. Other forms of pedagogy—e.g., inquiry-based learning—would be of interest, as well.

BT: How do you define PBL?

MM: I remember doing PBL with children; it was exciting for students and for me. As a teacher, it also kept me suiting up and showing up for 30 years, so it's not a bad retention tool. PBL is a wonderful thing and a way to expand students' thinking. But I did it on my lunch hour and after school. It needs tremendous support. Students did finally get some independent learning credit out of it.

WS: What would that support look like?

MM: Research-based class. Not all teachers automatically understand how to do that work with kids—lots of professional development needed.

MJ: Brian's framing is very helpful to me. We're looking at personalization. We'll have a whole session on that later. The anchor is the High School and Beyond Plan. Student-centered scheduling is another issue. With the CP, we heard some public input about getting rid of it because it's just random. Instead, we might want to consider giving it a credit or two credits to offer incentives.

RS: All of this discussion has brought me back to the initial purpose of a diploma. In making a statement of purpose, is it your intention to require that a diploma is competency-based? In effect, you are saying that you want the diploma to be meaningful and to be based on students' demonstrated competencies. Basically, now, if you meet the seat-time requirements, you get a diploma. I'm concerned about kids who are far behind (e.g., Kati Haycock's Education Trust statistics about certain groups of kids being so far behind in reading). How do we keep those kids in schools? How do we help those students who are three to four years behind?

EL: That point is well taken and at the heart of what we can do at the SBE. The reason we want to work hand-in-glove with the Basic Education Funding panel is we have an opportunity to set the bar, but we don't control the purse strings. However, we do have powers that can have great leverage. For instance, one of the principles we settled on early and was reinforced by the public outreach is one diploma for all—not creating a second tier.

LL: Another marginalized group is dropouts. Not just kids who drop out because of lack of skills, but also lack of interest. A competency-based system can provide alternatives to explore what other ways (and learning styles) might work better for individual students.

LD: We're working with 22 schools; in those schools, there are 200 students at risk for reading; only a few of those students are being served because the system isn't set up to accommodate it. Why? 1) Schedules are done in spring, prior to the 9<sup>th</sup> graders coming in, and 2) Need different skill sets in English teachers.

TB: Intervention programs purchased by the schools may not meet the needs of the kids. Can't have separate policies coming out of PESB, SBE.

WS: Incumbent upon us to at least highlight or make recommendations about students who need more support. What is the difference between 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade?

EL: What kind of policy changes might we make to help us reach back to the middle schools?

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(note-taker on quick break!)

EL: Are you requesting that the SBE require Navigation 101?

TB: There may be better ways to promote the support and understanding of the need for a full-blown guidance program (whatever you call it)—perhaps tied to the High School and Beyond Plan.

WS: What about those kids who have a strong desire to move on to college but do not have the family support? What can the system do to help those kids?

TB: One of the strengths of the Navigation 101 program is there is at least a school advocate for the student—a person who may be able to create a mentoring relationship. The caseload for Navigation 101 is 15--because everybody in the school is doing it, and is trained to do it.

BF: We have some nice language in the purpose of the diploma—the diploma is a compact (similar to language in some federal Title programs). I would add that to save an intervention for a particular time of year, and to disconnect during the summer—middle school is a risky time to disconnect.



AB: Having had the opportunity to be an administrator at the middle school level for nine years, seven years at the elementary, three years at the high school, I had the opportunity to see the whole spectrum of children—the same kids growing up. And I have to ask, why are students coming to 9<sup>th</sup> grade and they can't read? How could we be using assessment information better? Those kids have not experienced failure—because they've had social promotions until 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Then there are repercussions—they don't earn enough credits to move to the next grade, and next thing you know, their locker is still in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade hallway. Kids want to be in control of their life. Have to make the kids WANT to take the courses and be excited about it. There are ways to excite students—e.g., thematic teaching. But we have to focus back on the kids. Student-led conferencing is key. We had 100% success in getting people there.

BJ: The SBE already has policies on the books that every student must receive a copy of the graduation requirements by the beginning of 9<sup>th</sup> grade and a progress report by the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade and each year thereafter. In terms of this issue in tying it to the High School and Beyond Plan, maybe you can move the conversation earlier to 8<sup>th</sup> grade and be explicit that students must show progress on the High School and Beyond Plan.

RS: We had a discussion about moving the emphasis from 10<sup>th</sup> grade to 7<sup>th</sup> grade and required districts to have a signed parent-student-teacher meeting. It is our goal to have students ready for college and gainful employment. By the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, it's too late for many students.

KH: The question you ask, is what is there about middle school that could make a difference? Tracking in math begins in 6<sup>th</sup> grade. This is the third year that there is a 3-8 WASL. The big policy issue that's been left to the local district is, "What is 6<sup>th</sup> grade math?" There are now new learning standards. If a sixth grade student is not given the opportunity to learn 6<sup>th</sup> grade material, you have tracked that student, and they won't catch up.

WP: Personalization (distributed a handout). The foundation is getting these kids early and helping them develop a plan. Just wanted to get the High School and Beyond Plan on the table and begin thinking about the components of Navigation 101 that could be put in the policy. Could connect electives to High School and Beyond Plan and connect High School and Beyond Plan with Culminating Project to really personalize education.

EL: Have been making notes about different policy levers that have been mentioned, and many are encompassed in the handout.

## **BREAK/LUNCH**

The meeting broke briefly for lunch, and then moved to short presentations by OSPI staff representing the different subject areas.

## **SUBJECT MATTER CONSIDERATIONS**

Board member, Warren Smith, chaired this portion of the meeting.

### Lexie Domaradzki, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

*The original request to us was to identify the pros and cons of different numbers of credits in a certain area. We appreciated this morning's discussion because we started there, as well: What makes a diploma meaningful and context-rich for students? Staff put together a list of pros and cons, and spent a great deal of time working with people in the field to solicit those recommendations. They are also advocates, and will advocate for content in their areas.*

*Meaningful doesn't always mean more. It's more of an issue of deepening and enriching what we currently have.*

Warren asked each OSPI subject area specialist to share with the Board the burning issues in their area with respect to graduation requirements.

Barbara Tobias, Reading Program Manager

*There is a national literacy crisis in our country and in this State. In the Secondary Reading Pilot, the Reading Division of OSPI is working with 22 high schools around the state. We asked schools to complete a 4<sup>th</sup> grade fluency assessment on 25 students who scored at Level one on the Reading WASL and nearly half (48%) scored at 4<sup>th</sup> grade level or below. Please allow for enough flexibility in the credit system so that struggling readers will be able to learn how to read. If the credit system is too tight, schools might not have enough flexibility to allow for struggling readers to take intervention classes. Many schools currently do not count reading intervention classes as English/Language Arts credits, but instead as electives. Beyond basic literacy skills, English/Language Arts helps students learn in-depth skills, through the power and beauty of words, to enhance their understanding of the world and help them articulate that understanding. To truly gain a deep understanding; however, it is necessary to connect and integrate other content area information as well. If students wish to pursue college, four credits are needed; on the other hand, students who are not college bound would have greater flexibility if not required to take a fourth credit.*

Mary McClellan, Science Curriculum Specialist

*I asked a large number of the leadership of the science education community and to a voice, they asked me to ask for a minimum of three years of science for high school graduation. First, we need extended science literacy for all students and a third year requirement would best support that goal. The global economy requires high levels of science literacy in order for us to be competitive. More than 63% of states will require three credits of science for high school graduation by 2009, and the Business Roundtable has called on us to double the number of STEM graduates with a bachelor's degree by 2015. Second, all science courses need to be laboratory-based to support inquiry and application standards. Staffing, instructional support and space resources will be a challenge that will require additional funding and systemic support.*

Caleb Perkins, Program Supervisor for Social Studies/International Education

*One burning issue for me is the Washington State History requirement. There is confusion between rule language that requires Washington State History to be offered between grades 7 and 12 and the requirement that it be a high school credit. I would ask for a change from a credit requirement to a completion requirement so that it can be offered at the middle school. We're pushing proficiency with classroom-based assessments, so any efforts to support that momentum would be appreciated.*

*With respect to credits, an additional 0.5 credits at the high school level (coupled with changing Washington State History and Government to a "completion requirement") would promote the inclusion of a course devoted to modern world history at the high school level - an area that is currently neglected in the state graduation requirements (but not neglected in the EALRs and GLEs).*

(Caleb was asked to address the pros and cons of requiring .5 credits of local tribal history, per the Tribal Leader Congress on Education request.)

*Students need to have explicit instruction with accounts of what's happened with indigenous history and what's happening today. What is the right mechanism for doing that? We have tried with the latest iteration of social studies standards to include more of those issues.*

*(World Language falls under Caleb's responsibilities.)*

*Only a handful of states require world languages. There is plenty of research that shows that the study of world language, particularly at early ages, promotes cognitive abilities. One credit may be problematic—it wouldn't align with the HECB requirements. An unintended consequence might be that districts would shift language learning downward to lower level courses, and eliminate higher level courses.*

Lisa Rakoz, Program Supervisor for Health and Fitness Education

*First of all, health and fitness is academic. According to the Center for Disease Control, the number of overweight children has tripled in the last decade—about eight million—and nearly doubled among children 6-11 years of age, brought on by insufficient physical activity coupled with large portion sizes. Overweight children become overweight adults. I'm not asking for an increase in the number of credits. It's critical to have daily physical activity, and we need to teach children that fitness is for life. I want quality physical and health education. 1.5 credits in fitness and .5 credits in health. We're losing health because it's integrated with physical education or science. Sensitive issues need to be addressed in a classroom, not a gym. With respect to waivers and online physical education classes—what does that really look like? How do those online experiences meet the EALRs?*

Karen Hall, Mathematics Assessment Specialist

*I want to commend you for the hard work of slogging through the mathematics requirements, and your wisdom in coordinating your decisions with the math standards revision team. I'd really like to see that the path that you're on is the minimum. Students need to arrive at 9<sup>th</sup> grade prepared to start Algebra I. Without the description of what's in the Algebra I or Geometry courses, the credits would be a lifeless requirement. By coordinating your work with the standards revision team, it's a huge step forward. The Economic Mobility Project, an initiative of the PEW Charitable Team, has found that at the bottom quintile of family income, 42% of children in that level stay at that level. However, 19% of children from the bottom quintile who get a college degree are able to move to the first quintile. How are we going to maintain economic mobility? Make it possible for our students to be college ready. The key, from the mathematics perspective, is Algebra I. Foundations of Mathematics I and II will no longer suffice for satisfying the graduation credits.*

AnnRene Joseph, Program Supervisor for the Arts

*I believe in a well-rounded education for the whole child. Arts is defined as a core academic subject area in Washington, per state law. The eight core academic subject areas are: reading, writing, math, science, social studies, the arts (dance, music, theatre and visual arts), health and fitness and communication. Still, not all districts are providing access to the arts, for all students K-12. Arts education is the key to innovation in the 21st century. I'm asking for two credits for the Arts to begin at grade 6—one at benchmark two, earned in the middle school over two years of study, and one at benchmark three, earned in the high school. We have the research from the SAT scores that clearly shows that the more arts that students have, the higher the verbal and mathematical portions of the SAT, and that scores increase with multiple years of study in any/all four arts. We have enough teachers and we have enough classrooms (if you give arts educators back their rooms). (Distributed handout and mentioned research supporting arts education for review and support of proposal). Why arts? Why now? If the SBE*

*takes this lead, we would like you to change the requirement language to “dance, music, theater, and visual arts.” People don’t know what visual and performing arts are. The Arts are a core academic subject area. World language and CTE are not one of the eight core academic areas—arts is. (Showed chart illustrating all eight core academic subject areas in state law—using metaphor of the paint box palette). With the palette of all eight colors, you can create every color in the world -every possibility. Take one of the eight out, and you limit the possibilities of learners. If Washington State goes with two credits for the arts- one credit at benchmark two to be earned from grades 6-12 and keep the current one credit at benchmark three to be earned grades 9 - 12, we will lead the nation, and will prepare our students for life and work in the 21st century, in support of the state law, OSPI and SBE goals and missions. I am asking the Board to keep the current one credit requirement at benchmark three for one full year of study, and to add a second full year of study at benchmark two to be earned from grades 6 - 12. Currently, there is not enough instruction offered to meet and exceed the standards expected for all learners in the arts, per state law.*

Denny Hurtado, Director of Indian Education

(Denny was asked to inform the Board about the status of the sovereignty curriculum.)

*We are working on the sovereignty curriculum. Shana Brown, Yakima, is helping to write the curriculum along with an advisory committee of tribal and nontribal members. When we first started talking about tribal sovereignty, we realized it was a very big topic. We thought that trying to infuse our curriculum into existing content made better sense than creating a separate curriculum that might sit on a shelf. The curriculum is being driven by the committee and will be aligned with GLEs and state standards. What is sovereignty? Elders say we always had sovereignty, pre-contact. We agreed to start with what’s happening today, and then work backwards. We understand that we’ll only get a small snippet of time to expose students to these ideas, but we want to take that time to clear up misunderstandings and help students with the basic understanding of what the tribes have given up, and to understand who we are as a people. All they know about us is what they see on TV, and they usually only talk about us around Columbus Day, Thanksgiving, and Halloween. There are plenty of stereotypes--People think we don’t pay taxes or that we all get per capita payments from casinos. That causes friction in our communities. Terry has supported this project.*

TB: We’d like to have a well-developed unit that could be used and brought into required courses, and to have the issue of sovereignty explored. There’s a very logical place to put it in the framework. It could be a model template that could be used for local tribes.

John Aultman, Assistant Superintendent for Career and College Readiness

John Aultman was sick and unable to be at the meeting. His remarks were forwarded to staff after the meeting and are included below.

*My primary interest is flexibility—students have the flexibility within the mandated credits to put together a concentration of electives that reflect their interests. One option the Board could consider would be to specify only the 15 minimum credits needed for four-year public college admission; any credits required in addition would be in a concentration of electives connected to a student’s High School and Beyond Plan. Don’t expand credit requirements unless you add flexibility—and by that I mean, the flexibility to choose a concentration of electives.*

*With respect to what you label the requirement, I would recommend that you leave it as occupational education IF it remains a requirement for all students. Not all districts have CTE; nor do all districts have CTE-certified teachers. However, if occupational education becomes a*

*directed elective that student's can choose (but are not required to take) I would recommend that you call it Career and Technical Education.*

Wes Pruitt, Workforce Board Policy Analyst/Legislative Liaison

In John's absence, the Board asked Wes Pruitt to speak about Occupational Education. The Workforce Board had contributed responses to the questions SBE staff posed about occupational education that were incorporated into the packet of materials provided for the meeting.

*There's a lot of concern that the occupational education credit is not being respected in the schools. The occupational credit is aligned in current rules with the standards of an exploratory CTE course. Those standards identify application of academic standards, technical skills, and employability skills as part of their content - these are critical skills for preparing for the world of work that are not taught in non-CTE courses. It is argued in the CTE community that the occupational credit should be changed to a CTE credit to ensure that these skills are actually taught. Prior to 1209, high schools were required to provide courses that included work skills in 20% of their program hour offerings.*

*Some would argue for a second CTE credit. The Workforce Board has not taken a position on the second CTE credit issue. We do know that students who complete more credits in CTE plus have a strong academic background do very well in postsecondary education.*

*Another work-related coursework issue we try to raise is the program of study issue-students should be directed to use some of their electives (i.e., two) in alignment with their High School and Beyond Plan to help them prepare for their post-high school level of education and/or training.*

## **QUESTION AND ANSWER**

After the short presentations, the session moved to an informal question and answer period.

TB: Mary, the last issue you raised is building and equipment issues associated with lab facilities. Do you know anything about the current status?

MM: I haven't asked the high schools individually. However, generally speaking, the lab pieces are now being supported reasonably well. We could use support for the physical sciences. A third year of lab-based science would require funding and support from the state.

TB: We probably ought to do a survey.

MM: There are no high schools where science labs are sitting unused.

MJ: What I've learned about the skills centers and CTE courses that are not in skills center, there's a lot of opportunity for CTE courses to be science courses.

MM: Lots of opportunities, but they need to be authentic partnerships with the CTE and science teachers working as a team.

BJ: Detail issue on the lab science. Neither HECB nor SBE has a clear definition of lab science. There's nothing in policy at the state level defining what lab science is.

MJ: I've been worried that we'll be stymied in getting more lab science because of the need for a massive capital program—greater physical space, equipment, and facilities. It's a very rigid definition of a lab science class that confines it to bricks and mortar.

BF: I'm torn about adding credits, knowing that we don't know what the finance committee is going to recommend. I appreciate that Denny's group is working to infuse curriculum. We know that a few states are at 23 credits; we're at 19. Do we ask for more credits, pending funding? What comes first in terms of policy and direction? Have the funding, and then move ahead? Or establish the policy and seek the funding?

EL: These are vexing and hard issues, and I'm going to channel Jeff for the moment. Our job is to set the bar where we think it is right for the kids, mindful of current circumstances. Then consider, what is the path to that? Is it phasing? Is it funding? I'm not advocating pie in the sky, and hope that pennies fall from heaven.

BF: Then my question to the advisors is should we consider the whole smorgasbord? How should we make a decision?

AJ: I love your question and you know all of us are going to advocate for more credits. We have fabulous standards that have been set very high. It's a five-pronged issue: staffing (we have enough in the arts); scheduling (need a six or seven period day or a 4 x 4); facilities (need to reclaim rooms originally designated for arts); funding; community/business support to extend the school day.

BJ: I'm not advocating any content area; the discussion goes back to competencies. If you look at each area as distinct, then we're always going to buck up against issues of facilities, staffing, etc. If you look at competencies, it begins to break down the barriers. What does the student need, and what is our ability to get the student there, and who and how can you assess that content, opens up a richer conversation. Think about the students and competencies at the center.

EL: Are you talking about a system of dual credit?

BJ: I'm talking about equivalency crediting, not dual crediting.

EL: Is there a specific policy change that you would advocate?

BJ: The Board took the direction of tying credits to standards, where they existed. It's the clarification that whoever can deliver the curriculum and assess students' proficiency against those standards, then credit can be awarded.

WP: We're playing with this equivalency issue in CTE right now. You have to start with competencies. Local school districts have control of determining equivalencies. Is there a standard for a process—amount of time, staff involvement, number of GLEs? It's not just a CTE issue—it's about any discipline.

MM: Any teacher who is highly qualified has a deep conceptual understanding on the part of that teacher which translates to the student. So I would advocate that the teacher have that deep conceptual understanding, when we're talking about equivalencies.

LL: To me, what matters is what a student knows, can do, and can use. I see a lot of opportunity for cross crediting with a caveat that there must be definitions that say what it takes to have that equivalency. Social studies is often a catch-all. You can't teach all the history, all the economics, all the political science, etc. in a 12-year program. How do you get at the essentials without watering it down?

CP: GLEs have deliberately written standards to big concepts to avoid the mile wide and inch deep. The work we've done on classroom-based assessments describes what it looks like when a student meets competency.

TB: I know today is about the policies that SBE has the ability to influence. But it often comes down to teachers having the appropriate knowledge and skill. If we want more depth, we're not going to be able to require too much more seat time. The learning needs to be about the most powerful stuff. That can be done well by the people who understand it. We can't assume that teachers know how to do that. The Legislature has to own what they started 14 years ago and to recommit to where we've been going.

BJ: It's a challenge for the Board to strike a balance among drafting policy, giving clear guidance and allowing flexibility/autonomy of locals. Focus on what's in the state's interest.

WS: Denny talked about some things with the MOA that I think the Board needs to be prepared to duplicate in other areas. He talked about treaties being signed to protect Native Americans; there also have been constitutions that have been signed to protect Americans. As we talk about the MOA, I wish there will be opportunity for other groups to work with the Native American community—to bring in the history of everyone from slaves to women. There are other groups—e.g., Irish community and others—concerned that we're only talking about one group. We need to consider ways to infuse into history what rightfully should be there, so that all kids can take pride in their history.

## **OPTIONS FOR CREDIT FRAMEWORKS**

Board members moved to a discussion of two draft credit frameworks that staff had included in their packets. The frameworks were distributed to advisory committee members at the meeting. 20, 22, and 24 credit variations were included with each option.

Option 1: maximized student postsecondary opportunities by matching or exceeding Washington four-year public college minimum core course entry requirements.

Option 2: directed electives so students can choose the postsecondary education path that reflects their goals.

Eric Liu posed the question: What are the core differences between these two options?

The following bulleted points were raised in the ensuing discussion:

- If the focus is to get more students focused on life after high school, I think for both of these options, it will be key for more counselors to get involved.
- Is it counselors or career guidance people? There will never be enough counselors. We need a career guidance delivery system.
- It may be worth stipulating that policy tweaks for either option can address some of these issues.

- I can't look at option two if it means giving up the arts credit.
- Legally, the arts are in a different category because they are part of the eight essential areas.
- If you get enough credits, you can do both.
- We need flexibility in elective areas so students can choose something just because they want to try it.
- I think we should assume a six period day—therefore, 24 credits.
- We should probably only bring one option to the March meeting.
- A default curriculum should be a set of credit requirements that maximizes the opportunities for kids after high school.
- We need a well-crafted election policy—personalization with a purpose.
- If we could have a positive choosing scenario, we are trapped in a college paradigm that's not practical for the 21<sup>st</sup> century...
- Do you want option one to be a default or do you resist the idea?
- What are the possibilities for course completion in lieu of credit?
- World languages should start at earlier grades, important part of an economic development strategy (e.g., Chicago—incentivizing language education), consider demonstrated world language proficiency in lieu of two credits.
- Caution in identifying requirements that may get in the way of what the kid wants.
- The difference between CTE and Occupational Education is not inconsequential; job shadowing would not count as CTE, yet could contribute to a student's career exploration
- Are World Languages/CTE/Occupational Education necessary for every kid to have?
- We could consider giving the culminating project a credit.

Board members directed staff to bring back a 24-credit "Option one" and an "Option three" that would incorporate suggestions that had emerged from the discussion, particularly the placement of arts (because it is one of the eight essential subjects) as a separate requirement and the addition of flexibility, where possible, with electives.



