

## **BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND CREDIT-BASED HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS WAIVERS**

### **SUMMARY OF POLICY ISSUE /STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION (SBE) STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

The Board may grant waivers to school districts from the credit-based high school graduation requirements and the Basic Education Act Program Requirements (RCW 28A.150.200 through 28A.150.220) on the basis that such waivers are necessary to implement, successfully, a local plan to provide for all students in the district an effective education system that is designed to enhance the educational program for each student (RCW 28A.305.140).

### **BACKGROUND**

The Board will be considering applications for waivers from credit-based high school graduation requirements and the Basic Education Act requirements at the Board Meeting:

#### **Application for Waiver from Credit-Based High School Graduation Requirements**

1. **Truman High School**, in the Federal Way School District, is requesting a waiver from credit-based high school graduation requirements for the 2009-10, 2010-11, 2011-12, and 2012-13 school years, the maximum number of years allowed for a waiver. This is a renewal application. The waiver request meets Washington State's school reform vision, as stated in the State Board of Education's rules, specifically "shifting from a time and credit-based system of education to a standards and performance-based education system."<sup>i</sup> The request is to continue the previous decision to waive letter grades and Carnegie units as a means of determining academic achievement for students. Truman High School's standards-based system, established in 2002, provides a window through which students can see their true achievement levels as they relate to real world challenges and community expectations. Students are able to explore their interests, follow their passion and learn academic skills while developing their plans after high school. Truman High School's system requires students to demonstrate proficiencies as outlined by the Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements and the Grade Level Expectations in order to graduate.

Truman High School incorporates a small-school teaching environment and students remain with their teachers until graduation. All upper-level students participate in internship experiences weekly with a community mentor through the school's active

partnerships with community businesses. Core academic Grade Level Expectations and Career and Technical Education Program Standards are imbedded into the internship experiences using a system of standards based on rubrics to align the students' work. Student-led conferences occur twice a year and student learning plans are written by teachers, parents, and students to guide the students' academic development. Students and staff use the Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements and the Grade Level Expectations to ensure that the state's four learning goals are met.

### **Applications for Waiver from 180-Day School Year Requirements**

1. **St. John – Endicott Cooperative School Districts** are requesting a waiver of five days from the 180 day minimum school year requirement for the 2009-10 school year. This is a renewal application. The purpose of the request is to implement local restructuring plans, provide a more effective educational system, and enhance the achievement of all students according to the high standards of Washington State Educational reform. The cooperative districts are requesting the waiver to provide professional development time for staff to participate in collaborative planning and professional development. It would be used to align curriculum and develop authentic student assessments for the purpose of informing and improving instruction. The waiver allows the district to eliminate 14 late start and early release days.
2. **Seattle School District** is requesting a waiver of three days from the 180 day minimum school year requirement for three years (2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12 school years). This is a renewal application. The purpose of the waiver is to allow each school and educational program to have three days to strengthen the teaching of math, science, and literacy, to track student progress, to align curriculum, and to collaborate on improved instruction. The District would like to accomplish goals such as improving system alignment, increasing cultural competency and culturally responsive teaching strategies, focus on a limited number of high-leverage strategies across content areas, and ensure that the work of the professional learning communities is sustained for effective continuous professional growth. Additionally, the District wishes to provide home visits with families, where applicable. The District estimates that without the waiver the schedule would include six additional half-days.
3. **Ocean Beach School District** is requesting a waiver of two days from the 180 day minimum school year requirement for three years (2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12 school years). This is a renewal application. The purpose of the waiver is to provide professional development and collaboration time for their teaching staff. The waiver will allow specific days and time for math, science, and writing training for teachers. It will also provide time for grade-level collaboration in order to improve student performance by using diagnostic assessments. The work will be tied to the schools' improvement plans. The training will be led by their teachers in collaboration with ESD 112 consultants. School and district staff, as well as community members have recognized the need for time to engage in developing the math and other core subject curriculum and aligning them to the Grade Level Expectations. In addition,

parent groups at each of the District's buildings have urged more math and core subject training for the staff.

4. **Newport School District** is requesting a waiver of five days from the 180 day minimum school year requirement for three years (2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12 school years). This is a renewal application. The purpose of the waiver is to provide district-wide staff development, alignment of curriculum to the changing state standards, and review and analysis of student progress and achievement. The work is tied to the school improvement plans and the goals include increasing on-time graduation rates, improving attendance, and to more effectively instruct students. The waiver days allow staff to spend time developing planning goals and strategies for students with unique needs, such as special education students and multi-cultural students. The days also allow for teachers to plan after-school enrichment programs and programs for students in need of targeted assistance.
5. **Lopez Island School District** is requesting a waiver of four days from the 180 day minimum school year requirement for three years (2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12 school years). This is a renewal application. The purpose of the waiver is professional development through cross-grade collaboration review of student academic data, development of building-level themes, and strategies to enhance instruction, and individual teacher professional development. The goals of the waiver are to further the District's improvement of student achievement by enhancing the educational program for all students in the district. The waiver also allows the District to eliminate four half-days.
6. **Methow Valley School District** is requesting a waiver of six days from the 180 day minimum school year requirement for three years (2009-10, 2010-11, and 2011-12 school years). This is a renewal application. The purpose of the waiver is to continue the work of the District's professional learning communities in grades K-12. The professional learning community teams will review school improvement plans and implementation efforts; align curriculum across the system; and develop standards, assessments, instructional interventions, instructional enhancements across the curriculum, and cross-curricular instructional techniques. The goals of the work include: increasing the percentage of students meeting the standard in reading, writing, math, and science; increasing the percentage of students who graduate; narrowing the achievement gap; and creating greater rigor, relevance, and respectful relationships across the system. The waiver will result in five fewer half-days in the District's calendar.

## **POLICY CONSIDERATION**

The applications for waivers meet the State Board of Education's criteria for the purpose and use of a waiver.

## **EXPECTED ACTION**

Approval of applications

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