



The Washington State
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Performance-based Pathway Option FAQ

June 2023

1. Will students graduating in spring 2024 be able to use the performance-based pathway option?

The State Board of Education is likely to adopt rules for the new performance-based pathway option in December 2023, which would take effect in January 2024. Implementation tools, such as graduation proficiency targets and rubrics, will be published in February 2024. Almost all students graduating in 2024 should have already met a graduation pathway requirement or be working on meeting one of the existing graduation pathway options. In certain circumstances, it may be possible for some students to use the new pathway option in the 2023-24 school year. Schools that offer mastery-based learning options, or project-based learning or culminating projects that are well-aligned to learning standards may be able to adapt some student learning experiences to the new performance-based pathway option. However, because of the timing of implementation of the new graduation pathway option, schools should not be relying only on the performance-based pathway option for graduating an individual student or a group of students.

Prior to implementing the performance-based pathway option, districts will need to adopt a written policy that conforms with the statute and the new rules for the pathway option. In other words, the local policy will need to outline how the district will implement the pathway in accordance with the state requirements for it. School districts that want to offer this pathway should plan time for developing their local policy following the Board's adoption of rules (planned for December 2023), with additional time for the school board to adopt the policy, before offering the performance-based pathway option to any students.

2. What will a performance-based pathway "look like"? What will be the required elements of the performance-based pathway option?

Requirements for the new pathway will be determined through the rulemaking process, with more comprehensive guidance to be shared in in early 2024.

The legislation ([HB 1308](#)) specifies that the performance-based pathway option will involve a learning experience through which a student demonstrates knowledge and skills in a real-world context, providing evidence that the student meets or exceeds state learning standards in English Language Arts and math. The learning experience may take a variety of forms, such as a:

- project
- practicum
- work-related experience
- community service experience
- cultural activity

The learning experience may result in a product that can be evaluated, such as a:

- performance
- presentation
- portfolio
- report
- film
- exhibit

The rules that the State Board of Education will write and likely adopt in December 2023 will:

- establish state requirements for the safety and quality of the learning experience.
- establish authentic performance-based assessment criteria for determining that the student has demonstrated the applicable state learning standards.
- allow for external parties, including community leaders and professionals, to participate in the evaluation of the student's performance.
- specify that at least one certificated teacher with an endorsement in each relevant subject area, or other applicable qualifications as permitted by the Professional Educators Standards Board, will participate in the evaluation of the student's performance.

3. Does the performance-based graduation pathway option need to be in only math and/or English Language arts?

Through the performance-based pathway option, the student must demonstrate that they are meeting or exceeding English Language Arts and math state learning standards, but the student's learning experience may be interdisciplinary. The performance-based graduation pathway option is intended to be based on a real-world learning experience that is engaging and meaningful for individual students, based on the student's interests and what the student wants to do after high school. The main topic of the learning experience may fall within any subject area as long as ELA or math standards are addressed and can be evaluated. For example, a student interested in biology might perform a study of oysters in Puget Sound. The product of the learning experience might be a report that describes the study, including background research, a description of the study method, a statistical analysis, and conclusions. The main topic of the learning experience is biology, but the report would allow the student to demonstrate both English Language Arts and math learning standards.

See question #4 for more information about whether the performance-based pathway option may be used for English Language Arts and/or math.

4. Is the performance-based pathway option a “stand-alone” option, such as the sequence of Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses or the military (ASVAB) graduation pathway options, or is it a combination option, such as the state tests or dual credit graduation pathway options?

The performance-based pathway option may be used in combination with other English Language Arts or math graduation pathway options, so that a student meets the graduation pathway requirement by completing at least one English Language Arts option and at least one mathematics option listed in [RCW 28A.655.250](#) (3)(a) through (3)(e).

For example, a student may meet the pathway graduation requirement by meeting or exceeding the graduation standard on the statewide high school assessment in math and by completing a performance-based pathway option demonstrating that they are meeting or exceeding English Language Arts state learning standards.

A performance-based pathway option may allow a student to demonstrate both English Language Arts and math learning standards if the learning experience addresses both English Language Arts and math learning standards, and both sets of standards may be evaluated. For example, a science (see the example in Question #3) or social studies learning experience might involve both English Language Arts and math skills and knowledge.

5. What is the timeline for rule writing for the performance-based pathway?

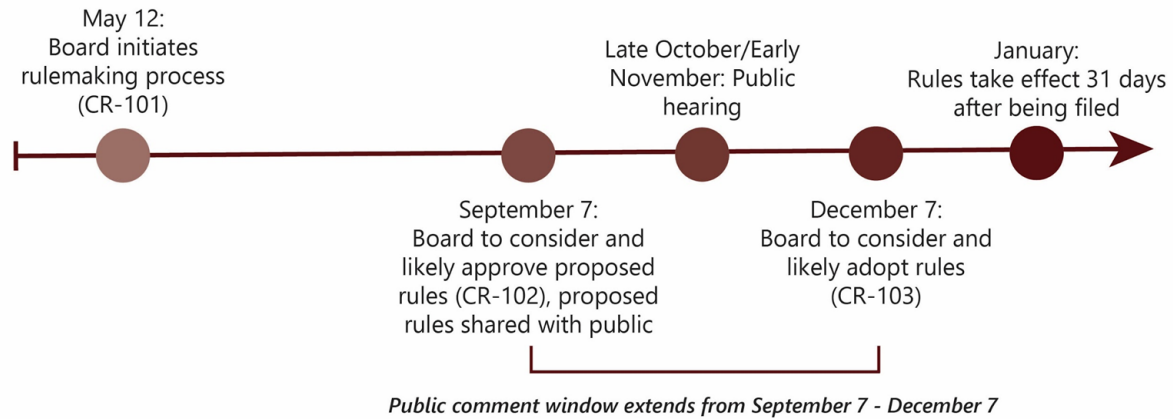
The State Board of Education will spend the summer of 2023 developing proposed rules for the Board’s consideration of approval at the September Board meeting. The public comment window will extend from approval of the proposed rules to December 2023 when the Board is likely to consider adoption of the rules. A public hearing will be held in late October or early November.

The final rules are likely to take effect in January 2024. Implementation tools, such as graduation proficiency targets and rubrics, will be published in February 2024.



Rules Filing Timeline

Pathways, HSBP rulemaking



Further information about rule making will be posted on the State Board of Education [Rulemaking webpage](#).

6. Will the performance-based pathway have options for students who receive Special Education services?

The performance-based pathway option will provide an additional way for students, including those receiving Special Education services, to demonstrate proficiency in English Language Arts and/or math. The new option creates more opportunity to customize a graduation pathway to an individual student’s interests, which might suit some students who receive Special Education services. But all students will need to meet the same graduation proficiency targets regardless of their program participation.

7. How will districts and district administrators be informed of new pathway opportunities? How will the State Board of Education provide updates on the Board’s work?

There will be upcoming opportunities to provide feedback on proposed rules, and opportunities will be developed for educators to learn about the performance-based pathway option. Further information about rule making will be posted on the State Board of Education [Rulemaking webpage](#). Signing up for the Board’s newsletter is the best way to be [updated on the Board’s work](#).

8. For districts that want to implement the performance-based pathway option, what might be some considerations for personnel planning?

The evaluation of students’ performance-based pathway must involve at least one certificated teacher with an endorsement in each relevant subject area, or other applicable qualifications as permitted by the Professional Educators Standards Board. Depending on the number of students who pursue this option and the subject areas involved in their learning experiences,

educators' time for evaluating the students' performance will be impacted. English and math educators in particular may be affected by the additional time required to evaluate student work.

Districts may wish to consider how to provide educator personnel to support students using the option, including whether the support would be conducted during particular classes or during an advisory period. Other considerations for implementing the new pathway option will be determined through the process of writing the rules.