



THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

A high-quality education system that prepares all students for college, career, and life.

May 12, 2016

Mr. Perry England, Chair
Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board
PO Box 43105
Olympia, WA 98504-3105

Dear Chair England and Members of the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board:

Thank you for the thought-provoking and productive board-to-board discussion on career readiness at the January 2016 State Board of Education meeting. As a result of that discussion, the State Board of Education applied for and received a National Association of State Boards of Education Deeper Learning grant. The grant will support work in developing a statewide shared definition of career readiness, aligning policy to the shared definition, and exploring career readiness measures in the state accountability system.

The State Board of Education invites the Workforce Board to continue to engage in board-to-board exchange toward the goal of developing a shared understanding of what it means for all students in our state to be both career and college ready. The following draft foundational principles were discussed and approved by the State Board of Education at the May 2016 meeting. Our two boards began to develop these principles in January and we wish to work with the Workforce Board to further this effort. These are considerations upon which to build a shared statewide definition of career readiness and we ask that the Workforce Board discuss and respond.

- Career readiness is our ultimate goal for all students, with each student holding the skills, knowledge and dispositions to follow their individual life path, and have equitable opportunities to access living-wage pathways.
- While college is an often-used pathway to career readiness, there are outstanding opportunities for students to directly enter the workforce. The Board considers “college” to be education and training that leads to a living wage job (this includes apprenticeships and professional and technical training programs).
- Career readiness for all students will need cooperation and collaboration between education, business and industry to foster opportunities for career exploration, and to ensure that career readiness is embedded in all grades and all courses for all students.
- All student should have workplace experience by graduation, and all educators should have knowledge of careers and work and be able to communicate to students about career pathways throughout K-12 education.
- Career and college readiness includes important elements of life preparedness and civic responsibility and engagement (a “career” is comprised of more than activities tied to earning wages).
- Explore the terminology of “postsecondary and workforce readiness” instead of “career and college readiness.”

We look forward to continued productive cross-agency work that will benefit Washington’s students, workforce, economy, and communities.

Sincerely,

Isabel Muñoz-Colón
Chair, State Board of Education

Cc: Washington Student Achievement Council
State Board of Community and Technical Colleges

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