



Strategic Plan Priority | System Design

Goal: School and district structures and systems adapt to meet the evolving needs of the student population and community as a whole. Students are prepared to adapt as needed to fully participate in the world beyond the classroom.

Waivers

PREPARED FOR THE MARCH 2020 BOARD MEETING

Information and Action

The State Board of Education and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction administer waivers from the minimum requirements of the program of basic education. The State Board of Education sets rules on these waiver programs, including the 180-day waivers that OSPI administers. In general, waivers can be divided into waivers of graduation requirements that are administered by SBE and waivers of time requirements that are administered by OSPI.

SBE administers waivers from credit-based graduation requirements and waivers to temporarily delay implementation of the 24-credit graduation requirements in WAC 180-51-068.

As of January 1 2019, OSPI administers 180-day waivers for emergency school or district closures, professional development, parent-teacher conferencing, and four-day school weeks for the purposes of economy and efficiency. SBE retains rule-making authority on these waiver programs. OSPI is required to annually update the Board and the Legislature on its administration of waivers from the 180-day requirement.

Materials included in packet:

- Annual waiver update from OSPI to SBE
- Memo on Issaquah School District renewal request for waiver from credit-based graduation requirements

- Copy of Issaquah waiver application and resolution (additional materials)
- Memo on temporary waiver from 24-credit graduation requirements for Green River College
- Application, resolution, and addendum from Green River College

Business Items:

- Approval of Temporary Waiver from WAC 180-51-068 for Green River College for the Class of 2019 and 2020
- Approval of Waiver from Credit-Based Graduation Requirements for Issaquah School District for the 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24 School Years



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

School Waiver Applications for the 2018-19 School Year

2020

Authorizing Legislation: [RCW 28A.300.760](#)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2018, Substitute House Bill 2824 shifted responsibility of certain school waiver applications from the State Board of Education (SBE) to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

Consistent with this authority, OSPI is required to report annually to SBE and the House and Senate Education Committees regarding waiver applications received for the prior school year under RCWs 28A.150.222, 28A.150.290, 28A.230.015, and 28A.300.750.

As part of the basic education requirements in Washington state, each school district must make a minimum of 180 school days available to students each school year. OSPI may grant certain waivers from this basic education program requirement to a school district in order for the district to implement a local plan to provide all students an effective education system designed to enhance the educational program for each student (RCW 28A.300.750). Waiver examples include parent-teacher conference days, professional development days, student transition day, and alternative calendars for specific schools.

Waivers may also be granted from the requirement for a 180-day school year to a limited number of districts meeting certain enrollment criteria that propose to operate schools on a flexible calendar for purposes of economy and efficiency (RCW 28A.150.222).

School districts can also apply for waivers from the 180-school day requirement due to unforeseen natural events, mechanical failures, and/or actions or inactions by one or more persons, including negligence and threats (RCW 28A.150.290).

INTRODUCTION

Waivers may be granted to school districts for:

- Parent-teacher conference days.
- Implementing a local plan to provide for all students an effective education system designed to improve student achievement by enhancing the educational program for all students in the district or for individual schools in the district.
- A limited number of districts meeting certain enrollment criteria that propose to operate schools on a flexible calendar for purposes of economy and efficiency.
- Unforeseen conditions or actions (“emergency waivers”).
- The ability to waive access to career and technical courses from the course content provisions of RCW 28A.230.010(2)

2018–19 School Year

During the 2018–19 school year, OSPI was authorized under state law to process emergency waiver applications submitted by school districts experiencing unforeseen conditions or actions.

School District Applications

A total of 152 emergency waiver applications were submitted to OSPI due to unforeseen circumstances or actions. The following is a breakdown of applications received:

- 141 school districts experienced unforeseen and heavy snowfall, making travel to and from school hazardous;
- Five school districts lost power due to severe weather conditions, creating cold and unsafe conditions in the school;
- Two school districts experienced both heavy snowfall and a loss of power, making travel hazardous and creating unsafe conditions in the school;
- One school district experienced both flooded roads and a loss of power, making travel hazardous and creating unsafe conditions in the school;
- One school district experienced a fire after school had been dismissed, creating unsafe and inoperable conditions in the school;
- One district had no water due to a line break in the main water supply, creating unsafe conditions at the school; and
- One district closed for one day after receiving a credible threat of violence prior to the start of school, rendering the school unsafe.

Criteria for Meeting Waiver Approval

OSPI approved all 152 emergency waiver applications received for the 2018–19 school year. No applications were denied.

The school districts that were approved due to unforeseen snow fall or icy conditions, which made travel to and from school hazardous, fell within the winter storm State of Emergency issued by Governor Inslee.

All remaining emergency waiver applications met the criteria due to unforeseen natural events (fire, flood, and windstorm), and an unforeseen action (threat of violence), and an unforeseen mechanical failure (water supply break). These conditions rendered the schools unsafe and/or inoperable.

Table 1: School District Applications

Reason for Waiver	Number of District Applications Received	Total Number of Days Waived
Snow – Unsafe Travel	141	338
Loss of Power	5	6
Snow & Loss of Power	2	6
Flood & Loss of Power	1	2
Fire	1	3
Water Supply Break	1	1
Threat of Violence	1	1

Source: School Apportionment and Financial Resources, February 3, 2020.

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

During the current 2019–20 school year, OSPI has continued to receive and process applications for emergency waivers. In addition, OSPI is now authorized to process school district waiver applications for parent-teacher conferences days, local plans to enhance educational programs, flexible calendars for purposes of economy and efficiency, and exempting CTE courses from course content requirements. Online applications for several of these waivers are posted on OSPI's web site at <https://www.k12.wa.us/about-ospi/about-school-districts/180-day-school-year-waivers>.

Following the end of the current school year, OSPI will report information regarding all waiver applications submitted to OSPI for the 2019–20 school year.

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The Washington State Board of Education

An education system where students are engaged in personalized education pathways that prepare them for civic engagement, careers, postsecondary education, and lifelong learning.

MEMO ON RENEWAL WAIVER FROM CREDIT-BASED GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

PREPARED FOR THE MARCH 2020 BOARD MEETING

Policy Considerations

Does the application for waiver from credit-based graduation requirements provide the information and documentation required for approval?

Overview of the Waiver Request

Issaquah School District requests a renewal of its waiver from credit-based graduation requirements for four years (2020-2024) for Gibson Ek High School.

Does the application for a waiver of credit-based graduation requirements by Issaquah School District for Gibson Ek High School provide the information and documentation required by WAC 180-18-055?

Does the district demonstrate in its application that the proposed non-credit based graduation requirements will meet minimum college admission standards?

Background: Credit-Based High School Graduation Requirements Waiver

In April 1999, the SBE adopted WAC 180-18-055, titled "Alternative high school graduation requirements." The rule authorizes the granting of a waiver by the Board that would enable students to earn a diploma by a demonstration of competencies in core subjects meeting state standards, in place of earning the credits required by Chapter 180-51 WAC (High school graduation requirements).

In filing the adopted rule, WSR 99-10-094, the Board stated that the purpose was to provide school districts and high schools a waiver option from credit-based graduation requirements to support performance-based education.

WAC 180-18-055(1) declares:

"The state board of education finds that current credit-based graduation requirements may be a limitation upon the ability of high schools and districts to make the transition from a time and credit-based education system to a standards and performance-based system with the least

amount of difficulty. Therefore, the state board will provide districts and high schools the opportunity to create and implement alternative graduation requirements.”

WAC 180-18-055 provides that a school district, or a high school with permission of the district’s board of directors, or an approved private school, may apply to the SBE for a waiver of one or more of the requirements of Chapter 180-51 WAC. The rule is unique among provisions of Chapter 180-18 WAC in authorizing schools, as well as the districts that govern them, to apply for a waiver of basic education requirements, as well as in extending the opportunity to private schools. The SBE may grant the waiver for up to four school years.

The rule lists in detail the information that must be submitted to the SBE with the waiver request. The application must include, for example:

- Specific standards for increased learning that the district or school plans to achieve;
- How the district or school plans to achieve the higher standards, including timelines for implementation;
- How the district or school plans to determine whether the higher standards have been met;
- Evidence that students, families, parents, and citizens were involved in developing the plan; and,
- Evidence that the board of directors, teachers, administrators, and classified employees are committed to working cooperatively in implementing the plan.

The applicant district or school must also provide documentation that the school is (or will be) successful as demonstrated by such indicators as assessment results, graduation rates, college admission rates, follow-up employment data, and student, parent, and public satisfaction and confidence in the school, as evidenced by survey results.

WAC 180-18-055 allows for a waiver of the specific credits enumerated in WAC 180-51. It is not a waiver of learning standards, including grade level expectations, nor is it a waiver of instructional hours. In addition, students still are entitled to a curriculum that meets the minimum requirements for admission to a public four-year college in Washington should they choose that option in their high school and beyond plan (28A.600.160). Any school or district granted a waiver under this section must report annually to the SBE on the progress and effects of implementing the waiver.

Table 1 shows the state learning standards, required high school credits, and the College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs) which are minimum requirements to be eligible for admission to a state public baccalaureate institution, and although many schools have additional requirements, the CADRs are generally consistent with minimum expectations for college level work at most public and private colleges and universities. The table below is for illustrative purposes. Content area learning standards are not waived under this waiver authority but high school credit requirements in Chapter 180-51 WAC are waived. High Schools may

need to show credit equivalencies for colleges and universities to recognize the CADR credit or other admission requirements.

Content Area Learning Standards	High School Graduation Requirements	College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs)
The Arts	1-2 (depends on HSBP choice)	1
Computer Science	Optional	can meet Math or Sr. Year Quantitative
English Language Arts	4	4
English Language Proficiency	English Language Proficiency	n/a
Mathematics	3	3 - Alg. 2
Science	3 for class of 2019 (districts with a waiver may require only 2 credits for class of 2019 and 2020)	3
Social Studies	3 (Including Civics and WA State History)	3
Educational Technology	Must be offered, not required for graduation	n/a
Health and Physical Education	2	n/a
Integrated Environment and Sustainability	May be addressed in Science or other Subject	n/a
World Languages	0-2 (depends on HSBP choice)	2
Financial Education	Must be offered, not required for graduation	n/a
Career and Technical Education	1	n/a

WAC 180-18-055 includes no specific criteria for evaluation of a request for a waiver of credit-based graduation requirements. The rule does stipulate that the SBE may not grant the waiver unless the district or school shows that the proposed non-credit based graduation requirements meet minimum college core admission standards.

All of the schools that have received this waiver to date incorporate aspects of the “Big Picture Learning” model. Big Picture Learning is a Providence, R.I.-based nonprofit, founded in 1995, that supports the creation and operation of public schools that follow its model of personalized, competency-based learning. There are over 70 Big Picture network schools in the U.S. and more around the world.

Current Request for Credit-Based High School Graduation Requirements Waiver

Issaquah School District has collaborated with Big Picture Learning through its regional network. The school seeks to continue to use the Big Picture Learning competencies to offer educational programming that they state is aligned to the learning standards.

The district attests that this model meets or exceeds the state learning standards and offers students the opportunity to meet the college academic distribution requirements (CADRs) required for admission to the public four-year colleges in Washington. The school asserts that they are monitoring the attainment of CADRs through a transcript that depicts the Big Picture Learning Competencies. It posits that student learning towards the Big Picture Learning Competencies is monitored and evaluated through assessment, student exhibitions of their project-based learning, internships or other work experiences, and personal inventories of student progress. The school plans to measure student progress on transcripts by indicating which of the Big Picture Learning Competencies are "in progress," have "met expectations," or "have exceeded expectations." Instead of using grades or credits to track progress, the school is using "met expectations" on Big Picture Learning competencies to monitor whether the students comprehensively met the school's requirements. The general idea is that this allows for individualized education that is based on the student's pace and learning interests rather than on pre-packaged courses. The evidence that the district provided shows that it is considering how the CADRs are satisfied by the students' learning on the Big Picture Competencies and that it monitors attainment of the competencies on transcripts in a similar way to how a district would monitor credit accrual. For instance, the transcript crosswalks elements of each Big Picture Learning competency to each of the CADRs. The school provided a Gibson Ek sample transcript that assures that students who level up to grade 11 have reached math proficiency through Algebra 2 and geometry, English proficiency, and have completed scientific inquiry including lab science.

The crosswalk in the application demonstrates the district's intentionality to offer CADRs. These waivers, if approved, do not waive the Washington State Learning Standards and the district provides assurance that its educational programming is aligned to the learning standards, including Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards.

Notable aspects of the Big Picture Learning model include the following:

- Use of the five Big Picture Learning competencies;
 - Personal Qualities – "the goal is to be the best you can be - to demonstrate respect, responsibility, organization, leadership, and to reflect on your abilities and strive for improvement."
 - Communication – "the goal is to be a great communicator: to understand your audience, to write, to read, to speak and listen well, to use technology and artistic expression to communicate, and to be exposed to another language(s)."

- Communication – “the goal is to think like a mathematician: to appreciate relationships and patterns in numbers, to analyze uncertainty, to comprehend the properties of shapes and graphs, and to study change over time.”
 - Empirical reasoning – “the goal is to think like a scientist or engineer: to use empirical evidence, numerical or qualitative data from your own or others’ observations, and logical processes to make decisions, evaluate hypotheses, and develop informed conclusions. It need not reflect specific scientific content, but may also incorporate ideas from a range of disciplines within the four major branches of science: Mathematics/Logic (including Computer Science), Biological, Physical, and/or Social Sciences.”
 - Social Reasoning – “The goal is to think like a social scientist, historian, or anthropologist and to apply an understanding of social and historical patterns to thinking about current political, social, ethical, economic, and cultural issues.”
- Intentional use of internships and/or work experience;
 - Individualized learning at the student’s pace and based on the student’s interests;
 - Use of a mastery-based learning model that uses “met expectations” rather than traditional grade points and credits and leveling up rather than traditional grade promotion;
 - Advisory, which is often mixed grade levels, with a focus on parent engagement;
 - Focus on student-chosen projects and exhibitions; and
 - Use of an array of assessment tools, including but not limited to state assessments.

Gibson Ek High School offers a program based on the following Big Picture Learning Distinguishers that correspond to the SBE staff analysis of notable characteristics that are listed above:

- Internships in the real world;
- One student-at-a-time personalization;
- Authentic assessments;
- School organization;
- Advisory structure;
- Small school culture;
- Leadership;
- Parent/family engagement;
- School college partnership and college preparation; and
- Professional development.

The school emphasizes the importance of career readiness in addition to college readiness and places importance on internships and work opportunities for their students.

The district answered all the required questions and provided evidence that they have considered how their educational programming aligns with the state learning standards and the CADRs. The district has met the minimum requirements for the waiver application process and submitted all required documentation.

ISSAQUAH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Issaquah School District requests a waiver from credit-based graduation requirements for Gibson Ek High School for the 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024 school years.

The district states that the school's proposed competencies, based on Big Picture Learning competencies, are aligned to state learning standards and that the school will offer programming that meets the CADRs.

The district provided information that describes the Big Picture Learning model. The prior section of this memo summarizes key aspects of that model.

The district successfully submitted all required components of the application and responded to all necessary questions. If approved, the approval letter will note that this waiver only applies to credit graduation requirements.

Action

The Board will consider whether to approve the request for a waiver of credit-based graduation requirements under WAC 180-18-055 presented in the application by Issaquah School District for Gibson Ek High School.

If you have questions regarding this memo, please contact [Parker Teed](#).