



FUTUREReady

Listening Session Toolkit

Help Shape the Future of High School Graduation in Washington



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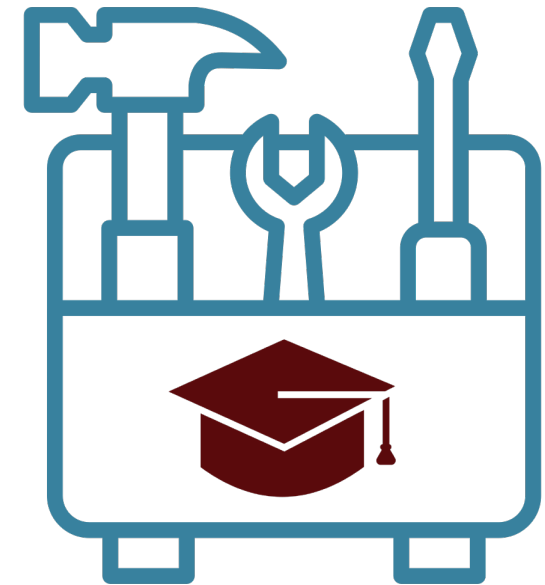
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Purpose of this Toolkit

The Washington State Board of Education is rethinking how students earn a high school diploma — and we need your voice.

This toolkit is for anyone who wants to host a conversation in their school, community, or organization. Your feedback will help shape graduation requirements that support a student's success in whatever their next endeavor is after high school.



What is FutureReady?

FutureReady is an initiative by the State Board of Education to update Washington State's high school graduation requirements so that they better prepare students for the future. **The goal is to make sure students graduate high school with the essential knowledge and skills they need to thrive in a changing world.**

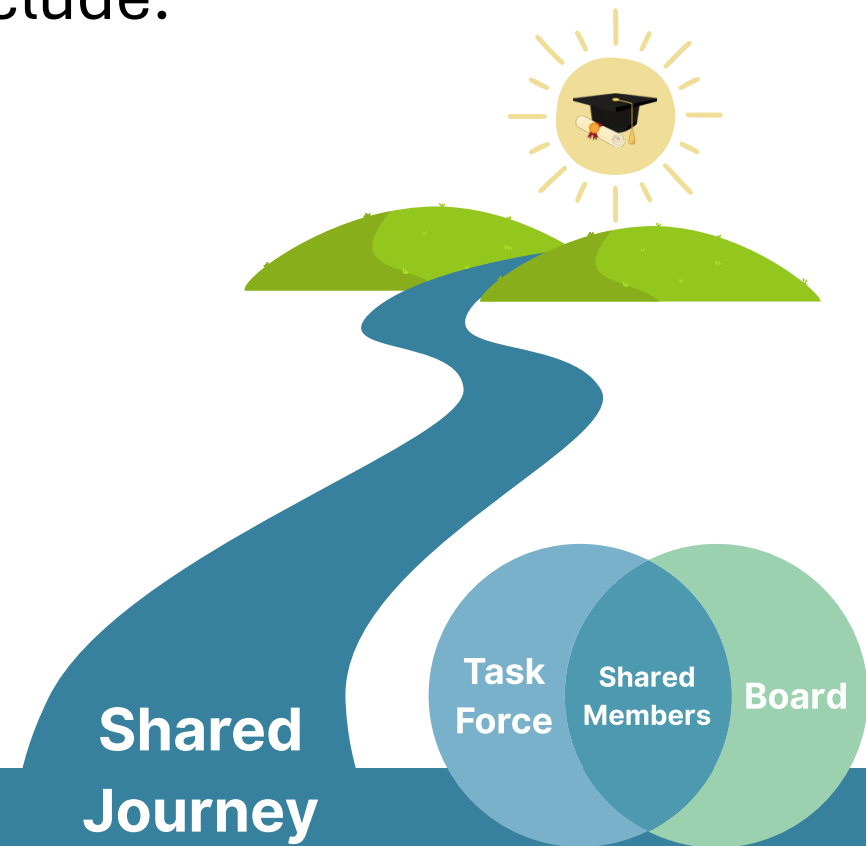
[Click here to view a handout with more information about the broader goals of this project.](#)

FUTURE
Ready

FutureReady Task Force

To guide this work, the State Board of Education has convened a FutureReady Task Force made up of diverse stakeholders to ensure a wide range of voices are heard. These partners include:

- Community liaisons
- Students and families
- Community-based organizations
- K-12 educators
- Postsecondary partners
- Employers
- Policymakers



Informing the Task Force's Work

While the Task Force plays a central role in shaping recommendations, the Board also recognizes the value of broader public input. This toolkit is part of a supplemental engagement effort designed to gather additional insights from communities across the state.

Input collected through these conversations will help inform the Task Force's and Board's discussions and development of a proposal for updated graduation requirements.

Why Change is Needed



Current requirements are complex and can be hard to navigate.



Students, educators, and employers are calling for updates.

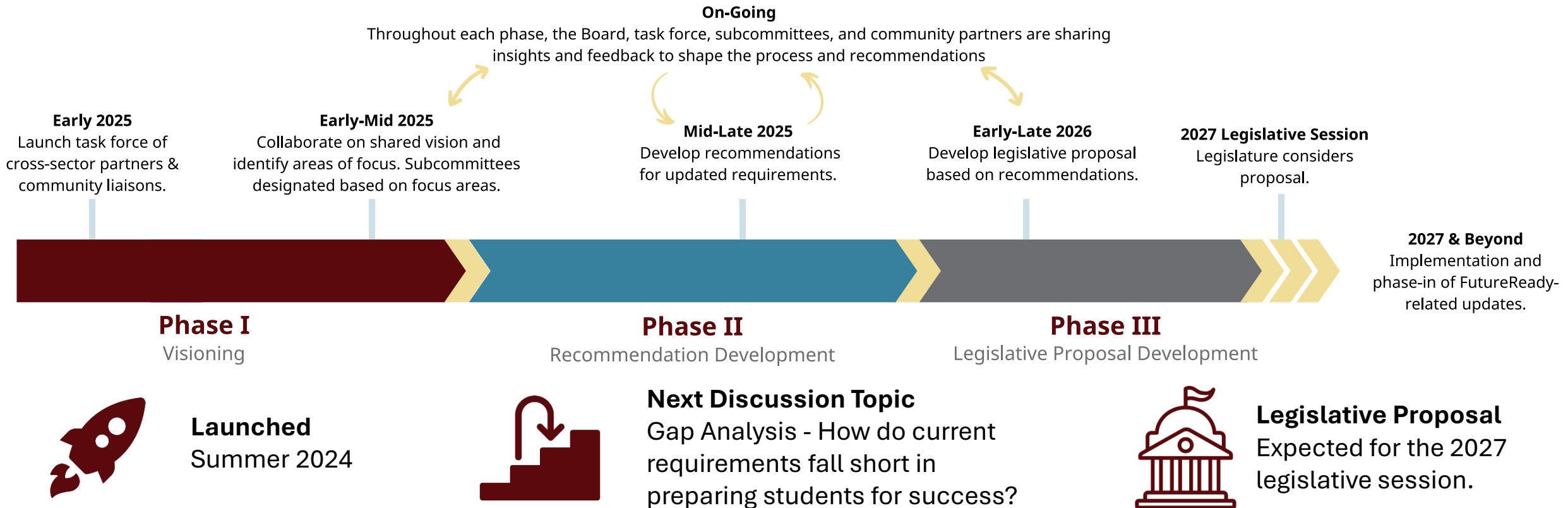


Not all students feel prepared for life after high school.

Timeline

FutureReady Initiative Timeline

Timeline dates are tentative and subject to change.



Learn More & Stay Updated

Sign up for our FutureReady newsletter to get updates on the initiative, receive summaries of task force conversations, and be the first to hear about public engagement opportunities.

[Sign Up for the Newsletter](#)



| How You Can Help!

We're asking for input from communities across the state to make sure the new requirements reflect what students really need to be prepared for their futures.

This is where you come in! We invite you to host a listening session to hear directly from students, families, educators, and community members about what's working and what needs to change.

We know that meaningful change can't happen without hearing directly from the people most affected.

Your listening session could help:

- **Lift up real stories and ideas** from communities across Washington.
- **Identify strengths, challenges, and gaps** that students experience firsthand with the graduation requirements.
- **Ensure all voices are heard**, especially those who have been underserved and not included in the creation of policies that impact them.
- **Inform the recommendations** the Task Force and Board will make.

How Your Input Will be Used



1. You gather input by hosting a conversation using this toolkit.



2. You send your notes and quotes to the State Board of Education.



3. Input is shared with the Task Force and Board, alongside findings from other listening sessions across the state.



4. Task Force and Board members use this input to:

- Identify what's missing or not working in current graduation requirements
- Highlight key concerns or ideas that may need deeper exploration
- Clarify what it means to be “ready” for life after high school
- Develop recommendations that reflect the diverse needs of students and communities



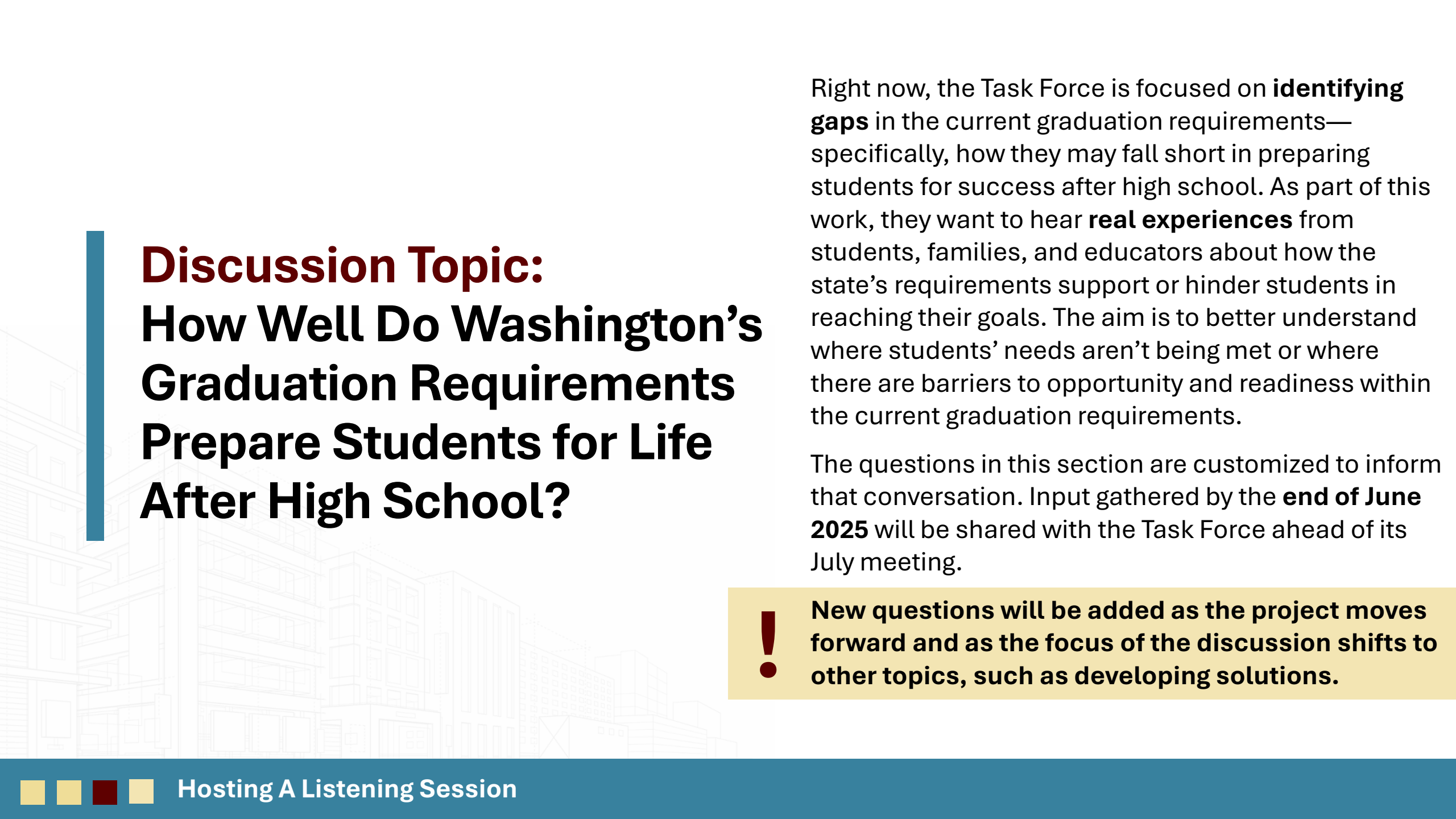
5. The Board considers input when making recommendations for updated graduation requirements to send to the Legislature.



Hosting A Listening Session

Thank you for helping shape the future of education in Washington. This is your space to bring people together and uplift your community's voice. There's no one right way to do it. Use this toolkit as a guide, if it's helpful, but make it your own!





Discussion Topic: How Well Do Washington's Graduation Requirements Prepare Students for Life After High School?

Right now, the Task Force is focused on **identifying gaps** in the current graduation requirements—specifically, how they may fall short in preparing students for success after high school. As part of this work, they want to hear **real experiences** from students, families, and educators about how the state's requirements support or hinder students in reaching their goals. The aim is to better understand where students' needs aren't being met or where there are barriers to opportunity and readiness within the current graduation requirements.

The questions in this section are customized to inform that conversation. Input gathered by the **end of June 2025** will be shared with the Task Force ahead of its July meeting.



New questions will be added as the project moves forward and as the focus of the discussion shifts to other topics, such as developing solutions.

Listening Session Questions

1. What high school classes, learning experiences, supports, or other opportunities helped you [or someone you know] feel confident and prepared for life after high school?
2. Are there ways in which the current graduation requirements make it harder for some students to pursue their goals? (For example, do graduation requirements limit flexibility, create unnecessary stress, or leave out important learning?)
3. What do you think every student should experience or learn in high school – no matter what path they choose after graduation?
4. If you had a magic wand, what would you add, remove, or change to make sure the high school diploma truly supports students' readiness for the future?

These questions are current until the end of June 2025.

A Simple Outline You Can Follow

1. Welcome & Introductions

Let people know why you're here and that their voices matter. Remind them to share only what they'd feel comfortable having shared publicly.

2. Share the Background

Briefly explain what FutureReady is and why the State Board is rethinking graduation requirements (use the background section from the toolkit). We encourage you to share what the current graduation requirements are (see pages 21-26) so that everyone is starting with similar information.

3. Group Discussion

Use the provided discussion questions. You can adapt them to fit your group's needs.

4. Capture What Is Said

Write down or record key takeaways, stories, and quotes. Use the **FutureReady Listening Session Summary Template** to organize your notes.



Facilitator Tip: Review the template before the session to know what you'll need to collect (feedback + participant info). You can download a version of this for your note taking during the session and then enter your notes in the web-based form once you're ready to submit the feedback to the State Board.



Important Note: To help protect participants' privacy, please avoid including any personal or identifying information in the notes you submit. For example, don't include full names, specific schools, or detailed personal stories that could make someone identifiable. Focus on summarizing the key themes, ideas, or concerns shared.

Sending in Your Input

The final step to hosting a session is sharing your notes with the State Board so they can include your insights in the next phase of the project! Please complete this **[FutureReady Listening Session Summary Form.](#)**

Feedback received by June 30th will be shared with the Task Force in time for its July meeting.

If you have any questions, please contact:

 **Anna Ricks**

Tribal Liaison & Community Engagement Coordinator

anna.ricks@k12.wa.us

564-250-5810



Important Note!

Any communication sent to State Board of Education staff or Board members is subject to public disclosure under Washington's Public Records Act. This means that members of the public may request access to emails, photos, videos, voice recordings, handwritten notes, and other submitted materials.

Tips for Hosting A Session

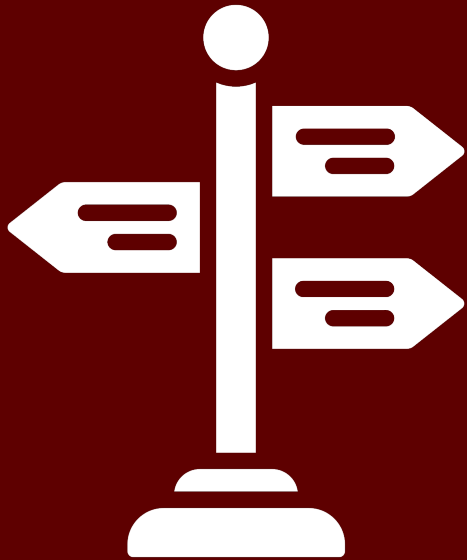
- Choose a format that fits your group (in-person, virtual, large group, small circle — whatever works!)
- Encourage **every voice**, especially those who don't usually get heard
- Use or adapt the questions based on your audience
 - Feel free to adjust the questions to fit your audience—for example, by clarifying language, adding context, or tailoring them for different age groups or lived experiences. Just keep in mind that big changes to the questions may make it harder for your input to connect with the conversations happening at the state level. The suggested questions are designed to align with the key issues the Board and Task Force are discussing, so sticking close to them will help ensure your input has the greatest impact.
- Don't worry about getting everything “perfect,” your authenticity matters most!



Tips for Guiding the Conversation

- You may need to guide the conversation to help keep the focus on what is relevant in terms of local vs. state requirements and current vs. old requirements.
 - **Focusing on State-Level Policy:** The State Board of Education sets statewide graduation requirements, but local school districts decide how to put those requirements into practice based on local needs. So, if people raise concerns about things like course materials, lesson plans, teaching methods, or scheduling, those are decisions made at the local level—not something the State Board can change through this project. To ensure that input is as relevant, usable, and impactful as possible, facilitators should gently steer the conversation back to the statewide graduation requirements and related state-level policies, rather than local issues that schools or districts control.
 - **Focusing on Current Requirements:** Graduation requirements have changed a lot over the years—even within the last decade. Depending on who's in the room, it can be helpful to clarify early on that the conversation is about current requirements. If people start talking about what things were like many years ago, try to guide the conversation back by reminding them it's most relevant when comparing past experiences to how today's requirements may be falling short.

Need Extra Guidance?



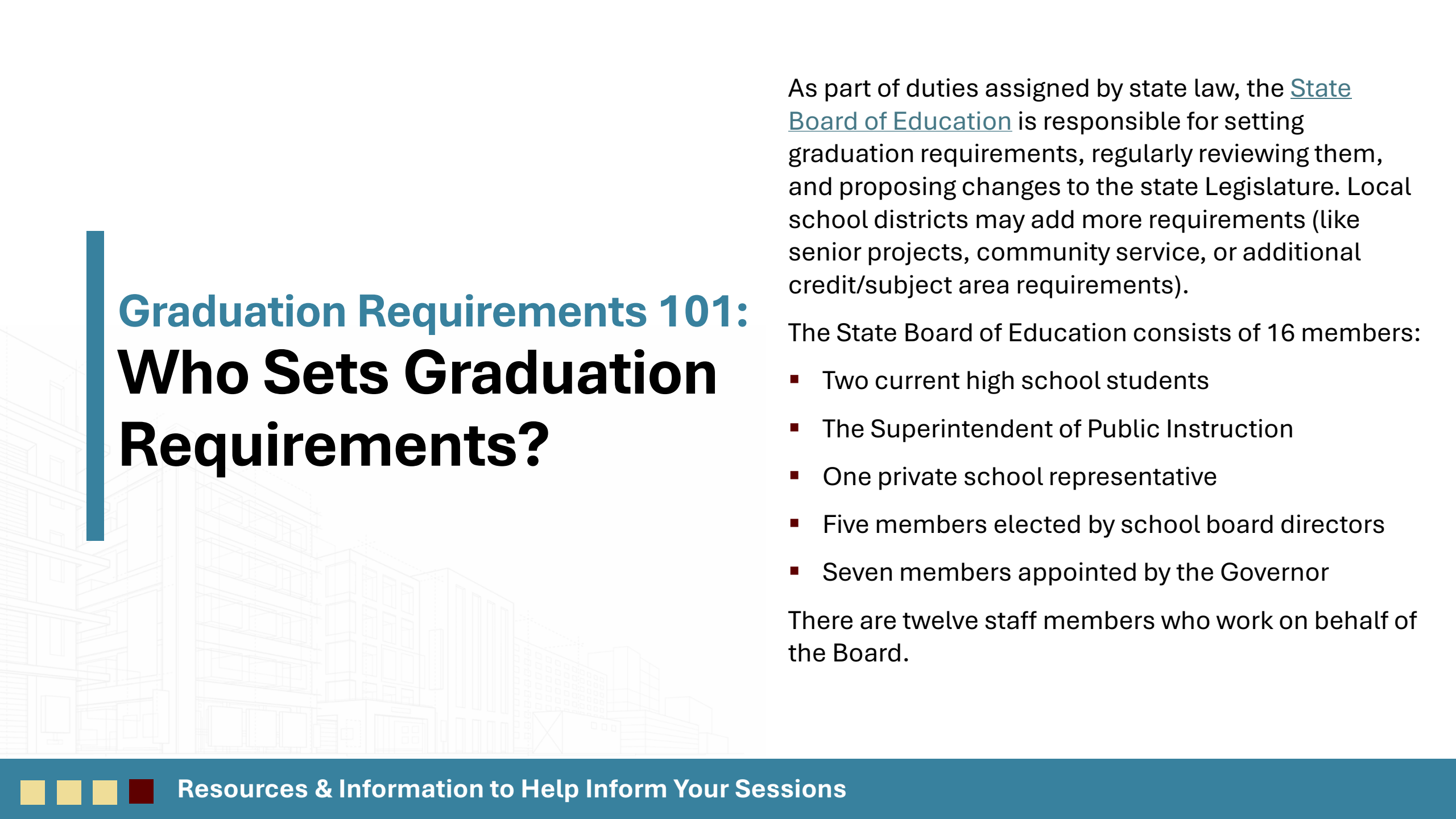
Check Out These Helpful Tools:

Facilitating Community Listening Sessions for PTAs

This guide offers practical tools and tips to help education leaders plan and lead inclusive, respectful discussions that elevate diverse family voices and inform decision-making.
(Center for Family Engagement)

Community Conversation Toolkits

These toolkits are a comprehensive resource designed to guide individuals and teams in fostering inclusive and equitable school communities through active listening and mutual learning.
(Roots of Inclusion)



Graduation Requirements 101: Who Sets Graduation Requirements?

As part of duties assigned by state law, the [State Board of Education](#) is responsible for setting graduation requirements, regularly reviewing them, and proposing changes to the state Legislature. Local school districts may add more requirements (like senior projects, community service, or additional credit/subject area requirements).

The State Board of Education consists of 16 members:

- Two current high school students
- The Superintendent of Public Instruction
- One private school representative
- Five members elected by school board directors
- Seven members appointed by the Governor

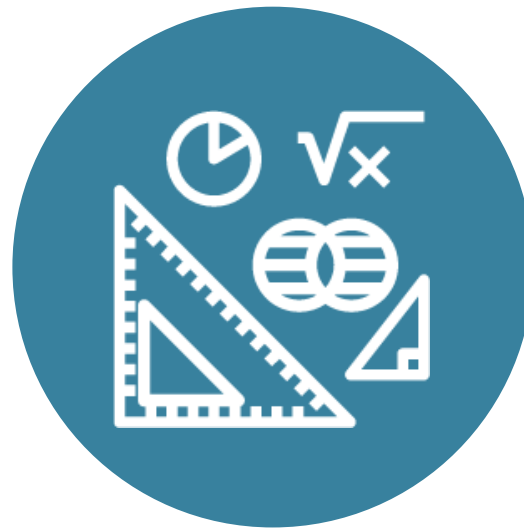
There are twelve staff members who work on behalf of the Board.

Graduation Requirements 101

Students must meet requirements in three areas to graduate in Washington.



**High School &
Beyond Plan**



**Credit
Requirements**



**Graduation
Pathway Options**

Graduation Requirements 101

High School & Beyond Plan

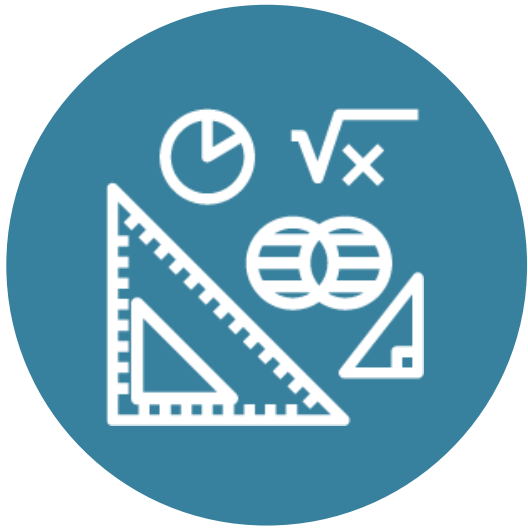


High School & Beyond Plan

As part of Washington's graduation requirements, students must develop a High School and Beyond Plan. In it, they outline how they will meet graduation requirements and what they want to do after high school. Students begin working on their plan in middle school and continue to update it throughout high school as their interests and goals evolve. The plan also includes supports the student may need to graduate, an activity log, and other important information to help guide their path.

Graduation Requirements 101

Credit Requirements



Credit Requirements

24 Total Credits:

- 17 core credits in math, English Language Arts, science, social studies, arts, health, physical education, and career and technical education.
- 7 flexible credits that include four electives and three personalized pathway credits, which are aligned to the student's career goals and their High School and Beyond Plan.

Districts can waive up to two flexible credits of the 24-credit requirement for individual student circumstances.

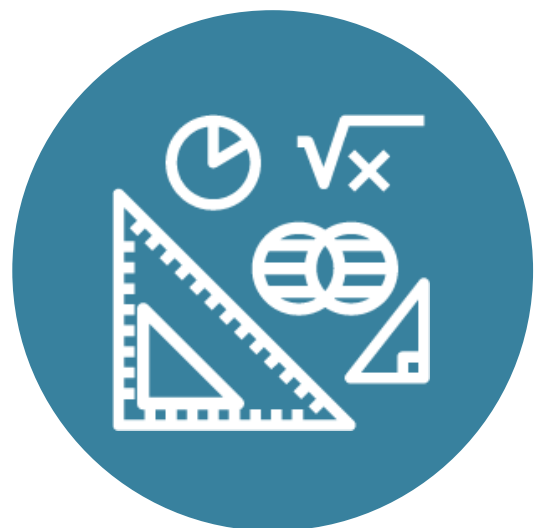
Graduation Requirements 101

Credit Requirements – Graphic Breakdown

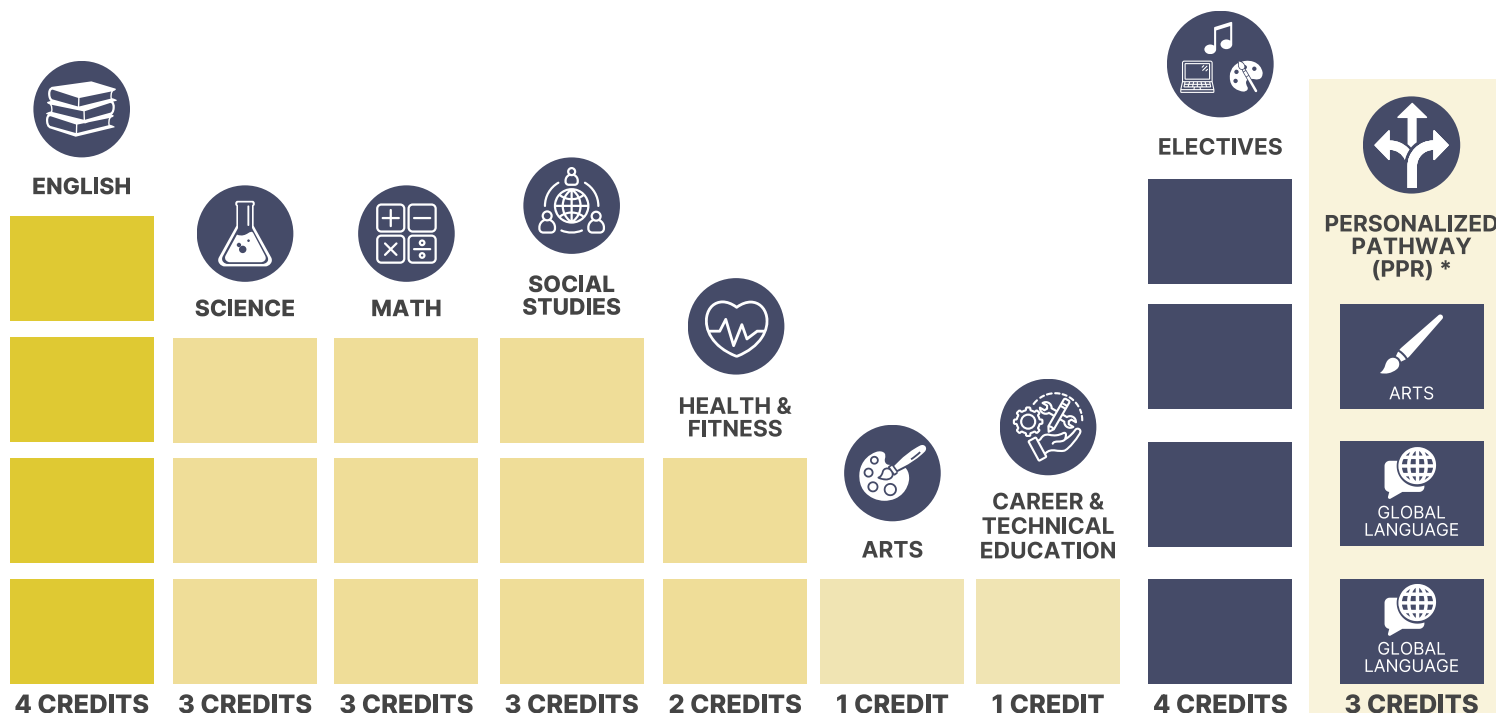
24 TOTAL CREDITS

17 CORE CREDITS

7 FLEXIBLE CREDITS



Credit Requirements



* Personalized pathway requirements (PPR) are electives in any subject that align with the student's High School & Beyond Plan. The arts and world language credits can be replaced with other electives.

Graduation Requirements 101

Graduation Pathways



Graduation Pathway Options

Students must demonstrate readiness for postsecondary goals in both English Language Arts and Math through one of the following:

-  State Assessment
-  Dual Credit Courses
-  AP/IB/Cambridge Exams
-  SAT/ACT College Entrance Exams
-  Transition Courses
-  Performance-Based Pathway
-  Combination of the above pathways
-  Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)*
-  Career and Technical Education Course Sequence (CTE)*

* Students who pursue the ASVAB or CTE pathways do not need to meet English and math requirements separately since English and math are embedded in both of those pathways.

Graduation Requirements 101

Helpful Resources

We've created a few resources you can share with your attendees to help them understand current graduation requirements.



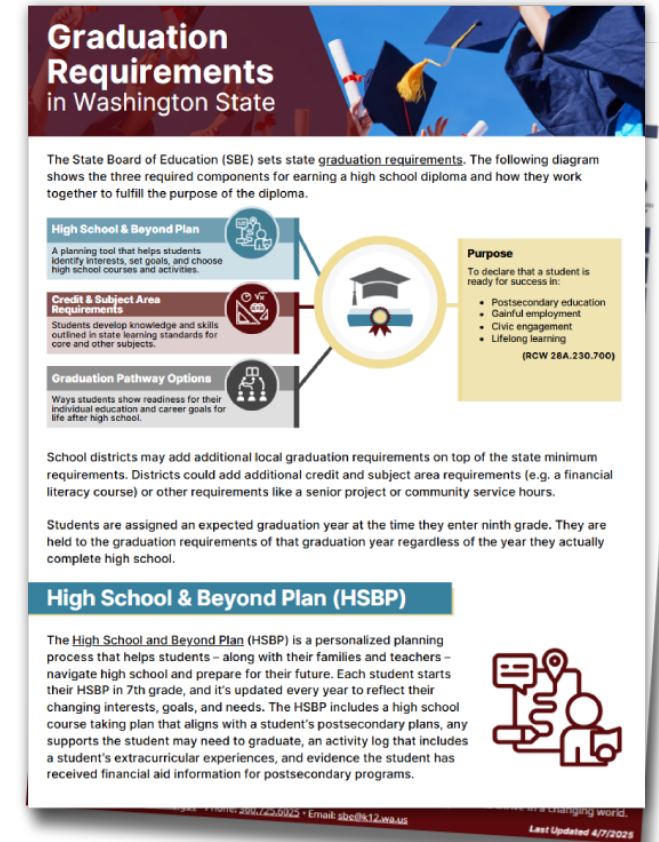
Washington State Graduation Requirements Handout

[Click here to see versions in other languages.](#)



Washington State Graduation Requirements 101 Video

[El video también está disponible en español.](#)



All Your Resources in One Place

We've compiled all the documents and resources referenced in this toolkit in one place for easy download!

Thank you again for your interest in hosting a session. If you have any questions, please let us know!

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Engagement Coordinator

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FutureReady Listening Session
Toolkit (Google Drive)