



# FUTURE Ready

## Listening Session Toolkit

*Help Shape the Future of High School Graduation in Washington*

Updated June 2, 2026



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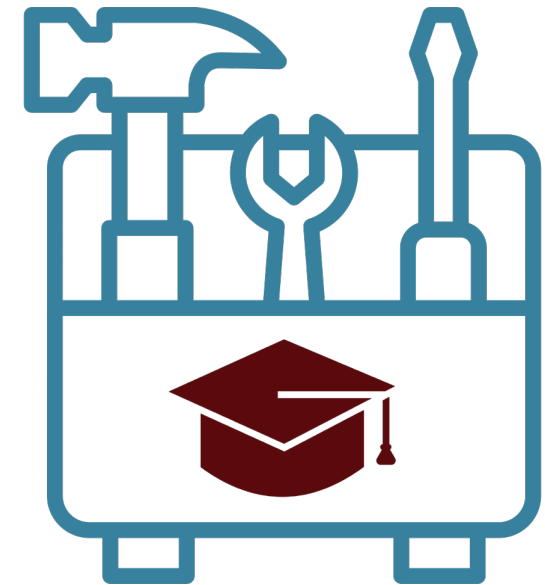
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# Purpose of this Toolkit

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.](#)



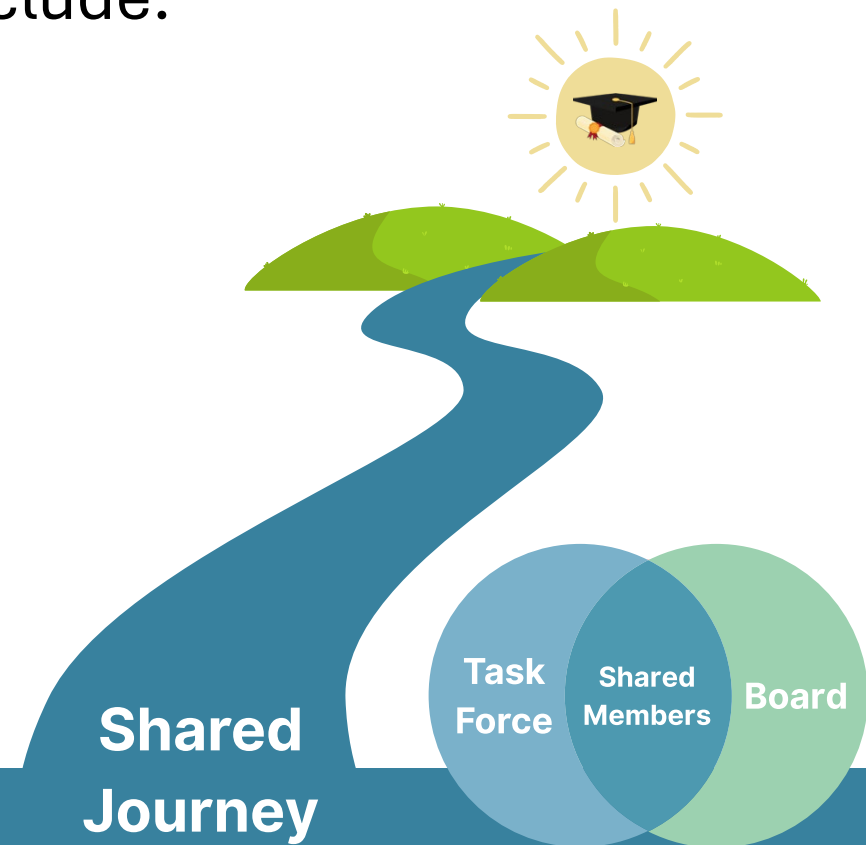
**FUTURE**  
**Ready**

The logo features the word "FUTURE" in a blue, sans-serif font with an arrow pointing right at the end of the word. Below it, the word "Ready" is written in a larger, dark red, serif font. The background of the logo area shows a faint, white line-art illustration of a city skyline with various buildings.

# 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.

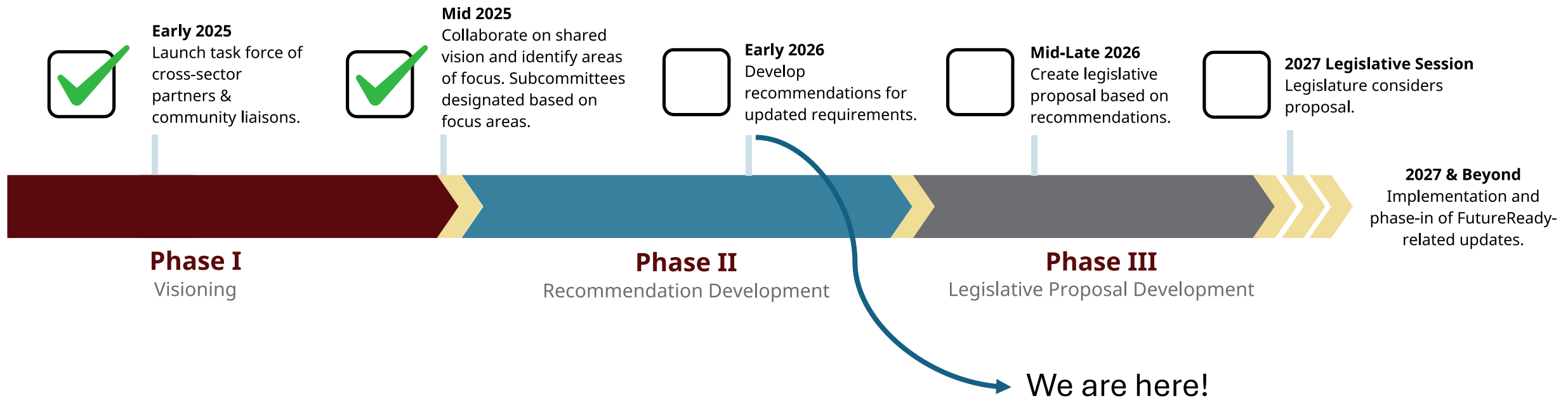


Not all students feel prepared for life after high school.

# 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 to improve the High School & Beyond Plan (HSBP)**

**Please Note: This toolkit includes two discussion topics. You do not need to complete both topics. You may choose one or another. You may also complete both if you'd like!**

The FutureReady Task Force is considering making improvements to the HSBP process through additional guidance, reflection, and improved relevancy.

We have heard feedback about incorporating more practical life skills (adulting 101) in the school day, such as financial education, cooking, and managing a home and are finding ways to include that.

We are interested in hearing what would be helpful when completing the HSPB, including the types of guidance students should receive, how time is dedicated to completing the HSPB, and what a final demonstration of a reflection might look like.

# HSBP Listening Session Questions

1. Would you be interested in dedicated time during the school day to work on your HSBP activities and practical life skills with guidance? (e.g., a standalone 0.5 credit course, advisory time, other?)
  - a) What types of skills would you want to learn or practice during such a class?
2. If there were a reflection to be completed in your senior year for you to connect all the activities and classes you've done throughout high school to your next steps (giving you an opportunity to practice for interviews, writing cover letters and resumes, talking about your accomplishments, etc.), how would you structure that?
  - a) If there were a final demonstration of your reflection, such as a presentation or exit interview, what components would make that feel most relevant?

**Note:** These questions are geared at a student population. If you're working with other populations, please edit as necessary.



## Discussion Topic: Subject & Credit Questions

**Please Note:** This toolkit includes two discussion topics. You do not need to complete both topics. You may choose one or another. You may also complete both if you'd like!

The FutureReady Task Force is in the process of determining credit and subject area requirements. We have some specific areas where feedback would be appreciated to inform final decisions.

During this discussion, feel free to reference our [proposed credit framework](#) (see slide 30). This framework is still under development but will help provide context about how your suggestions may be integrated into new credit and subject area requirements.

# Subject & Credit Listening Session Questions

- 1. Financial Education:** Where should financial education live within the credit requirements?
  - Should it be required for graduation (whether that is done through a standalone course or integrated into other courses)?
  - Note: Districts must already offer access to financial education standards to students.
- 2. Career & Technical (CTE):** Should all students **be required** to take a CTE course to graduate, or **should this be offered** by a school to all students while allowing students to substitute it for another course that more closely aligns with their postsecondary plans? CTE courses are opportunities for students to receive applied learning of a variety of skills, including career specific technical skills, practical life skills, and academic skills.
  - **Note:** [CTE course equivalencies](#) would continue under the proposed framework, allowing approved CTE courses to meet both CTE and academic subject area requirements (such as English Language Arts). The key policy question is whether all students should be required to complete a CTE course focused on applied technical skills, or whether students should have the option to not take a CTE course so they can focus on other courses of interest. Additionally, we are exploring changes to the [2-for-1 policy \(see #7\)](#) that would allow students to earn both CTE credit and the corresponding academic credit, rather than meeting two requirements while earning only one credit toward the 24-credit total.
- 3. Art:** Should all students be required to take an art class to graduate, or should some students be able to take a different course? Under what circumstances should a student be able to make a different choice?

# A Simple Outline You Can Follow

## 1. Welcome & Introductions

Let people know why you're here and that their voices matter — and 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 linked on our toolkit webpage\*\*](#) 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 the **[FutureReady Listening Session Summary Form linked on our toolkit webpage.](#)**

If you have any questions, please contact:

**Anna Ricks**

Tribal Liaison & Community Engagement Coordinator

[anna.ricks@k12.wa.us](mailto: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

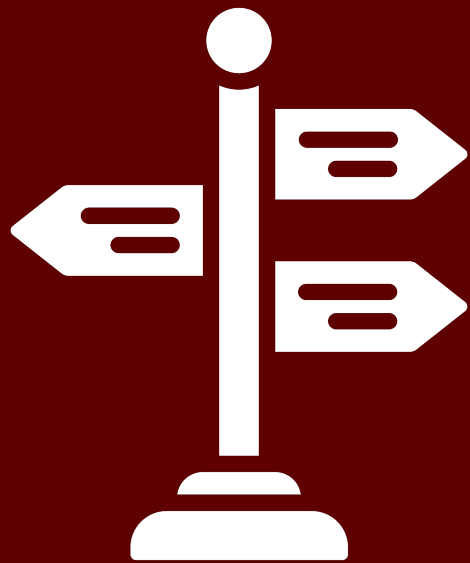
- Choose a format that fits your group (in-person, virtual, large group, small circle — whatever works!)
- Encourage **every voice**, especially those who don't usually get heard
- Use or adapt the questions based on your audience
  - Feel free to adjust the questions to fit your audience—for example, 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

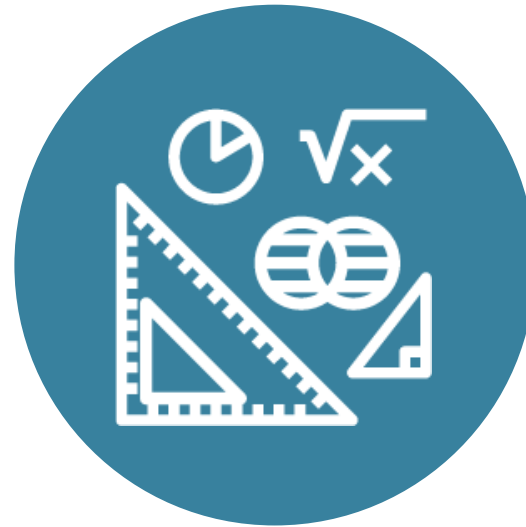
There are twelve staff members who work on behalf of the Board.

# 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



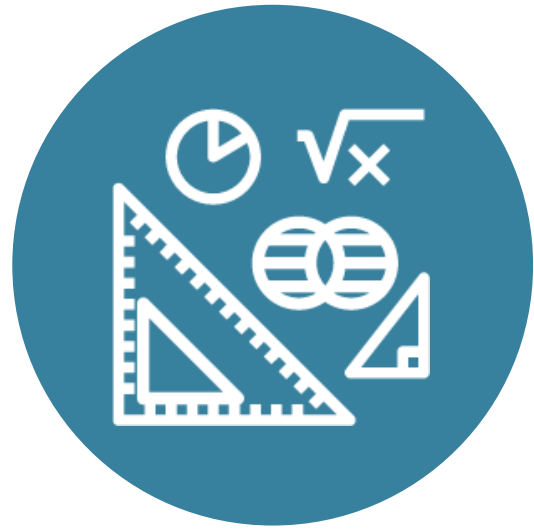
### High School & Beyond Plan

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.

[Learn more about the HSPB on the Board's website.](#)

# Graduation Requirements 101

## Credit Requirements



### Credit Requirements

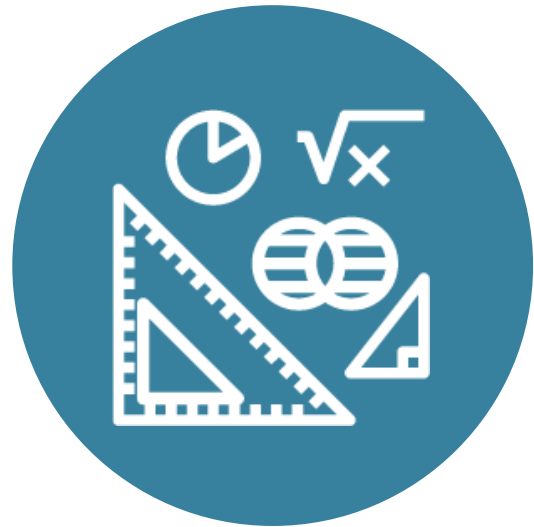
#### 24 Total Credits:

- 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.

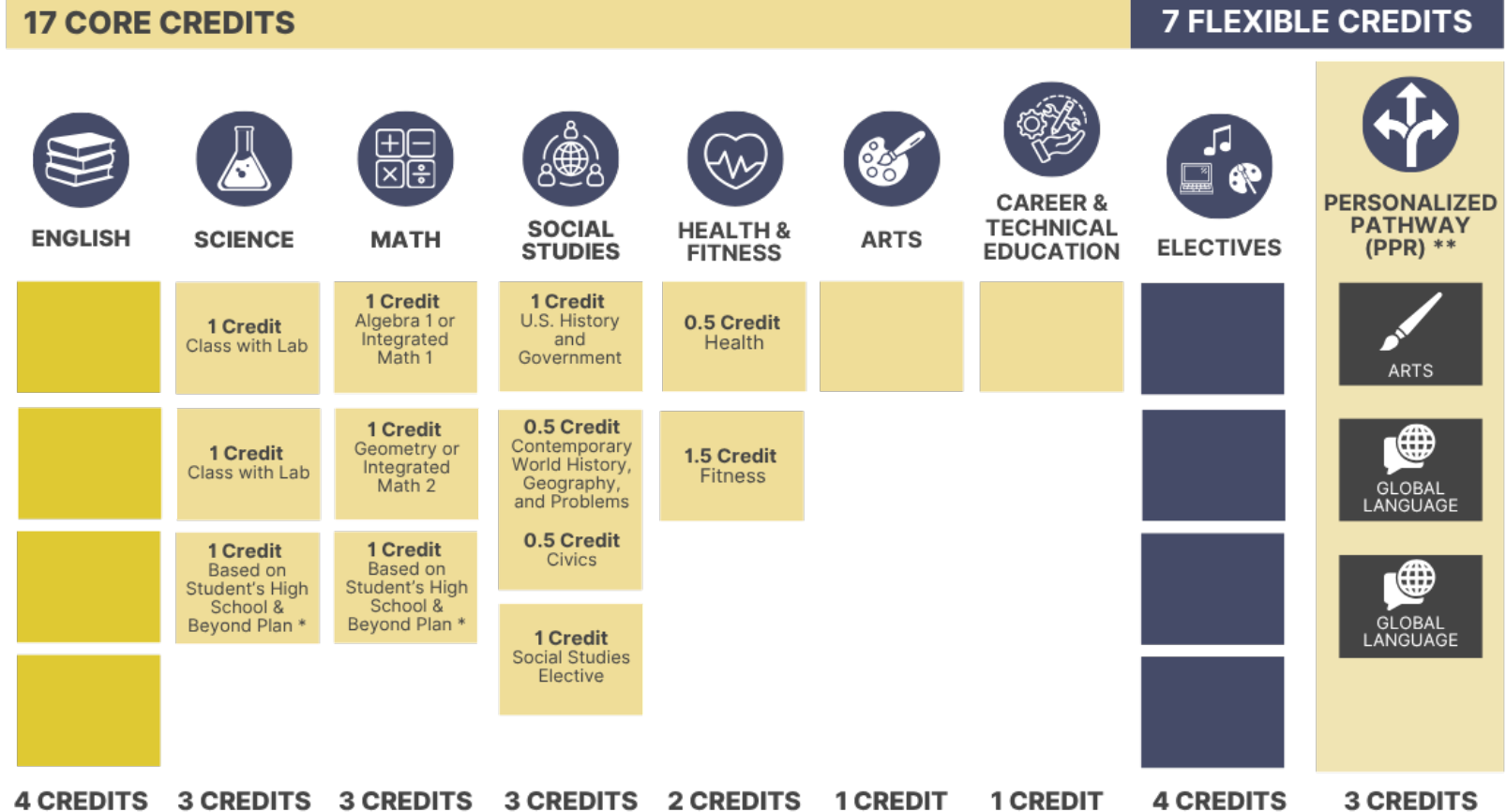
Districts can waive up to two flexible credits of the 24-credit requirement for individual student circumstances.

# Graduation Requirements 101

## Credit Requirements – Graphic Breakdown



### Credit Requirements



\* Third credit of science or math can be substituted with Computer Science, but not both.

\*\* Personalized pathway requirements (PPR) are electives in any subject that are aligned 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.



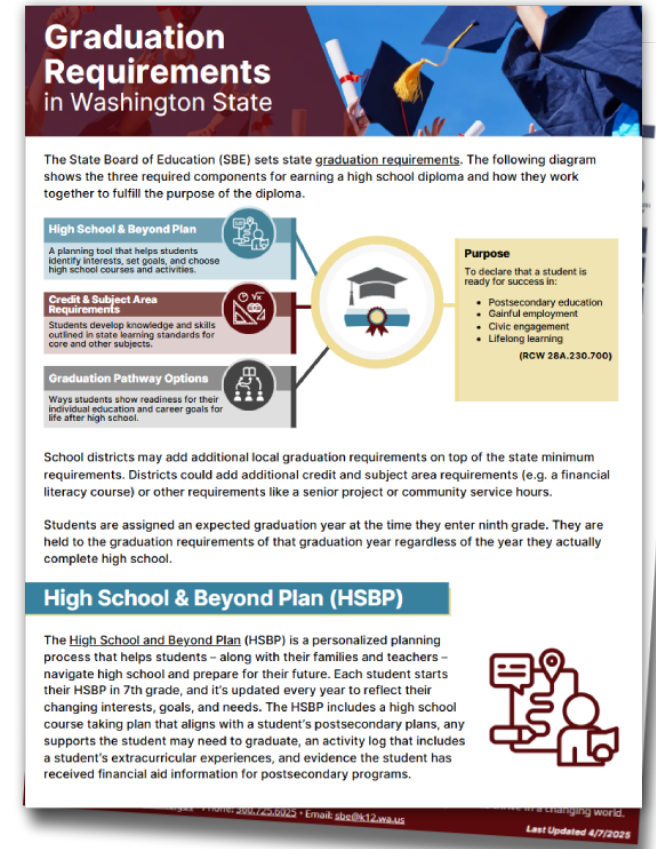
### [Washington State Graduation Requirements Handout](#)

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



### [Washington State Graduation Requirements 101 Video](#)

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



**Graduation Requirements in Washington State**

The State Board of Education (SBE) sets state graduation requirements. The following diagram shows the three required components for earning a high school diploma and how they work together to fulfill the purpose of the diploma.

Component	Description
<b>High School &amp; Beyond Plan</b>	A planning tool that helps students identify interests, set goals, and choose high school courses and activities.
<b>Credit &amp; Subject Area Requirements</b>	Students develop knowledge and skills outlined in state learning standards for core and other subjects.
<b>Graduation Pathway Options</b>	Ways students show readiness for their individual education and career goals for life after high school.

**Purpose**  
To declare that a student is ready for success in:

- Postsecondary education
- Gainful employment
- Civic engagement
- Lifelong learning

(RCW 28A.230.700)

School districts may add additional local graduation requirements on top of the state minimum requirements. Districts could add additional credit and subject area requirements (e.g. a financial literacy course) or other requirements like a senior project or community service hours.

Students are assigned an expected graduation year at the time they enter ninth grade. They are held to the graduation requirements of that graduation year regardless of the year they actually complete high school.

**High School & Beyond Plan (HSBP)**

The High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) is a personalized planning process that helps students – along with their families and teachers – navigate high school and prepare for their future. Each student starts their HSBP in 7th grade, and it's updated every year to reflect their changing interests, goals, and needs. The HSBP includes a high school course taking plan that aligns with a student's postsecondary plans, any supports the student may need to graduate, an activity log that includes a student's extracurricular experiences, and evidence the student has received financial aid information for postsecondary programs.

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Last Updated 4/7/2025

# Additional Offerings Districts Must Ensure Students Have an Opportunity to Complete

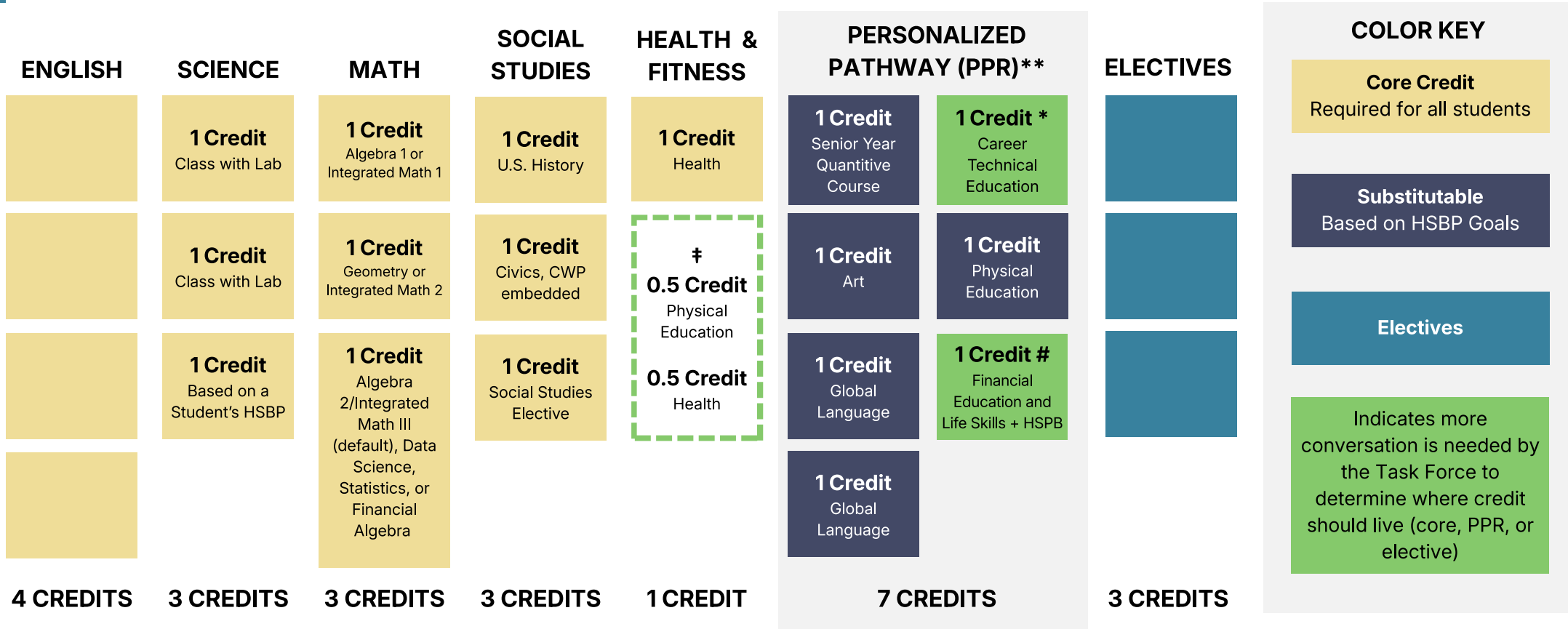
- AIDS Prevention Education Program\*
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)\*
- Elective Computer Science Course
- Comprehensive Sexual Health Education\*
- Financial Education\*
- Seal of Biliteracy
- John McCoy (Iulilaš) Since Time Immemorial Curriculum\*
- Sex Trafficking Awareness and Prevention Education\*
- Conservation, Natural Resources, and the Environment Instruction\*
- Yearly Arts Coursework (Applies to Districts with >200 Students)
- Study of Constitution of United States and Constitution of State of Washington\*

\* This is content that a district must ensure all students are exposed to before they graduate.



Read our [Educational Offerings handout](#) to learn more about all offerings that districts must offer.

# Proposed Credit Framework (In development)



\* Proposed change in 2 for 1 policy to allow credit for both CTE and Academic Course

\*\* Personalized pathway requirements (PPR) are electives in any subject that align with the student's HSBP. Courses noted on these are recommended defaults that can be substituted based on a student's HSBP goals. All high schools must offer these courses.

# With a requirement to develop a state model curriculum

‡ Indicates potential proposal to split half credit of health and physical education between core requirements and PPR. Graphic only shows core credit component for simplicity of presentation.

# 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!

## **Anna Ricks**

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**FutureReady Listening Session  
Toolkit (Google Drive)**