



The Washington State
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Washington Graduation Pathways
Forum
WSSDA Conference
November 22, 2019

The community forum was hosted as part of the Washington State School Directors Associations (WSSDA) conference during a breakout session titled, "Pathways to Graduation: State Policy, District Experiences, and Recommendations for Change". Approximately 90 educators from around the state were in attendance. The SBE's presentation provided an overview of the high school graduation pathways. There was also an emphasis placed on the equal importance of each pathway. During the presentation there were opportunities for attendees to ask pathway specific questions as each pathway was covered, with a full open Q&A session during the last 15 minutes of the session.

Participants in the community forum shared the following feedback on current pathways, student equity, access and barriers, additional pathway suggestions, access to post graduation data and outcomes, and barriers to graduation in general, during the session:

➤ **Current pathways**

- Different standards for dual credit and the AP/IB exams don't make sense and should be addressed
- The shifting "minimum" score, set by AFQT, needed to successfully complete the ASVAB pathway is concern.
- It was noted as an area of concern that there are no science requirements, or acknowledgments of why there aren't science requirements, for the graduation pathways.
- It was suggested that non-certified courses be considered for part of the CTE pathways requirements.
- Pathways need to include more science and social studies related options and/or requirements.

➤ **Student Equity**

- The need to address the Special Education demographic in terms of the pathways and a desire for feedback on how this should be done.
- Attendees voiced concern about helping underserved and marginalized populations graduate in general, but also within the context of utilizing the pathway options.

- Concern was expressed with state assessments and the level of scores required for off grade level students. Specifically, how do the graduation pathway requirements address off level students?
- **Access/Barriers**
 - Size in general
 - Access for districts of different sizes, specifically urban versus rural, is not equitable.
 - Access to the types of advisory boards and industry needed to successfully implement some of the pathways is very limited in rural communities and therefore creates a barrier to offering every pathway.
 - Size & AP/IB pathway
 - Many smaller, rural districts can't offer AP/IB.
 - Size & CTE pathway
 - Small districts aren't always able to get CTE certified teachers to teach CTE courses and because this is a requirement of the CTE pathways it makes it challenging for small or rural districts to offer this.
 - It was suggested that changes be made to the CTE pathways requirements so that noncertified CTE teachers can be used to teach pathways related CTE courses in smaller districts.
 - Getting a certified CTE teacher to teach just one class (i.e. the class needed to satisfy the CTE pathway requirement) is a barrier to offering this pathway.
 - Smaller districts need more goal oriented and industry requirement focused flexibility around the CTE pathway.
 - Even within larger districts smaller, choice high schools exist and are much like the rural schools in terms of their access to all pathways.
 - Large districts with smaller choice high schools want to make sure they are not overlooked when it comes to addressing barriers to offering all pathways, since their smaller choice high schools experience similar challenges as those faced by small, rural districts.
 - Dual Credit
 - Dual credit pathways are difficult to offer, because community colleges don't always cooperate with secondary schools.
 - If it were possible to make dual enrollment opportunities more cost effective for post-secondary institutions it would increase the likelihood of schools being able to offer this pathway.
 - Because the colleges aren't incentivized to offer dual credit enrollment it creates a barrier to implementing this pathway.
 - It was suggested that college courses be included in the classes offered at the high school.

- It was noted that there are economic dis-incentives for community colleges to offer dual enrollment.
- It was suggested there had been success with some districts offering grades 9-14 community college courses on their high school campus and this might be a better way to approach the dual enrollment pathway.

➤ **Additional pathway suggestions**

- There is a need for a pathway offering apprenticeship opportunities.
- It was suggested that science requirements should be added.
- Soft skills pathways and/or a social/emotional mental health related pathway should be considered.
- It was requested that customized pathways be an option so schools have more flexibility in creating pathways that work for their students.
- It was suggested that mastery based transcripts be used as a way to allow more flexibility within the graduation pathways.
- One attendee shared that their graduation rates went up with the AVID program and suggested this might be something to consider for an additional pathway.

➤ **Access to post graduation data & outcomes**

- There's a need to define what desired graduation outcomes are in terms of post-graduation success for students and use real data to inform this.
- There's an urgent need to create pathways that consider and look at outcomes.
- More information is needed on student outcomes and tracking post-graduation in order to better inform how successful current pathway options are and to help address additional pathways that might be needed.
- Attendees wanted to know if post-graduation data was currently available and if not, would there be better access to post graduation data for students graduating under the new pathways?

➤ **Barriers to graduation in general**

- Is 24 credits the right number to require for graduation?
- The 24-credit graduation requirement continues to be cited as a general barrier to students utilizing the pathways and to graduating in general.
- General concerns were expressed regarding graduation rates.
- It was suggested that core credit be given for "HS and Beyond" type courses to help students meet the 24-credit graduation requirements so that they had the option to take the elective courses needed to satisfy some of the graduation pathways options.

➤ **Other**

- It was suggested that diplomas would become a more valuable asset if they included badges identifying areas of knowledge or success.
- The whole child needs to be better addressed in the pathways and what are ways this can happen?