



## What *ARE* Students Taking?<sup>1</sup> Fast Facts from the Transcript Study

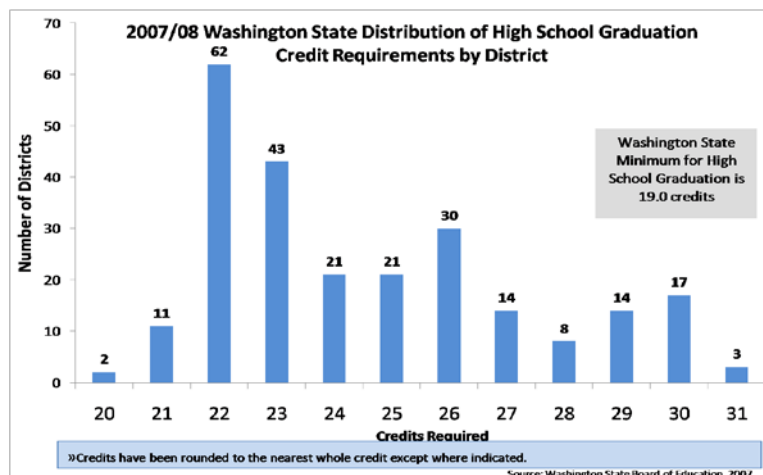
In this sample of 14,875 students from the graduating class of 2008:

- Almost 50% successfully completed all courses that met the minimum, public four-year WA college admissions standards—despite a lack of correspondence between minimum state requirements and college entry requirements, and between district requirements and college entry requirements.
- Students generally attempted more credits than required and earned more credits than required. The mean number of credits attempted was 27.6; the mode was 24. Based on the mean number of credits, students attempted approximately 4.0 more credits than required and earned 2.9 more credits than required.
- 65.5% of students completed the advanced math requirements required for minimum, public four-year WA college admission.
- 43.6% of students completed geometry by the end of the second year of high school; of these, 79.2% of students met standard on the math WASL. 30.4% completed Algebra 2 or above by the end of their sophomore year; of these, 95.6% met standard on the WASL. There was a statistically significant relationship between the level of math completed and meeting standard on the math WASL.
- 72.3% of students completed two credits of science, including at least one lab credit, by the end of the second year of high school; of these, 59.5% met standard on the science WASL. There was a statistically significant relationship between the level of science completed and meeting standard on the science WASL.
- In science:
  - 87.6% met the minimum HECB requirement of 2 credits, 1 lab (HECB will require 2 labs for students entering college in 2010)
  - 78.4% took 2 lab courses, but fewer than 3 credits
  - 54.6% met the proposed CORE 24 requirement of 3 credits, 2 labs

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<sup>1</sup> In 2007, the State Board of Education conducted a study to determine what course credits students were *required* to take in order to graduate from high school. In 2008, the Board commissioned a transcript study by the BERC Group to determine what course credits students in the graduating class of 2008 were actually *taking*. The BERC Group examined course-taking patterns of 14,875 high school seniors from 100 schools in 100 districts. Every county was represented in the sample. The minimum HEC Board requirements were used because they provide a standard, measureable metric of comparison in Washington State. Both the graduation requirements database of all 246 districts with high schools and the full transcript study can be found on the Board's Web site at: <http://www.sbe.wa.gov>.

- In English:
  - Almost 79% met the current 4-credit HECB and proposed CORE 24 requirement, including 3 credits of composition or literature and 1 credit of drama as literature, public speaking, debate, journalistic writing, business English, or English as a Second Language.
  - Only 20 districts do not require 4 credits of English.
- In Social Studies:
  - Approximately 90% met the current 3-credit HECB requirement and proposed CORE 24 requirements.
- In Arts:
  - 91% met the current HECB requirement of 1 credit (which means 8.8% did not meet the minimum 1 credit fine arts graduation credit; technically, this credit *cannot* be waived)
  - Almost 40% met the proposed CORE 24 requirement of 2 credits.
- In Career and Technical Education:
  - The mean number of CTE credits successfully completed was 2.9; the modal number of credits was 2.0.
- In World Languages:
  - Almost 70% met the current HECB requirements and proposed CORE 24 requirement of 2 credits.
- 23% of students received credit in one or more subject areas for passing a particular section of the WASL; Students usually received .25 or .50 credits in English, math, or science for passing a portion of the WASL. (In one district, students received 1 credit for passing each section of the WASL.)
- Baseline graduation requirements:



## Questions for Discussion

- What surprises you?
- What does the data make you think about?