

# Opening the Locks on Opportunity: Career Readiness and the High School Diploma

December 2017



# OPENING THE LOCKS ON OPPORTUNITY: CAREER READINESS AND THE HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

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## Executive Summary

What would it take for all students completing high school in Washington to be ready for their next step? What common knowledge and skills should students have to be successful in an array of pathways leading to countless careers?

For the past two years, the State Board of Education (SBE), with the support of a National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Deeper Learning Stipend, has explored and discussed career readiness within the context of Washington's high school diploma. The SBE has held joint meetings with Washington's Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (the Workforce Board), and has met with and discussed career readiness with agency partners, parents, students, and community members.

This report, *Career Readiness and the High School Diploma*, is organized into three sections:

1. **The Washington High School Diploma—where are we now?**—this section summarizes the current policy basis for the Washington diploma. A framework for a definition of career readiness within the context of the high school diploma is suggested, based on current law, policies, and discussions with stakeholders.
2. **What have we learned?**—a look at what is happening in career readiness around Washington, this section highlights current practices and initiatives by different Washington agencies and organizations. This section is intended to help the Board identify possible policy gaps and appropriate partners for possible policy recommendations or advocacy.
3. **Where do we go from here?**—a discussion of options for further work for the state and for the Board to consider in strategic planning and the adoption of future legislative agendas.

**Where are we now?** This section of the report offers a framework for a definition of career readiness that consists of four components, and suggest that a system or program that supports and strengthens any one or combination of components also helps prepare students for career readiness:

1. Career Ready Skills and Deeper Learning
2. Career Information and Planning
3. Content Knowledge
4. Connections to Postsecondary Options

**What have we learned?** This framework developed in the first section of the report is based on existing state policy as expressed in statute and rules, and on feedback from participants at discussions and forums the Board has held or helped to organize. Participants, which included agency representatives, parents, students and other stakeholders, shared their knowledge, experience and opinions with the Board. Common themes from the Career Readiness Workshop held jointly with the Workforce Board included:

- Start early
  - This is a team effort:
    - Engage all levels of education
    - Engage all parts of the school system/distribute responsibility
    - Engage business in a more intensive and effective way
  - Make the learning and attainment of career readiness skills more explicit
  - Translate between the language of business and the language of education
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- Provide the professional development, tools, tool kits, resources and incentives to support the development career of readiness in the school system
- Expand work-based learning opportunities: internships/service learning/school-based jobs for students, externships for teachers
- Identify, recognize, inventory and scale best practices
- Assure access for all youth

Common themes from the SBE's forums Multi-cultural Perspectives on Career Readiness included:

1. The importance of relationships and mentoring for students in school.
2. The need for implicit bias, cultural competency, and trauma-informed instruction training for teachers.
3. The need to prepare students to think about postsecondary plans earlier.

In addition to summarizing the feedback from workshops and forums, this section of the report also summarizes what different agencies and government organizations involved in K12 education are doing in career readiness.

### **Where do we go from here?**

The Board held multiple discussions concerning career readiness during the past two years, has incorporated career readiness priorities into its legislative priorities, and has considered the feedback from participants at the workshops and forums as the Board considered it near-term and long-term strategic plan. Legislative priorities for 2018 include:

- A state investment in social-emotional and trauma-informed educational approaches.
  - These approaches align with student-centered learning that fosters career readiness skills and deeper learning.
- Support for strong guidance and planning around post-secondary preparation. The SBE urges the Legislature to provide financial and programmatic support at the middle school level to effectively implement the changes required by the 2017 Legislature (HB 2224).
  - This priority aligns with the often-repeated message from forum and workshop participants that postsecondary planning needs to start early.

In addition, based on the compiled information in this report, the Board may wish to consider additional career readiness topics to work on and incorporate into strategic planning and future priorities:

- Support for intentional incorporation of career readiness skills and consistently communicating the relevance of learning to life beyond high school, across all curricula.
  - Advocacy for more counselors and support for ways that counselors can provide professional development and support to other middle and high school educators, so that all educators can provide accurate pathway information to students.
  - Support and encourage career-planning courses that incorporate High School and Beyond Planning and financial planning.
  - Continue to reinforce the relationship with the Workforce Board to foster career connected learning opportunities and work to support increasing engagement of business and industry in K12 public education.
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# THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

*A high-quality education system that prepares all students for college, career, and life.*

## CAREER READINESS AND THE HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

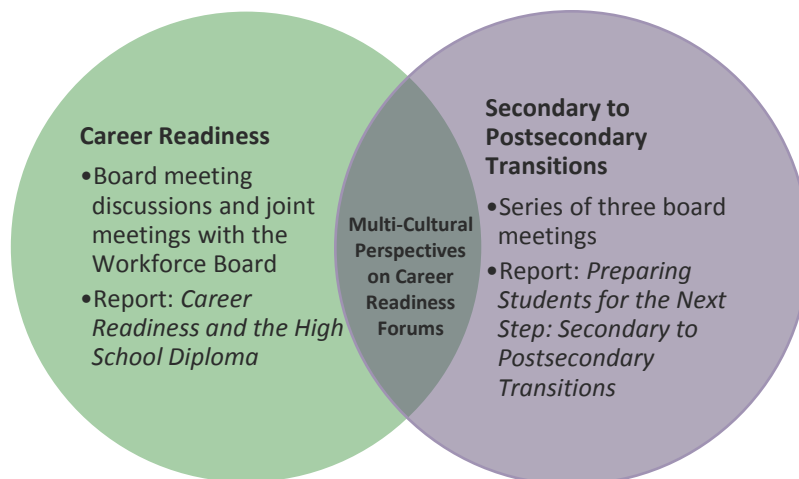
### Introduction

What would it take for all students completing high school in Washington to be ready for their next step? What common knowledge and skills should students have to be successful in an array of pathways leading to countless careers?

For the past two years, the State Board of Education (SBE), with the support of a National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) Deeper Learning Stipend, has explored and discussed career readiness within the context of Washington’s high school diploma. The SBE has held joint meetings with Washington’s Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (the Workforce Board), and has met with and discussed career readiness with agency partners, parents, students, and community members. For the past year, this work has overlapped with an effort by the Board to better understand student secondary to postsecondary transitions (See figure 1). This report, *Career Readiness and the High School Diploma*, summarizes the work of the Board on career readiness, and is a companion report to [Preparing Students for the Next Step: Secondary to Postsecondary Transitions](#).

As part of both efforts, the Board held three public forums, Multi-Cultural Perspectives on Career Readiness, in different locations across the state (Everett, Walla Walla, and Spokane). A summary of what parents, students, educators, representatives from community organization and members of the public shared with Board members at the forums is included in [Preparing Students for the Next Step: Secondary to Postsecondary Transitions](#).

**Figure 1:** Overlapping initiatives by the State Board of Education during 2017.



This report, *Career Readiness and the High School Diploma*, is organized into three sections:

4. **The Washington High School Diploma—where are we now?**—this section summarizes the current policy basis for the Washington diploma. A framework for a definition of career readiness within the context of the high school diploma is suggested, based on current law, policies, and discussions with stakeholders.

5. **What have we learned?**—a look at what is happening in career readiness around Washington, this section highlights current practices and initiatives by different Washington agencies and organizations. This section is intended to help the Board identify possible policy gaps and appropriate partners for possible policy recommendations or advocacy.
6. **Where do we go from here?**—a discussion of options for further work for the state and for the Board to consider in strategic planning and the adoption of future legislative agendas.

## The Washington High School Diploma—where are we now?

### *The Meaning and Purpose of a High School Diploma*

The language in statute is clear and ambitious: the diploma declares a student ready for **both postsecondary education and gainful employment** (RCW 28A.230.090)—it is both, with citizenship and the skills for lifelong learning added to the mix as well.

This statute guides and aligns with Washington’s policy of **one diploma for all students**. Washington is one of 28 states (including the District of Columbia) that have a single diploma. Twenty-three states have multiple diplomas. For states with multiple diplomas, the diplomas may be considered, for example, “college preparatory,” “technical,” “career and technical,” “honors,” or “standard.” In such states, the graduation requirements are different for different diplomas: generally, more academic credits are required for honors diplomas and more Career and Technical (CTE) credits are required for a technical diploma. Different testing options may also have a role in different diplomas.

In addition to one diploma, in Washington all students must generally meet the same milestones on the way to earning a high school diploma. These milestones include 1) earning credits toward high school graduation requirements, 2) meeting assessment requirements, and 3) having a High School and Beyond Plan. Legislation passed in 2017 ([ESHB 2224](#)) provided new alternatives for students to meet standard on the state assessments, but in the broad context discussed here, these alternatives do not represent a separate diploma or different milestones. If students are unsuccessful on the tests, they may access alternatives, and the alternatives are, by law (RCW 28A.655.061(10)(a)), comparable in rigor to the skills and knowledge students demonstrate through taking the tests. Students may chose different courses and attend skills centers, and schools may offer different instructional models and curricula; these provide flexibility, options, and are considered different paths to a Washington diploma. While students may take many different paths, all students are expected to pass these milestones.

The approach of having all students pass the same milestones on the way to a high school diploma is a policy choice that Washington has made, and other states (and countries) have not. Kentucky, for example, defines a [college-ready student and a career-ready student differently](#), and provides separate routes for students to earn a high school diploma. If a student is successful in either of these, the student earns the same Kentucky diploma. In other states, there are different routes that lead to different diplomas. [Ohio provides students three ways](#) to a diploma: 1) pass state tests, 2) earn an

### The Meaning and Purpose of a High School Diploma in Statute

#### [RCW 28A.150.200](#)

The legislature defines the program of basic education under this chapter as that which is necessary to provide the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the state-established high school graduation requirements that are intended to allow students to have the opportunity to graduate with a **meaningful diploma that prepares them for postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship**. [Emphasis added.]

#### [RCW 28A.230.090](#)

The purpose of a high school diploma is to declare that a student is **ready for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship, and is equipped with the skills to be a lifelong learner**. [Emphasis added.]

industry-recognized credential and pass a workforce readiness test, or 3) do well on ACT or SAT tests. These different routes lead to the Ohio High School Diploma, the Ohio Career-Technical Diploma with Honors, and the Ohio Academic Diploma with Honors respectively.

The one-diploma policy of Washington not only aligns with the state’s statute, but also may be an expression of the culture of secondary education in Washington. A sentiment that was often expressed by educators, students, and members of the public at the community forums the Board held in March through July of 2017, was an aversion to any policy that might “track” students. When there are separate tracks, it has been the experience of students and adults who passed through the system that people of color experienced bias and low-expectations, and were guided into tracks that were perceived as less academically rigorous. The one-diploma policy of the state helps to avoid different tracks for different students.

While a one-diploma policy may help prevent tracking of students due to negative biases, it may also be a system with less capacity for individualization and customization. To off-set a rigid, “one-size-fits-all” system, Washington also has **policies designed to create flexibility within the system**. The additional options for alternative assessments provided by HB 2224 are examples of this. Other examples include providing for districts to be able to waive two credits of the 24-credit graduation requirements, and flexible credits within the graduation requirements such as Personal Pathway Requirements.

To summarize, the foundational ideas that underlie high school diploma policy in Washington are:

1. One diploma for all students.
2. A diploma means students are ready for both college and a career, as well as citizenship and life-long learning.
3. All students pass the same milestones (credits, assessments, and HSBP) on the way to a high school diploma.
4. Flexibility and customization are provided through policies within the system that support multiple pathways.

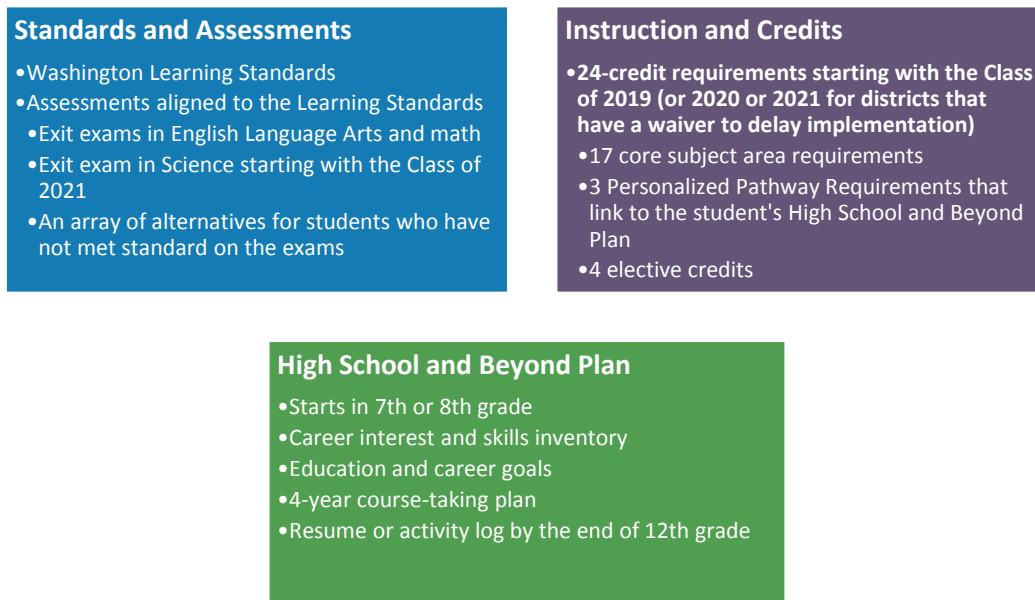
### *The Components of a Washington High School Diploma*

The components (or milestones) of a Washington diploma (Figure 2) consist of 1) standards and assessments, 2) instruction and credits, and 3) the High School and Beyond Plan.

#### Standards and Assessments

The standards are a way of describing the content students should learn in high school and assessments are one way students may demonstrate mastery of the content subjects. Some subjects have statewide assessments—ELA and math through the Smarter Balanced Assessments, and science through the Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science (WCAS). Currently, the Smarter Balanced Assessments are also exit exams, and students must meet a certain score to earn a diploma. If they do not meet that score, they may use an alternative to demonstrate mastery of the ELA and math content. In 2017, [ESHB 2224](#) provided additional alternatives for students who have not met standard on the exams. The bill also established the Class of 2021 as the first class for who the WCAS will be an exit exam.

**Figure 2:** Components of a Washington High School Diploma



Currently, the graduation score needed on the Smarter Balanced assessments in ELA and math is less than the score that has been identified by the Smart Balanced Consortium as the college-ready Level Three achievement level—the level that indicates a student is on-track to be prepared for college entry-level, credit-bearing college courses by the time they graduate. The SBE, who has the authority to set scores on state assessments required for graduation, has set a minimum high school graduation level within the range of Level 2 (at approximately a “Level 2.6”). The SBE adopted a [position statement in January 2015](#) that affirms the goal of a graduation requirement that aligns with a career- and college-ready performance level, but states an intent to set a minimum score for graduation while the system adjusts to new standards and assessments.

### Instruction and Credits

Instruction and credits are subject area credit graduation requirements. Students generally meet credit graduation requirements through instructional course offering at their school. In addition, districts have a great deal of flexibility in delivering opportunities for students to earn high school credit. In Washington the definition of a high school credit is not based on in-class seat time so credit-earning opportunities may include alternative learning, work-based learning, and competency-based credit (see the [Competency-Based Handbook](#) for more information).

Figure 3 shows the subject area 24-Credit Graduation Requirements for the Class of 2019 and beyond. The Washington Legislature approved implementing these SBE graduation requirements in 2014 with E2SSB 6552, which also provided for districts to delay implementation of the 24-Credit Graduation Requirements by two years. About 100 of Washington’s 249 districts with high schools have a waiver to delay. By the Class of 2021, all students will have these graduation requirements.

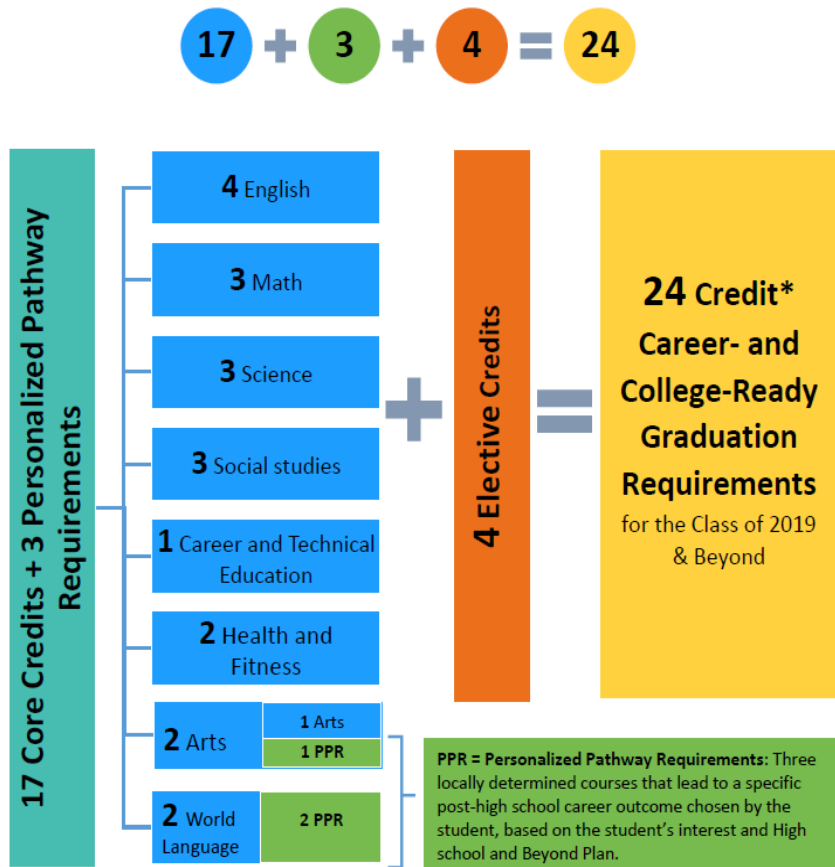
The graduation requirement framework consists of 17 core subject area requirements, four electives, and three Personalized Pathway Requirements (PPRs). PPRs are three credits that may replace two world language requirements and one of the two arts credits. These are credits that allow a student to progress toward a specific education or career goal stated in their High School and Beyond Plan.

Washington is one of 11 states, including the District of Columbia, that includes Career and Technical Education (CTE) as a requirement for graduation. Forty states do not require all students to take a CTE class in high school. In Washington, students may meet this requirement by taking a CTE course or by taking an “occupational education course.” The occupational education option is available for a handful of small districts that do not have a CTE program; however, the overwhelming majority of Washington

students meet this requirement through a CTE course. The CTE requirement, part of the 17 “core credits,” recognizes the career-readiness skills that students gain through CTE that all students should have.

**Figure 3: 24-Credit Graduation Requirements**

### How Do the 24-Credit Graduation Requirements Add Up?



*\*For individual students, 2 credits may be waived: A district must adopt a written policy to waive up to 2 credits of the 24, based on the student’s ‘unusual circumstances.’*

World languages are also part of the 24-Credit Graduation Requirements. Not all students are required to take world languages, because world languages may be replaced by PPRs. Including world languages as part of the 24-credit framework is to inform students and encourage them to consider the importance of world languages in career and college readiness—providing students with career, academic, and cultural skills and knowledge as well as meeting entrance requirements for 4-year postsecondary institutions. Only three other states have world languages as part of graduation requirements.

#### High School and Beyond Plan

The third component of Washington’s high school diploma is the High School and Beyond Plan. By law, a decision about whether a student has

met the HSBP requirement is made locally (RCW 28A.230.090(1)(c)). [ESHB 2224](#) created greater definition to the HSBP than had been required previously. Prior to this law, the state requirements for the HSBP included a plan for high school, a plan for postsecondary education and training, a record of any CTE course equivalencies the student took, and to act as a guide for the student’s third credit of science and third credit of math. The new law calls for the HSBP to also:

- Guide a student’s high school experience and prepare a student for postsecondary education or training and career.
- Be initiated during the 7th or 8th grade.
- Start with a career interest and skills inventory.
- Be updated to reflect assessment results, assess progress, changing interests, goals, and needs.
- Identify available interventions, academic support, and courses that are designed for students who have not yet met high school graduation standards.



In addition, districts are encouraged to involve parents and guardians in the developing and updating of the HSBP, and the required elements include:

- Identification of career goals, aided by the skills and interest inventory.
- Identification of education goals.
- A four-year plan for course-taking that fulfills graduation requirements and aligns with career and education goals.
- By the end of the 12th grade, a resume, or activity log.

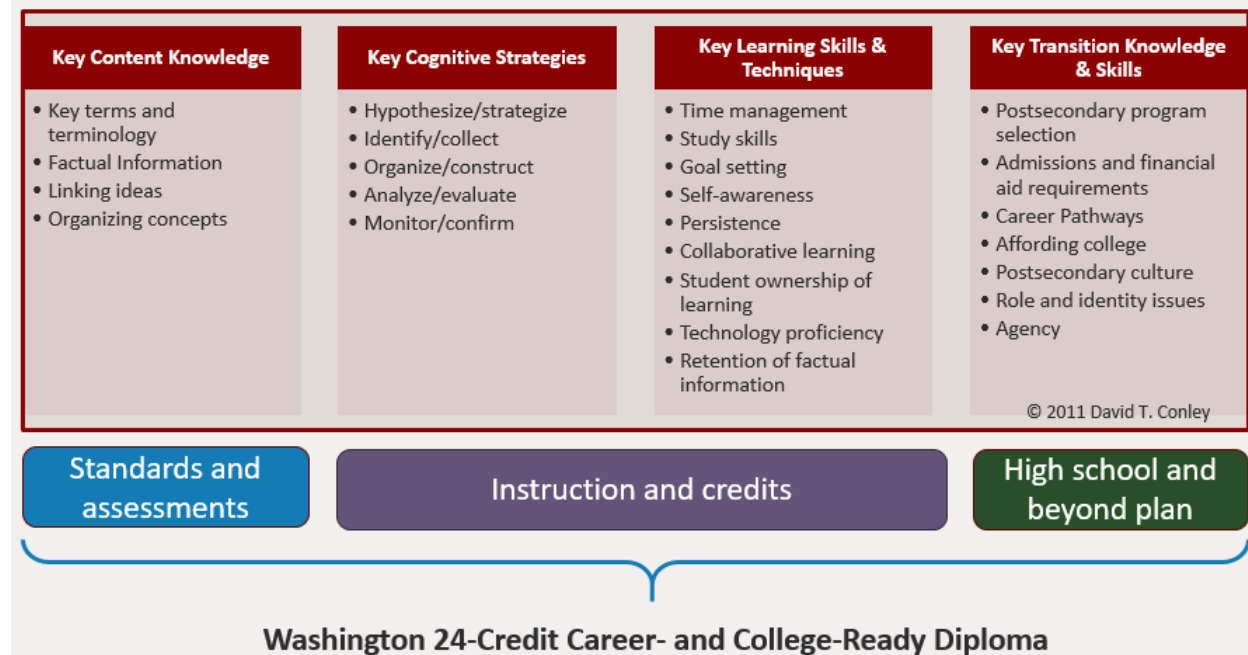
Districts implement the HSBP in a variety of ways. It is not a credit requirement, but some districts chose to award credit. Some districts support the plan through a credit-bearing advisory course. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction’s [Career Guidance Washington](#) provides a free curriculum that includes high school and beyond planning. Also, an online high school and beyond planning tool is available for districts through [WSIPC](#). (The WSIPC tool is available at no cost to members, and for a one-time set-up fee to non-members.)

*Alignment of the Washington State Diploma with Career and College Readiness*

Is Washington’s high school diploma a career- and college-ready diploma? The meaning and purpose of the diploma that is articulated in statute aligns with a college and career readiness, but do the components of the high school diploma align as well?

One model of college and career readiness is David Conley’s [Four Keys to College and Career Readiness](#). Figure 4 shows Conley’s keys within the rectangle, and how the components of Washington’s high school diploma, below the rectangle, could align with these keys. The HSBP clearly aligns with “Key Transition Knowledge and Skills”—a student could acquire this knowledge and these skills through a good HSBP. The “Content Knowledge” Key is aligned with standards and assessments. The Key Cognitive Strategies and Key Learning Skills and Techniques are strategies, skills, and techniques that students would acquire through good instruction and good high school credit-earning opportunities. In its components, the Washington high school diploma generally aligns with at least one model of career and college readiness.

**Figure 4:** Conley’s Four Keys to College and Career Readiness and the Components of the Washington High School Diploma



The concept of college readiness is understood to mean mastery of the content knowledge, as well as the skills and dispositions that would enable a student to be successful in entry level courses at postsecondary institutions. Is career readiness something different? The SBE has discussed defining career readiness with partners such as the Workforce Board as well as with students, parents, and representatives of community organizations at the community forums held in March, May, and July 2017. The work of developing a definition of career readiness that has buy-in across the state is on-going. But current policy, combined with often-repeated messages about career readiness heard by Board members at the meeting with the Workforce Board and at the community forums, may form the basis for a framework for moving forward with meaningful policy and advocacy work on behalf of career readiness. Table 1 lists general statements and their sources that contribute to the framework, and Figure 5 summarizes a framework of career readiness.

**Table 1:** General Statements About Career Readiness

General Statements	Source/supporting evidence
A high school diploma means prepared for postsecondary education <b>and</b> gainful employment, as well as citizenship and life-long learning.	Statute, meaning and purpose of a high school diploma.
One high school diploma, but with flexibility for districts and students, and options of multiple pathways for individualization for students.	One state high school diploma is expressed in Washington statute. “One diploma, with multiple pathways” was also the conclusion based on wide outreach as part of the SBE’s Meaningful High School Diploma project.
All students should have foundational content knowledge in key subject areas including Career and Technical Education.	Graduation requirements rules.
All students should be introduced to information about career options early, by 7 <sup>th</sup> or 8 <sup>th</sup> grade, and in high school identify their education and career goals and have a plan for postsecondary education and careers.	Statute (ESHB 2224) and participants in SBE community forums.
All student should consider a high school education that affords the widest postsecondary education and career options, including the study of world languages, and should consider and have knowledge of academic and career pathways available to them, including skill centers and CTE programs.	Graduation requirements rules, SBE graduation requirements resolutions, and participants in SBE community forums.
Employability skills and attributes and deeper learning should be taught and supported across the curriculum.	Expressed by participants in SBE community forums and the SBE/Workforce Board discussion with stakeholders; also, the SBE/Workforce Board joint resolution.
Students need to know why: students what to know the relevance of their high school learning in all subjects to their life outside of school and after high school.	Expressed by participants in SBE community forums and the SBE/Workforce Board discussion with stakeholders.
A high school education should include financial literacy since this is practical and necessary knowledge for success in postsecondary life.	Participants at SBE Community forums and in statute: Goal 4 of Basic Education.

Figure 5 is meant to organize and summarize the statements in Table 1 in a visual that is somewhat parallel to Conley’s College and Career Readiness Keys, but is focused not on the attributes of a career-ready student, but rather on the attributes of the system that helps prepare students to be career

ready. In other words, activities in high school that strengthen one or a combination of these four key components will strengthen career readiness of students as they progress toward earning a Washington high school diploma. The four key components identified in this framework are 1) Career-Ready Skills and Deeper Learning, 2) Career Information and Planning, 3) Content Knowledge, and 4) Connections to Postsecondary Options.

**Figure 5: A Career Readiness Framework**

<b>A high school diploma:</b> All student prepared for postsecondary education, careers, citizenship and life-long learning One diploma--but with flexibility and individualization			
<b>Career-Ready Skills and Deeper Learning</b> Deeper Learning and "soft skills" Incorporated across all curricula Career connected learning Engages businesses and communities Students understand the relevance of learning to life	<b>Career information and Planning</b> A quality High School and Beyond Plan Identification of career and education goals A plan for after high school Starts in middle school Information and access to a wide range of pathways	<b>Content Knowledge</b> High quality instruction in core subject areas, including CTE and civics High quality industry-specific knowledge and skills in CTE pathways Basic financial literacy Course choices relevant to student goals	<b>Connections to Postsecondary Options</b> Students informed about all postsecondary options Dual Credit options available and encouraged Trusting relationships between students and educators who can share accurate information

This framework is intended to be useful in recognizing areas where career readiness fits within the career- and college-ready diploma. This framework may also be useful in recognizing areas where the system is fairly well-developed, and other areas where further work would improve the career readiness of our high school graduates.

**What have we learned?**

*Career Readiness Conversations*

During the Board’s extended look at career readiness, the Board undertook to hear from a wide range of people with differing perspectives. The SBE and the Workforce Board held a joint meeting for a career readiness discussion and “café conversation” with partners. There were approximately 60 attendees plus members, with representation from districts, OSPI, Career and Technical Education, the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, and the Student Achievement Council. Full notes from the café conversation are included as Appendix A, but the primary themes concerning career readiness were:

- Start early
- This is a team effort:
  - Engage all levels of education
  - Engage all parts of the school system/distribute responsibility
  - Engage business in a more intensive and effective way
- Make the learning and attainment of career readiness skills more explicit
- Translate between the language of business and the language of education
- Provide the professional development, tools, tool kits, resources and incentives to support the development career of readiness in the school system

- Expand work-based learning opportunities: internships/service learning/school-based jobs for students, externships for teachers
- Identify, recognize, inventory and scale best practices
- Assure access for all youth

As part of the Workforce Board and the SBE’s joint meeting, the two Boards passed a joint resolution, which is included as Appendix B. In the resolution, the boards recommended moving forward with advocacy for funding for CTE, exploring career readiness standards, and working on a high school and beyond planning/career exploration credit-bearing course.

In addition to the joint meeting with the Workforce Board, the SBE held three community forums, “Multi-Cultural Perspectives on Career Readiness.” For these forums, the SBE reached out to community organization as well as schools, districts, and postsecondary institutions. At these forums, the SBE heard that students of color and low-income students face a variety of barriers to success in high school. In order to increase career readiness for students, the three major themes were:

1. The importance of relationships and mentoring for students in school.
2. The need for implicit bias, cultural competency, and trauma-informed instruction training for teachers.
3. The need to prepare students to think about postsecondary plans earlier.



A more detailed summary of the forums are included in [Preparing Students for the Next Step: Secondary to Postsecondary Transitions](#). Input the SBE received in these career readiness conversations was integrated into the Framework in Figure 5, and will inform the Board’s ongoing strategic planning for 2018, as well as the development of Board’s next 5-year strategic plan that will be developed within a year.

### *Career readiness around Washington*

Multiple government agencies and organizations are interested and working on high school or youth career readiness. At the September 2017 Board meeting, the Board requested staff collect information on what other agencies and organizations are doing. This information will allow the Board to consider meaningful contributions to statewide efforts in career readiness that align with the Board’s roles and responsibilities and take into account the work of partner organizations. Table 2 lists some of the programs and initiatives of state agencies that support career readiness and are involved in K12 education. This list includes programs and initiatives that are highlighted on the agencies’ websites, as well as those suggested by partner agency staff.

How well are the elements of the career readiness framework addressed in Washington? Table 3 organizes the agency and system programs and initiatives by the elements of the framework. This categorization is somewhat arbitrary and multiple programs and initiatives align with several elements, nevertheless, Table 3 shows that there is valuable, innovative work being done in each area of career readiness. In addition, some non-government organizations also provide rich career-readiness learning for students, as well as advocacy for career readiness policies. CTE remains a widely available program that operates across the framework. There are pockets and swaths of excellence throughout the state, yet too often there are silos rather than integrated system. Some components of the framework are more developed and some are less:

**Table 2:** Agency Programs and Initiatives for Career and College Readiness and Youth Career Readiness

OSPI	Workforce Board	Washington Student Achievement Council	Governor’s Office	State Board for Community and Technical Colleges	Legislature Coalitions Task Forces Public/Private
<a href="#">Career and Technical Education</a> <a href="#">Skill Centers</a> <a href="#">Career Guidance Washington</a> <a href="#">GATE— Graduation Initiative</a> <a href="#">Dual Credit Programs</a> <a href="#">Microsoft Imagine Academy</a> <a href="#">Career Connect Task Force</a>	Career Planning: <a href="#">Career Bridge Washington</a> and “ <a href="#">Where Are You Going?</a> ” <a href="#">Oversight of state’s Carl Perkins Act</a> supporting CTE <a href="#">Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP)</a> Strategic Workforce Development Plan, which includes a focus on youth with barriers to employment	<a href="#">Dual Credit Programs</a> <a href="#">College Readiness Project</a> <a href="#">College Admissions</a> <a href="#">Financial Aid</a>	The Governor’s priorities for education that most affect youth career readiness include improving graduation rates and a focus on STEM. Goals for education are listed in <a href="#">Results Washington</a> .	<a href="#">Bridge to College</a> (in partnership with OSPI) <a href="#">High school diploma programs</a> <a href="#">Dual Credit Programs</a> <a href="#">High school equivalency testing</a> (GED)	<a href="#">Ready WA</a> <a href="#">Career Connect Task Force</a> <a href="#">STEM Education Innovation Alliance</a> <a href="#">AJAC</a> <a href="#">Washington STEM</a> <a href="#">Core Plus</a>

**Table 3:** Programs and Initiatives Categorized by the Elements of the Career Readiness Framework

Career Readiness Skills and Deeper Learning	Career Information and Planning	Content Knowledge	Connecting to Postsecondary Options
<a href="#">Career and Technical Education</a> <a href="#">Skill Centers</a> <a href="#">GATE—Graduation Initiative</a> <a href="#">Oversight of state’s Carl Perkins Act</a> supporting CTE <a href="#">Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP)</a> <a href="#">Microsoft Imagine Academy</a> <a href="#">STEM Education Innovation Alliance</a> <a href="#">Core Plus</a> <a href="#">AJAC</a> <a href="#">Washington STEM</a>	<a href="#">Career Guidance Washington</a> <a href="#">GATE—Graduation Initiative</a> Career Planning: <a href="#">Career Bridge Washington</a> and “ <a href="#">Where Are You Going?</a> ” <a href="#">Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP)</a> <a href="#">Ready WA</a>	<a href="#">Career and Technical Education</a> <a href="#">Skill Centers</a> <a href="#">Career Guidance Washington</a> (financial planning and other topics) <a href="#">Oversight of state’s Carl Perkins Act</a> supporting CTE <a href="#">Microsoft Imagine Academy</a> <a href="#">High school diploma programs at CTCs</a> <a href="#">STEM Education Innovation Alliance</a> <a href="#">AJAC</a> <a href="#">Washington STEM</a> <a href="#">Core Plus</a>	<a href="#">Career and Technical Education</a> <a href="#">Skill Centers</a> <a href="#">GATE—Graduation Initiative</a> <a href="#">Dual Credit Programs</a> <a href="#">College Readiness Project</a> <a href="#">College Admissions</a> <a href="#">Financial Aid</a> <a href="#">Oversight of state’s Carl Perkins Act</a> supporting CTE <a href="#">Bridge to College</a> <a href="#">Talent and Prosperity for All (TAP)</a> <a href="#">AJAC</a> <a href="#">Washington STEM</a> <a href="#">Core Plus</a>

Career-Ready Skills and Deeper Learning—There is attention and momentum in the state on career connected learning, but a lot of work to be done. Effectively engaging business in education and education in business is very challenging. For CTE programs, advisory committees provide business, industry, and labor guidance. For many non-CTE subject areas, engagement with any business or community representatives is uncommon. According to students and former students in SBE public forums, understanding and connecting the relevance of learning to the student’s life and future was one of the things most commonly found lacking in their education. Overall, intentional incorporation of career readiness skills and communicating the relevance of learning across all curricula may be the least well-developed component of the career readiness framework.

Career Information and Planning—New legislation, HB 2224, significantly improved the definition of High School and Beyond Planning, and districts are in the midst of the challenge of implementing the new requirements. Counselor caseloads remain extremely high. Students and former students in SBE public forums reported that they often turned to teachers for advice on planning, suggesting that all high school educators should have some familiarity with postsecondary options and pathways.

Content Knowledge—The 24-credit graduation requirements were designed to help student be ready for life after high school, including for college or career training. There is a correlation with increasing the required math credits from two to three with a decrease in recent high school graduates needing to take remedial math in community and technical colleges. CTE provides specialized content knowledge in career fields, but some students who might benefit from CTE programs do not consider them, or they may not have access to them. Opportunity and access remain challenges to delivering rigorous, high quality instruction for all students. Participants at SBE forums also felt that basic financial literacy was important but insufficient or lacking in high school.

Connections to Postsecondary Options—The state, through legislation, has committed to reducing costs to students for Dual Credit. Work is ongoing for the difficult tasks of streamlining policies across agencies and institutions, but there is pay-off in more opportunities and options for students in the area of Dual Credit. The task of connecting students to postsecondary options often falls on counselors, while educators throughout high school should be helping to make such connections, and sometime the full range of available options are not communicated to students. It is projected that there will be a need for workers to fill living-wage jobs that have a range of educational requirements, from certificates to post-baccalaureate degrees.

### **Where do we go from here?**

At the September 2017 Board retreat, the Board discussed possible topics for further work, following up on career readiness. Possible further work discussed included:

- Expanded HSBP supporting career readiness, including career readiness “soft skills” and Deeper Learning.
- Explore with OSPI how to support work-based learning (WBL) and career connected learning.
- Developing a statewide definition of career readiness.
- Adopting career readiness standards and a meaningful way to assess them.
- Support ways to make career option information more readily available to students, including in rural and remote areas.
- Support and encourage credit-earning career planning courses.
- Consider promoting the use of career-ready assessments or credentials.
- Funding advocacy to build system- and school-level capacity for career readiness.

- What are ways to work with agency partners and other stakeholders in developing in a cohesive vision of career readiness?

At the November 2017 Board meeting, the Board adopted 2018 Legislative Priorities. The top legislative priority is to urge the Legislature to fund Special Education. The Board also supports other policy and budget requires that include priorities for career readiness:

- A state investment in social-emotional and trauma-informed educational approaches.
  - These approaches align with student-centered learning that fosters career readiness skills and deeper learning.
- Support for strong guidance and planning around post-secondary preparation. The SBE urges the Legislature to provide financial and programmatic support at the middle school level to effectively implement the changes required by the 2017 Legislature (HB 2224).
  - This priority aligns with the often-repeated message from forum and café conversation participants that postsecondary planning needs to start early.

In addition, based on the compiled information in this report, the Board may wish to consider additional career readiness topics:

- Support for intentional incorporation of career readiness skills and consistently communicating the relevance of learning to life beyond high school, across all curricula. Support for professional development for educators to be able to incorporate the message of the importance and relevance of learning in all subject areas. Students should be able to identify how the knowledge and skills they acquire in high school will make them better thinkers, workers, and citizens, and enable them to lead more fulfilling lives after high school.
- Advocacy for more counselors and support for ways that counselors can provide professional development and support to other middle and high school educators, so that all educators can provide accurate pathway information to students.
- Support and encourage career planning courses that incorporate High School and Beyond Planning and financial planning. Support the incorporation of financial planning in curricula offered to all students. This was a recommendation of the SBE and the Workforce Board’s joint resolution.
- Continue to reinforce the relationship with the Workforce Board to foster career connected learning opportunities and work to support increasing engagement of business and industry in K12 public education.

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*“We had a great opportunity this past year to meet with students and communities throughout the state. What I think is most important that comes from this is us, as State Board members, learning what real people are going through, what children are going through who often come from disadvantaged backgrounds, to achieve in education and ultimately to achieve the goals they have in life.”* —Kevin Laverty, Acting Chair, Washington State Board of Education

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If you have questions regarding this report, please contact Linda Drake at [linda.drake@k12.wa.us](mailto:linda.drake@k12.wa.us)

## APPENDIX A

### Career Readiness Café Notes

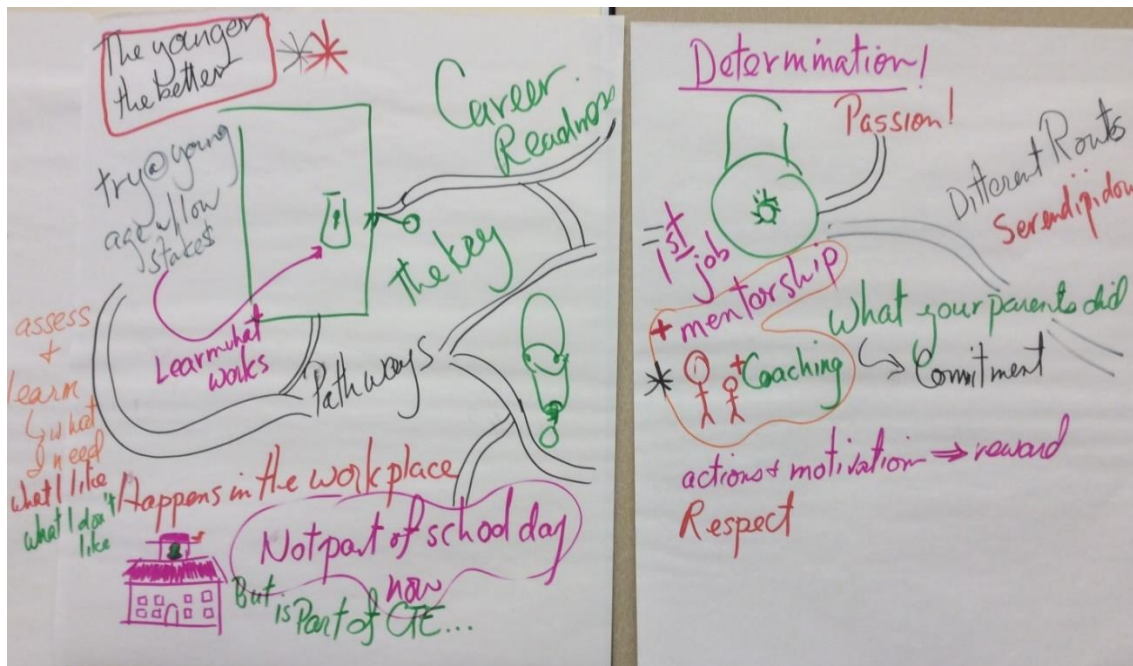
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**IF CAREER READINESS IS ABOUT OPENING THE LOCK TO OPPORTUNITY (FOR HIGHER LEVELS OF EDUCATION, FOR JOBS, AND FOR MOVEMENT ALONG CAREER PATHWAYS), WHAT ARE THE KEYS TO ASSURING THAT ALL WASHINGTONIANS ARE CAREER READY?**

#### PRIMARY THEMES:

- Start early
- This is a team effort:
  - Engage all levels of education
  - Engage all parts of the school system/distribute responsibility
  - Engage business in a more intensive and effective way
- Make the learning and attainment of career readiness skills more explicit
- Translate between the language of business and the language of education
- Provide the professional development, tools, tool kits, resources and incentives to support the development career of readiness in the school system
- Expand work based learning opportunities: internships/service learning/school-based jobs for students, externships for teachers
- Identify, recognize, inventory and scale best practices
- Assure access for all youth

#### Debrief of our experiences regarding Career Readiness





- We need to start young and provide lots of different routes/experiences
- It happens serendipitously, generally outside the classroom - although many classroom activities prepare us, we just don't communicate this well.
- Mentorship/coaching plays a key role
- Often connected to early "work experiences" – learned what we liked, didn't like, and how to be successful in a variety of situations
- Often connected to what our parents did
- Helped us learn about how actions, motivation, and respect can lead to rewards

**Question 1: How might career readiness principals be taught across the curricula, in both academic and career and technical education courses?**

- We are all in this together
- Career Readiness is at the "Core of the Golden Circle" – it provides the answer to "why do I need to learn this?"
- The corner stones of Career Readiness:
 

Start early	Summer Work Experiences	career readiness standards
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- Be dedicated across the system to assure the appropriate scope, sequence, intention and incentives. It's about access/understanding/exposure
  - Need to define career readiness - what does success look like? Is it all about soft and social skills?
  - Need more teach-the-teacher resources and professional development
  - Be explicit! - help teachers identify and translate how current activities develop career readiness: project based learning, student government, sports, clubs like robotics, etc.
  - Translate and embed career readiness into education
  - Provide skills training in lower grads - Build skills over time with standards
  - Make sure all have access.
  - Targeted, in-depth, ongoing engagement with students
  - Find ways to teach soft skills
- It's about connection with kids
- It's about organization/Innovation/Follow through
- Need to understand today's workplace (not the way it used to be) as well as how millennials operate differently than past generations.
  - NOTE: eliminate misperceptions about millennials – previous generations have also had their challenges becoming work ready.
- HSBP with a personalized pathway (PPR) is currently required for graduation – a best practice!

**Question 2: How could we better align our education system to help students become ready for postsecondary education and work?**

- Career Education is NOT tracking
- CTE is (and needs to be recognized as) a college pathway
- Engage Business early in K-12
  - Industry to help define the outcomes from education
  - Need dedicated employer liaison in each District

- Summer teacher internships/externships to increase teach knowledge of industry
- Assure universal access – currently varies by region - every student must be engaged/have the opportunity
  - Need a common definition of career readiness
  - Explore best practices (Europe, other states)
- Make career advising more uniform
- Address the 24-credit barrier – how to achieve this with flexibility
- Provide individualization and intentional planning. Require a plan and steps to achieve the ultimate goal (e.g. FAFSA required for passing grade)
- Provide clear paths, supports, courses for secondary CTE to post-secondary CTE transition
  - Follow-up between HS & Fall – (e.g. have a texting campaign)
  - Administer CTC placement test in high school
  - How can post-secondary institutions validate/value secondary CTE and work based learning and HSBP
- Ensure more students leave with industry recognized credentials/assessment
- Better more credit equivalency
- More Running Start
- Recognize and make explicit existing career exploration opportunities – TAs, library assistants, etc.
- Match kids to interest areas
- Transportation for ??? and after school
- Find ways to deliver career readiness information and activities outside of school (e.g. libraries)

***Question 3: How might we make it easier for businesses to help support development of career readiness skills***

- We need a movement! BIG IDEAS
- The whole educational pipeline needs to reflect industry needs
- Need a sustained relationship/partnership and investment
  - Invite industry into schools systematically, not just on career days, on-offs
- Consider engaging business associations, not just businesses, engage HR professionals, need both small and large companies (desperate business are the best partners ☺)
- When business provides input, it is important to see a change as a result
- Process: Business identifies need (work readiness) business and ed develop a common understanding of the need (soft skills/technical skills), business identifies gaps.
- What are the current “best practices” for engaging industry? Advisory Panels? Look at other states/countries for best practices.
- Catalog existing efforts
- There’s no choice – industry must be engaged. Make it easier for business to engage
  - Get business to play an active role in the classroom: mentoring, curriculum design, guest teaching
  - Develop a systemic approach – common language, centralized flow of information from business to the schools (which can be difficult especially for small districts), works best when you have all three legs – K-12, CTE, industry
  - Understand the role that business wants to play
  - Translate between the language of business and education/ Use the language of biz, not of ed

- Do better outreach to show business the door to enter through, clearer business engagement points
- Clarify labor rules – a state manual exists, but is not as clear/succinct as it could be
- Develop a toolbox/ Tool kit – define the rules, expectations of advisory committees, develop the relationship
  - Eliminate barriers for employers to hire students
  - Quantify the common skills needed by business
  - System is unintelligible
  - L&I regs are difficult to understand
  - Facilitate matches between businesses and students
- New season for standards – could be more inviting to businesses.
- Provide teacher externships
- Embed career readiness in academic content settings
- Look for opportunities to engage the “silver tsunami”
- Develop passions early – in K12 – maker spaces
- Help kids see the connections between their interests and possible careers
- Learn from those businesses that have created their own programs due to their needs (e.g. Boeing, Automotive Mechanics, etc.)
- P.D. for Industry Advanced Centers
- Must show co-investment – lead to ROI in the short and long term
- Leverage social media, technology to facilitate access to classrooms

***Question 4: How might we expand career-connected learning statewide rather than in pockets of best/promising practices?***

- Leadership skills = Work readiness skills
- Scale is the issue/need to Scale and reward/incentivize
- Curriculum available for all
- Develop standards/framework at the state level, train faculty to teach to the standards/need standardization/standard outcomes
- Define the “steps” to the next level of “life” (i.e. FAFSA, Resume, letters of reference)
- Tool chest
- Value the experience of our teachers, especially those coming from industry
- Work-experience (WBL) (E-Harmony for internships)
- Create an inventory of promising practices – superintendents/conference
- Examples of promising practices: CTSOs – student leadership, 4-H, Boys/Girls Clubs, Service Based learning, HS acting as mentors to lower grades, Try-a-trade, Touch a Truck
- Internships
  - Teachers from industry
  - Train the trainers
- P.S. visitation

***Question 5: How might we ensure that all students have equitable access to opportunities to become ready for careers and post-secondary education?***

- Fund it!
- “Equity” does not mean “the same”
- ID Career Readiness experiences for all/follow through with every student

- IEPs for everyone
- Address the statewide inequity in distribution of CTE
  - NOTE: Seeing more special ed students in CTE Provide transportation
- Expose, inspire, allow students to picture an array of options
  - Students limit their choices if they don't have good info/Low income students choose low income jobs – need career guidance in high school and beyond
  - Create “Professional Connectors” – need people whose job is to connect school to work
  - Introducing kids to career options helps connect goals and motivations – exposure to what is possible
- Figure out who's not there: use data to inform interventions – i.e. who goes to college?
- All faculty provide support/Distributed responsibility across school staff
- Fully fund Dual credit
- Transportation/Access to extra-curricular
- Technology can help – access to more on-line options
- How to address system silos, even unintentional silos?
- How is the system funneling/sorting students?
- K-12/higher ed partnership and education/business partnerships help provide opportunities in small/rural areas
- Find alternative ways to demonstrate skills
- Commit to prepare for the jobs available
- HSBP
- Culture and capacity
- Overcome regional obstacles
- Internships, Service learning,
- Talent shows
- Community outside school

## APPENDIX B

Exhibit A

### Joint Resolution on Career Readiness

**WHEREAS**, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) was created by the state Legislature to provide planning, coordinating, evaluation, and policy analysis for the state training system as a whole and to provide advice to the Governor and the Legislature concerning alignment of the training system in cooperation with the agencies that comprise the state training system and the Washington Student Achievement Council; and

**WHEREAS**, the Workforce Board is a unique partnership of business, labor, education, and training organizations dedicated to creating a highly skilled workforce that meets the needs of Washington businesses and workers; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Board of Education consists of members both elected by school directors and appointed by the Governor, charged with advocacy and strategic oversight of public education, implementing a standards-based accountability framework, providing leadership in personalizing education and ensuring respect for diverse cultures and abilities, promoting achievement of basic education goals, and articulate with higher education, workforce, and early learning, coordinating and unifying the public education system; and

**WHEREAS**, one of the goals of Basic Education is for every student to develop the knowledge and skills essential to understanding the importance of work and finance; and

**WHEREAS**, the purpose of a high school diploma is to declare that a student is ready for success in postsecondary education, citizenship, and gainful employment and is equipped with the skills to be a lifelong learner; and

**WHEREAS**, recent surveys of Washington employers have found that employers struggle to identify and recruit an adequate number of qualified candidates in-state with employability skills and attributes, such as time management, leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Board of Education and the Workforce Board jointly endorse collaboration to define career readiness and identify policy frameworks that build pathways to economic self-sufficiency for Washington students, while ensuring that employers have access to a skilled workforce;

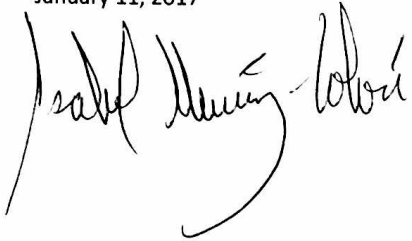
**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Workforce Board and the State Board of Education, along with partners and stakeholders, will work to align the education system to support all students becoming career ready by:

- Requesting that the Legislature create and empower a Career Ready Policy Work Group to identify and recommend career readiness learning standards to help guide educators, students and parents in preparing all students for gainful employment in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- Working together to develop a high school credit-bearing course incorporating High School and Beyond planning, career exploration, career connected learning, and to explore Career and Technical Education equivalency with social studies civics or financial literacy.

**Joint Resolution on Career Readiness**

- Focusing advocacy in the upcoming legislative session on the importance of adequately funded career and technical education programs and creating multiple pathways for students to develop skills and achieve economic self-sufficiency

January 11, 2017

Handwritten signature of Mark Herring in black ink.Handwritten signature of J. Roy in black ink.