



The Washington State
BOARD OF EDUCATION

COVID-19 Updates

PREPARED FOR THE MAY 2020 BOARD MEETING

Information

Materials included in packet:

- Update on emergency waiver applications
- Summary of additional challenges related to COVID-19
- Discussion questions

Synopsis:

The Board will receive updates on COVID-19 response from the State Board of Education, the Governor's Office, and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. SBE staff will provide an update on the emergency waiver rules and approved district waiver applications. In addition, SBE staff will summarize other challenges related to COVID-19 for Board consideration. Finally, the Board will participate in a facilitated discussion on the Board's longer-term policy response to COVID-19.



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Update on Emergency Waiver Applications

The purpose of the Emergency Waiver Program is to temporarily grant districts additional flexibility to waive certain credit-based graduation requirements for students who were on track to graduate this school year. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) must apply to the State Board of Education to be granted the waiver authority. To be approved, the Local Education Agency must certify compliance with the program requirements, and the application must be certified by the school district superintendent or head of the LEA.

The application was launched in iGrants (Form Package 956) on April 9. The Board reviewed and approved the first batch of 113 applications during the Special Board Meeting on April 21. By resolution, the Board delegated application approval authority to the Executive Director for efficiency. Applications are now reviewed and approved within 3-5 business days of receipt. As of April 30, a total of 177 applications had been approved. See the [Emergency Waiver Website](#) for the up-to-date list of Local Education Agencies that have applied for and have been granted the emergency waiver authority.



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Summary of Additional Challenges Related to COVID-19

The following is a summary of coronavirus-related challenges raised during our emergency rulemaking and in subsequent conversations with school personnel and education partners. This is not a comprehensive list, but rather reflects those issues that most closely align with the Board's areas of responsibility. We are continuing to do outreach with partners and will share any additional issues we learn about during the board meeting.

Note also that some questions from the field have been addressed through published guidance, including FAQs from the State Board on the [Emergency Waiver Program](#) (for [public](#) and [private](#) schools), [guidance on Competency-Based Crediting](#), [WSSDA Model resolutions and policies](#), and [OSPI guidance and rules](#).

- How to equitably deliver the program of Basic Education to every student in the state
- Learning loss due to school closures
 - Concern for all grade levels, particularly middle and high school students
 - Concern for juniors who are not on track if traditional credit recovery models are not available next year
- Subsequent graduating classes may also need some flexibility with certain state graduation requirements
 - Stakeholders have asked SBE to extend the emergency waiver to other grades, perhaps with more restrictions on total number of credits waived and core vs. elective credits
- Need for pathways flexibility, with a variety of suggestions to consider
 - Extend expedited appeals waiver
 - Create a pathway specific waiver
 - Revive the Collection of Evidence / Portfolio pathway option



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- Consider options for students receiving Special Education services (given the CIA goes away) and other special populations
 - Pause on pathways
- Potential for continuation of distance learning, hybrid learning, and modified schedules next school year if social distancing continues
 - Are our definitions and requirements flexible enough?
Examples: school day, instructional days and hours, attendance, credit
- Challenges in meeting specific requirements (e.g., Washington State History this spring, High School and Beyond Plan, etc.)
- Lack of awareness of existing competency/mastery crediting guidance
- Downstream impacts of lack of testing for spring 2020



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Discussion Questions about the Board's Longer-Term Policy Response to COVID-19

- What are the outstanding issues for current seniors and for the current school year?
- What are the expected impacts on next school year and subsequent graduating classes?
 - If we return to normal
 - If social distancing continues
- Are there other issues that should be added for SBE consideration?
- Which issues can SBE address through guidance?
- Which issues can SBE address through rulemaking under current authority?
- Which issues should SBE raise up for legislative consideration next session (via our legislative platform, agency request legislation, etc.)?