



The Washington State
BOARD OF EDUCATION

DRAFT

Report | Alignment of Graduation
Requirements with the Profile of a Graduate



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Contents

Acknowledgments	2
Executive Summary	2
Background	2
Authority to Make Recommendations to Align State Graduation Requirements to the Profile of a Graduate	2
Current Requirements	2
Washington State Profile of a Graduate	9
Stakeholder Engagement on Alignment of Graduation Requirements with the Profile of a Graduate	11
Findings.....	12
The Profile of a Graduate does not need modifications.....	12
Students acquire cross-cutting skills through multiple subject areas	13
Views on Current Graduation Requirements; Hopes for Future Graduation Requirements	14
Challenges with Current Graduation Requirements.....	15
Gaps Between the Profile and Current Graduation Requirements	18
Recommendations.....	19
Recommendations Concerning the Profile of a Graduate.....	19
Recommendations Concerning Alignment of the Profile of a Graduate with Graduation Requirements.....	19
State Board of Education Legislative Proposals.....	29
Areas for Further Exploration	29
Appendices [to be added].....	31
Appendix B—Summaries of Listening Sessions	31

Acknowledgments

This paper was created by the State Board of Education, informed by engagement with educators, students, families, and Washington residents. We are incredibly grateful to the Washington state community for their contributions and perspectives on aligning graduation requirements with the Washington Profile of a Graduate.

Executive Summary

Background

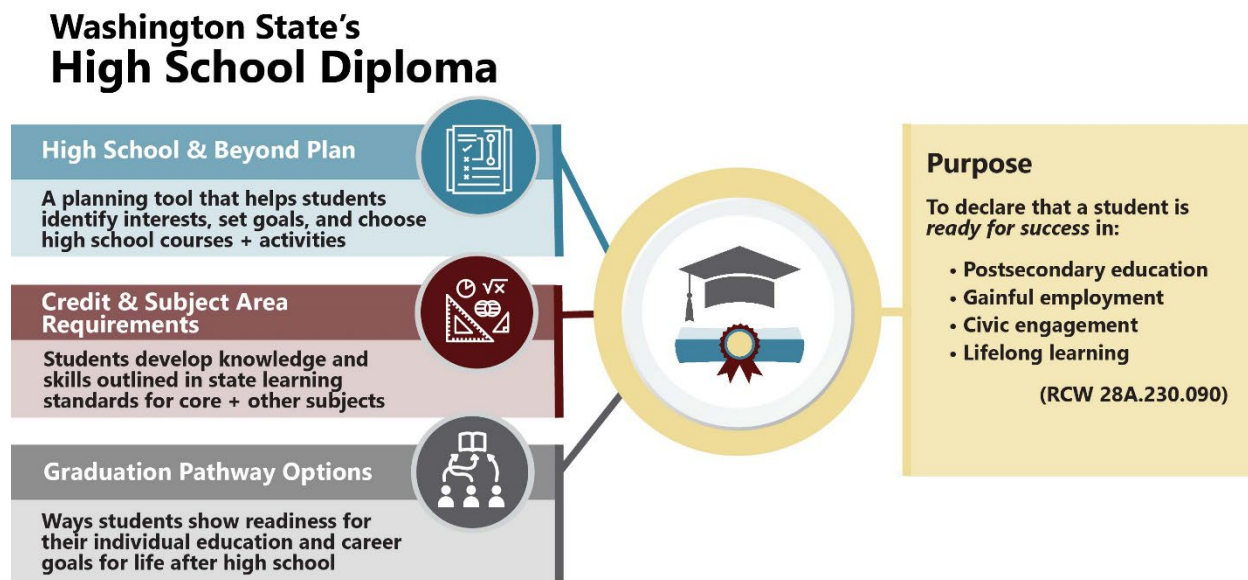
Authority to Make Recommendations to Align State Graduation Requirements to the Profile of a Graduate

In legislation passed in 2021 ([SSB 5249](#), Chapter 144, Laws of 2021), the Legislature charged the State Board of Education (SBE) with reviewing the state Profile of a Graduate and submitting a report to the Legislature by December 2022 with findings and recommendations. As part of this report, the Legislature further authorized the SBE to submit recommendations to align graduation requirements with the Profile of a Graduate. In developing these recommendations, the SBE was asked to consider the relationship between credits and core subject area requirements; potential changes to the requirements; and how the components of the diploma can work together better as a system.

Current Requirements

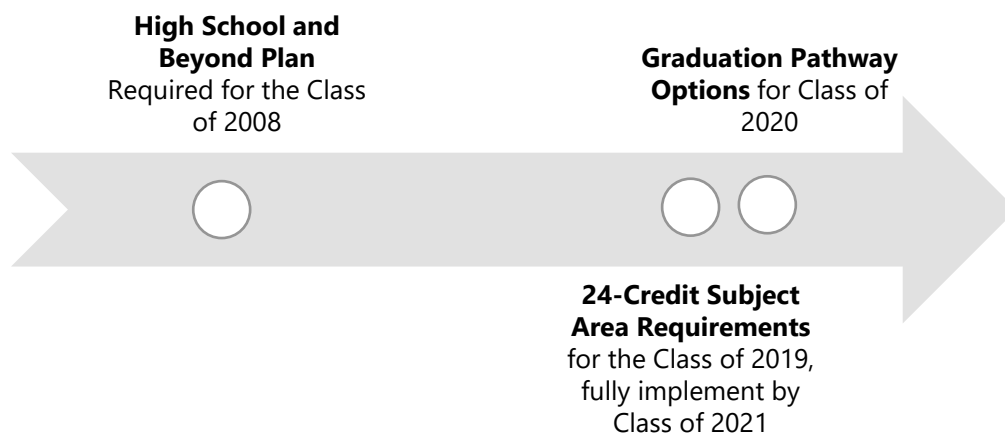
Current graduation requirements for public schools consist of three parts, as shown in Figure 1: the High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP), credit and subject area requirements, and graduation pathway options.

Figure 1: Current Diploma Requirements



The timeline of implementation of the different parts of the diploma are depicted in Figure 2. For greater detail on the development of graduation requirements, [Washington State Graduation Requirements Development](#) (2006-2022). [update table]

Figure 2: Timeline of Implementation of Parts of the Diploma



The High School and Beyond Plan has been a requirement since the Class of 2008. The current 24-credit framework for credit and subject area requirements was implemented

generally for the Class of 2019, but districts could delay implementation for up to two years, so the Class of 2021 was the first class when all students were meeting the 24-credit requirements. Graduation Pathways became a requirement in 2019, replacing state mandated assessments as a requirement.

High School and Beyond Plan

The HSBP is a planning tool that helps students identify interests, set goals, and choose high school courses and activities. According to state law ([RCW 28A.230.090\(d\)](#)), local districts are authorized to decide when a student has met the requirements of the HSBP.

During the past few years, the Legislature has added requirements to the HSBP including the following and other elements:

- Initiating the HSBP by 8th grade.
- Ensuring the HSBP is available to parents or guardians in their native language if possible.
- Informing about federal and state financial aid programs.
- For students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), developing the HSBP must be in alignment with students' IEP including the students' transition plan, and in a similar manner and with similar school personnel as for other students.

According to the [Basic Education Compliance Briefing Paper](#) for the 2021-22 school year, various electronic platforms are used for the HSBP, with about 40% of districts using the low-cost WSIPC tool (formerly the Washington School Information Processing Cooperative that now goes by "WSIPC," is a consortium used by many districts for technical support that administers the Skyward student information system). About 60% of districts use an advisory period for delivering the HSBP in high school and also do not award credit for the HSBP.

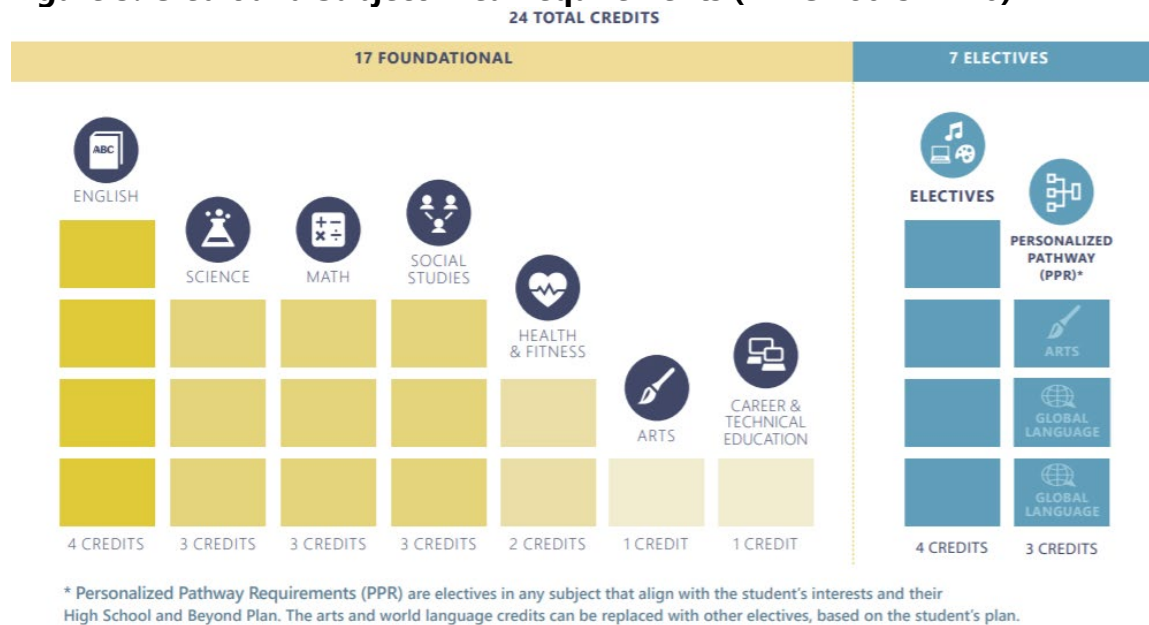
Credit and Subject Area Requirements

The state credit and subject area requirements consist of 17 core credits and seven flexible credits, as shown in Figure 3. In total, there are 24 state required credits, and the current credit and subject area requirements are often referred to as the "24-Credit Requirements." (Sometimes the requirements are also called "Core-24," although technically Core-24 was an earlier version of the 24-credit requirements that were never implemented or approved by the Legislature.)

High school credits are not defined based on seat time, meaning the amount of time it takes to earn a credit can vary. Instead, credits are defined in connection to state learning standards (or locally determined learning standards if the subject does not have

state standards). Specifically, high school credits are defined as successful completion of courses taught to the state’s learning standards or satisfactory demonstration by a student of mastery of the state’s learning standards (WAC 180-51-050). Most schools use the former rather than the later definition, thus indirectly connecting a credit to seat time instruction in a course.

Figure 3: Credit and Subject Area Requirements (WAC 180-51-210)



In math and social studies, specific courses are required within the three credits in each subject area (WAC 180-51-210). For math, algebra 1 and geometry (or the equivalent in integrated math) are required. For social studies, the required courses include United State history (one credit); a course in contemporary world history, geography, and problems (one-half credit); civics (one-half credit); and Washington state history (one-half credit, or a non-credit requirement if taken in middle school at a pre-high school level).

Districts are required to offer a high school program that meets college academic distribution requirements (CADRs), the minimum admissions requirements for Washington state baccalaureate institutions (RCW 28A.230.010). Districts are authorized to identify which course meets which graduation requirement (WAC 180-51-025), and to identify on the transcript which courses meet CADRs (WAC 392-415-070). The 24-credit graduation requirements generally align with CADRs, but diverge in a few specific ways, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: High School Graduation Requirements and College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs)

Graduation Requirements	College Academic Distribution Requirements
No Grade Point Average requirement.	Grade Point Average of 2.0 or higher.
The third credit of math is not specified (it must align with the student’s HSBP).	Math requirement of algebra 2 or Integrated Math III.
No specified senior year quantitative course requirement.	Senior year math-based quantitative course (so that seniors take meaningful math during their senior year).
World language is not a core subject area, but two flexible credits (personalized pathway requirement*), and they are not required to be in the same language.	Two world language credits required in the same world language.
One arts core credit and one flexible credit (personalized pathway requirement*).	One arts credit.
One Career and Technical Education required as a core credit.	No Career and Technical Education required.
1.5 physical education credits are required as core credits, 0.5 of health credit is required as a core credit.	No physical education or health requirement.

* Personalized pathway requirements are three flexible credits that must align with a student's High School and Beyond Plan. If the student is unsure what they want to do after high school, two world language credits and one art credits are "default" subject areas. Earning two world language credits in the same language keeps open the student's option to meet CADR's.

The seven flexible credits include four electives and three personalized pathway requirements. By default, the personalized pathway requirements include two credits in world languages (to align with the state’s college admission requirements) and one credit in art, but these credits may be replaced with other elective credits chosen by the student that align with the student’s High School and Beyond Plan.

Local districts may establish local requirements in addition to the state credit and subject area requirements. Sometimes local requirements may differ between schools in the same district. Examples of additional local credit requirements include advisory, a course in independent living, a technology course, Washington State History for credit, and other additional social studies or Career and Technical Education courses.









Two of the flexible credits may be waived locally for individual students due to individual student circumstances, in which case the student may graduate with as few as 22 credits. Few other waivers exist for the credit and subject area graduation requirements. These waivers (or excusals) are:

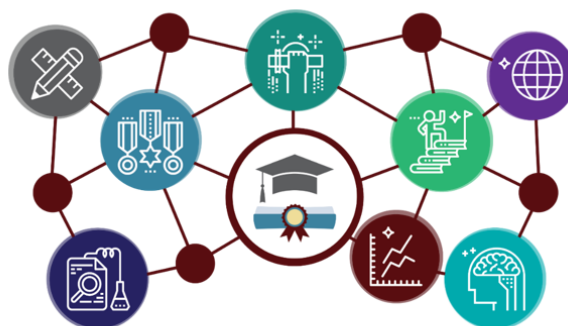
- The emergency waiver due to the COVID-19 emergency (sometimes called the Graduation Requirement Emergency Waiver or GREW). An emergency waiver was available to the Classes of 2020 and subsequent cohorts in the 2019-20 through 2023-24 school years. The emergency waiver permitted a waiver of up to two credits and the graduation pathway requirement, provided the student earned at least 20 total credits, until the 2023-24 school year, when the number of credits that may be waived is reduced to one, and there is no waiver of the graduation pathway ([WAC 180-111-50](#)).
- A local excusal/waiver of participation in physical education classes ([RCW 28A.230.050](#)). With the excusal, students do not need to participate in the course but demonstration of the physical education learning standards is still a requirement.
- A local waiver of the Washington State History requirement ([WAC 180-51-210](#)) for individual students who previously resided outside the state or who missed the opportunity to fulfill this requirement due to emergency circumstances.
- A waiver under [WAC 180-18-055](#), that allows a school or district to apply for approval from SBE to waive graduation requirements. Schools have been approved for this waiver to pursue school-wide mastery-based learning. (A waiver of credit graduation requirements is not necessary for mastery-based learning, but some schools have found it works well with their particular instructional model.)

Graduation Pathway

The graduation pathway options are listed in Figure 4. The pathways provide students with multiple ways to demonstrate readiness in furtherance of the student’s individual goals for high school and beyond. They are intended to be student-focused, individualized, adaptable, rigorous, and meaningful.

Figure 4: Graduation Pathway Options

-  State Assessment
-  Dual Credit Courses
-  AP/IB/Cambridge Exams
-  SAT/ACT College Entrance Exams
-  Transition Courses
-  Combinations
-  ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery)
-  Career and Technical Education Course Sequence



Graduation pathway options include both course-based and exam-based options. Most students meet the graduation requirement by meeting the graduation score on the state assessments, followed by the Career and Technical Education pathway ([Graduation Updated presentation](#) from OSPI at the March 2022 Board meeting).

Data on pathway completion suggests the system of pathways is inequitable for students. In 2021, a higher percentage of white students, Asian students, and students with two or more races, met the pathway requirements on the state tests than did Black, Hispanic (any race), American Indian/Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander student groups. Students without disabilities met pathway requirements at higher percentages than students with disabilities in all pathway options, and likewise for non-multilingual learners compared to multilingual learners. Non-low income students met all pathways at higher percentages than low-income students except for the ASVAB pathway, where an equal percentage met the requirement.

More information about each pathway may be found on the SBE [graduation pathways webpage](#). The SBE has conducted three years of research on graduation pathway implementation (annual reports are available on the SBE [legislative reports webpage](#)).

Required and Recommended Educational Offerings

In addition to graduation requirements, the Legislature has identified a number of other educational offerings that are either required or recommended. Some of these are learning standards, defined as “the knowledge and skills all public school students need to know and be able to do based on the student learning goals in RCW **28A.150.210**” ([RCW 28A.655.070](#)). For example, Washington has financial education learning standards, so financial education is part of the body of content that must be taught to

all Washington's students. However, there is no particular subject area where financial education content resides in most high school programs that all students access.

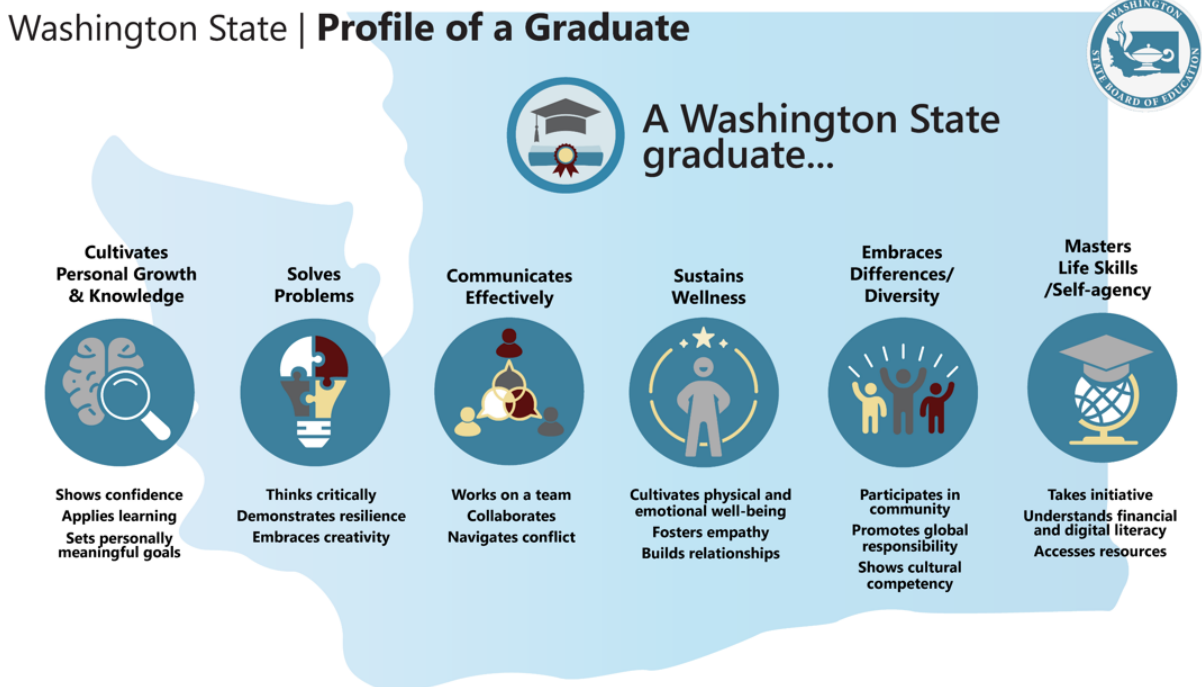
For financial education, and in several other content areas, the definition of standards in statute as applying to all students seems out of alignment with other statutory requirements. RCW 28A.300.468 requires that districts provide only "all students in grades nine through twelve the opportunity to access the financial education standards..." *The opportunity to access standards* is different from all students knowing or being able to do what is described in the standards.

Other educational offerings include the required curriculum Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State, Comprehensive Sexual Health Education, and Ethnic Studies which is encouraged to be offered. A complete list of required and encouraged educational offerings is included as Appendix

Washington State Profile of a Graduate

As directed by [SSB 5249](#) (Chapter 144, Laws of 2021), the state's [Mastery-based Learning \(MBL\) Work Group](#) developed a Washington State Profile of a Graduate describing the cross disciplinary skills a student should have developed by the time they graduate high school. According to the [Mastery-based Learning 2021 Report](#), "The development of the Profile of a Graduate skills is a lifelong process; these are skills adults may still struggle with at times in their life. Thus, the K-12 system focus is to support students in developing age-appropriate foundational skills which prepare them for their next steps in life."

Figure 5: Profile of a Graduate



The [Mastery-based Work Group](#) report further states:

The MBL Work Group members believe that Washington has an imperative to shift the focus of our education system from an industrial model that sorts students to one that intentionally supports every student in developing the range of dynamic skills we want to see in each graduate of our public K-12 system. Washington State’s Profile of a Graduate represents a shift in the focus of our system leading to a transformation of our education system to close both the opportunity gap and the resulting achievement gap. The Work Group believes that the Profile of a Graduate should serve as the overarching vision for the entire K-12 education system moving forward—a vision that will help Washington State achieve the goals of basic education and that schools, families, and communities will embrace because they helped develop it. ([Mastery-based Learning in Washington State, 2021 Report](#))

The Profile of a Graduate is intended to be the end-goal for two routes to a diploma: the traditional credit and course-based route, and the mastery-based learning route. Both routes are intended to support students in developing the skills and knowledge of the Profile and attain the same standards of achievement.

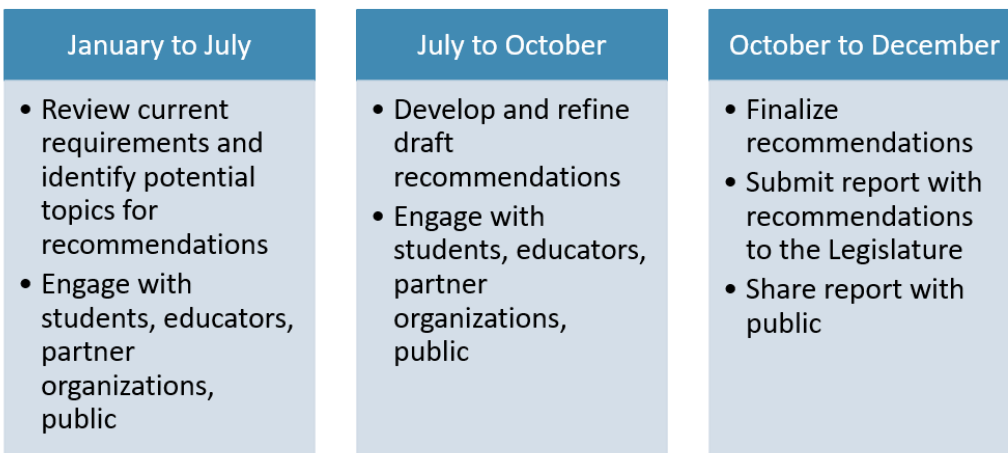
The Profile of a Graduate proposed by the MBL Work Group reflects a wide range of input from stakeholders and lessons learned from other states and communities. More about the Profile development process is in the MBL Work Group’s [2021 Report](#).

Stakeholder Engagement on Alignment of Graduation Requirements with the Profile of a Graduate

The SBE held two rounds of listening sessions to hear feedback from students, educators, parents, and the public about the work of aligning graduation requirements to the profile of a graduate. Listening session in spring were aimed at engaging with partners and the public to identify potential topics for recommendations and gaps between graduation requirements and the Profile of a Graduate. Listening sessions in the fall were to follow-up with interested parties to hear feedback on the draft recommendations.

The listening session were held through online Zoom meetings, and feedback was captured through interactive applications as well as through some oral comments. In addition to general listening sessions, several listening sessions were designed specifically for students, including a session led by the SBE’s two student board members. At these sessions, adults were asked to listen only, so students could speak and be heard. In addition, several listening sessions were held with special populations of educators and students: in particular, institutional education, Open Doors youth reengagement program, and alternative schools.

Figure 6: Phases of Alignment Work



Approximately 600 people attended and participated in the listening sessions. The most common role for participants in the adult listening sessions was that of district

administrator. More details about listening session participants and summaries of the listening sessions are included in Appendix A.

In addition to listening sessions:

- A survey about draft recommendations was open from mid-August through the end of October 2022, which collected over 200 submissions.
- SBE staff met with several partner groups, sharing information about the alignment work and encouraging participation in the survey and listening sessions. These included:
 - Education Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee
 - Washington School Counselors Association
 - Private School Advisory Council
 - Washington Council for High School College Relations
 - Washington School Directors Association Student Representative Network
 - Association of Washington Student Leaders Student Voice Group

Findings

Based on graduation pathway research, the process of developing the Profile of a Graduate by the Mastery-based Learning Work Group, and the engagement with students, parents, educators and members of the public for the alignment work, the Board finds the following:

The Profile of a Graduate does not need modifications

Legislation ([SSB 5249](#), Chapter 144, Laws of 2021) directed the Board to review the Profile of a Graduate and consider modifications to the profile based on public comment. The Board discussed the Profile of a Graduate and aligning graduation requirements to the Profile at multiple Board meetings in 2022, and the Profile proved to be a useful lens for evaluating graduation requirements. The Mastery-based Learning Workgroup took into consideration the input of many stakeholders in the process of developing the Profile. Further, the SBE consulted various stakeholder in the development of these recommendations. The Board received no public comments suggesting modification of the state Profile, and comments about the Profile have been positive from students, parents, and educators. The only cautionary note expressed by some educators and members of the public was that the Profile be more than an attractive graphic, and that action should happen to further the goal having Washington graduates complete their K-12 education equipped with the skills of the Profile.

The MBL Work Group supported one unifying Profile of a Graduate, while also recognizing the importance of making space for each district's unique environment.

Each district is encouraged to locally determine how to adapt their instruction to focus on developing these skills as well as assess how students demonstrate they have gained foundational competency in each skill. The Work Group also recommended that districts who already have a Profile spend time reviewing the state Profile of a Graduate and finding ways to align the state competencies to their own context.

Students acquire cross-cutting skills through multiple subject areas

Profile of a Graduate skills may be developed and practiced in any subject area, and through experiences outside of classrooms. Part of the purpose of mastery-based learning is to recognize this learning and allow students to use knowledge gained outside of school to work together with what they learn in school to progress on their education journey.

Likewise, students may also learn the learning standards for one subject area in courses taught in other subject areas—in other words, in the current education system, subject areas may be considered silos, but student learning is fluid. For example, students may learn and practice English learning standards in art, math learning standards in social studies, and science learning standards in Career and Technical Education (CTE). CTE course equivalency ([RCW 28A.700.070](#), [RCW 28A.230.097](#)) recognizes that core subject area learning standards may be taught in CTE courses, but does not allow full recognition of the student’s learning. Under CTE course equivalency, the student may only transcribe one subject, either the CTE course or the core subject area, and may only earn credit in that subject. Districts also have authority to establish “two for one” policies, that broadly allow a course that addresses learning standards in more than one subject area to meet more than one graduation requirement subject area while the student earns one credit for the course. Districts may recognize these types of courses per WAC [180-51-025](#) “The content of courses and the determination of which courses satisfy particular subject area requirements and whether a particular course may satisfy more than one subject area requirement shall be determined locally in accordance with written policies adopted by boards of directors of districts...”

Through focusing on learning standards and on advocating for increasing opportunities for mastery-based learning, SBE hopes to break down learning silos and recognize myriad ways students learn.

Views on Current Graduation Requirements; Hopes for Future Graduation Requirements

In 2006, SBE was directed by the Legislature (E2SHB 3098, Chapter 263, Laws of 2006) to “develop and propose a revised definition of the purpose and expectations for high school diplomas issued by public schools in Washington state.” This work eventually led to the Board proposing, and the Legislature approving, 24 credits for graduation. Since 2006, policy makers have considered and implemented new requirements intended to teach students critical skills and knowledge and make the high school diploma more meaningful. Much has been added to the responsibility of districts to include in their educational programs and for students to learn. However, very little work has been done to consolidate learning or “make room” for new requirements.

A consistent complaint of students, parents, and educators is that current graduation requirements are complicated, confusing, challenging, and overwhelming (see Figure 7). It must be the ongoing work of the Board and the system as a whole to communicate effectively about graduation requirements to students, parents, and educators. Requirements should be easier to understand, clearly tied to what we want our graduates to accomplish through their K-12 education, and flexible enough to accommodate individual students’ needs and educational goals. Districts should not have to work so hard to understand and implement graduation requirements and required educational offerings. Furthermore, requirements should not be implemented in 250 (the approximate number of districts with high school programs) different ways.

In addition to working toward ensuring that all students receive a high quality education that prepares students to be “ready for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship, and is equipped with the skills to be a lifelong learner,” (RCW 28A.230.090), SBE and the system must be consolidating, aligning, and streamlining. The next phase of work must include making sure that students, educators, and district have the capacity and support to meet the state’s expectations. Consolidating and simplifying will transfer effort from mere compliance to the teaching and learning that matters, including the development of the knowledge and skills that will allow all students to develop the competencies of the Profile of a Graduate. The system needs to shift focus to mastery of the learning standards as a means to achieve the goals of basic education and the purpose of diploma rather than compliance and time-based credits.

When we create a system that:

- Has fewer but more meaningful learning standards with clear expectations of learning,

- Recognizes student learning that takes place across subject areas and in different settings both in and out of school,
- Measures meaningful indicators that map progress toward all students attaining the competencies of the Profile of a Graduate,
- Individualizes education for each student and gives students agency over their learning so that each student can identify how they will meet their personal education and career goals,

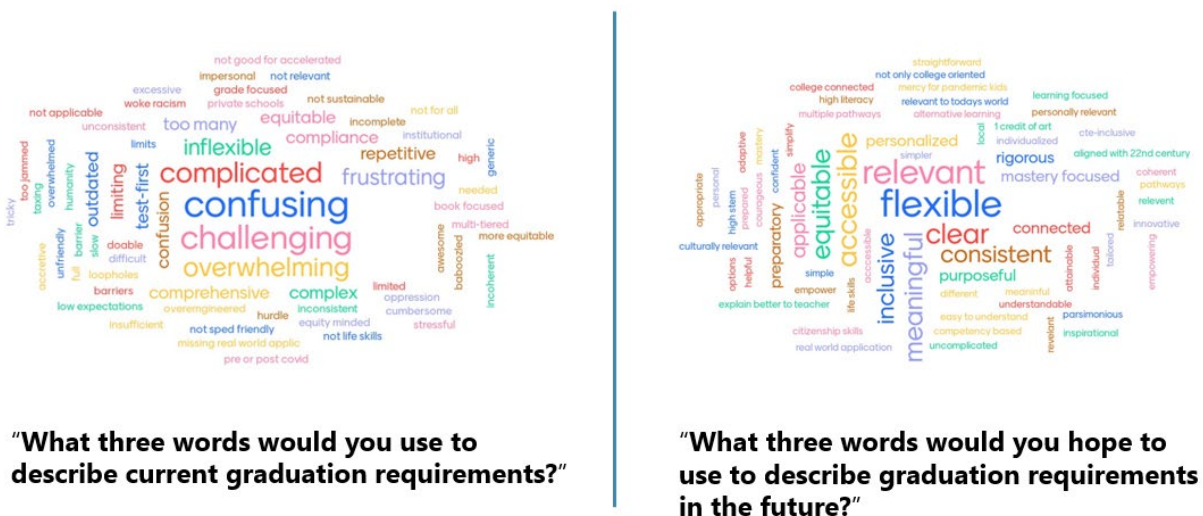
we will be further in a journey toward graduation requirements that are “relevant, flexible, and clear,” which is how our spring listening session participants hope to be able to describe graduation requirements in the future (see Figure 7).

Challenges with Current Graduation Requirements

Graduation pathway research [cite Strobel report] and feedback from listening sessions and meetings with stakeholder groups helped the SBE to identify the following challenges with current graduation requirements:

- **The current system of graduation requirements is confusing and complex.** “Confusing” and “complicated” were the most common adjectives used by students, parents, and educators to describe current graduation requirements during the alignment listening sessions. Figure 5 shows a “word cloud” that session participants created when they were asked for three words to describe current graduation requirements and three words they would hope to use to describe graduation requirements in the future. For the future, participants hoped for “relevant” and “flexible” graduation requirements.

Figure 7: Listening Session Word Cloud



- **Not all students have access to all graduation requirement options.** This is due to capacity issues and local decision-making. For example, small districts do not have the capacity to offer a full range of Career and Technical Education programs, which are both a core subject area requirement and a graduation pathway option. Such districts may also find offering dual credit options challenging, particularly if there are no higher education institutions to partner with close by. The decision about which graduation pathway options to offer is made locally, and many districts do not have the capacity or chose not to offer all graduation pathway options. In addition, there is variation within districts so, while an option may be available at the district level, it may not be available to an individual student based on which school or program they attend.
- **Uneven implementation of the HSBP.** While there appears to be broad agreement regarding intent of the High School and Beyond Plan, implementation has proven to be challenging and uneven. There are many modes of delivering the HSBP, including advisory periods, embedding the HSBP in a core subject area, a required life skills courses or senior projects, and independent work by the student. A best practice encouraged by SBE and OSPI is to revisit the HSBP at least annually. The HSBP is generally not transportable between districts if the student transfers, nor does it exist and remain useful to the student after high school. Students and educators report a complete range of opinions about the HSBP, from useful and meaningful to meaningless or nonexistent.
- **Graduation pathways are implemented as “test first.”** Graduation pathways were created to replace the previous system of an exit exam with alternatives. In practice, the system did not substantively change. Most students meet the pathway requirement with the state test administered to all 10th graders. Other pathway options are usually not discussed or explored with students unless they do not meet the graduation standard on the test. Often pathways are treated by both educators and students as a “check the box” rather than a meaningful demonstration of readiness for the student’s individual education and career goals.

Dual Credit: Some advocates have supported graduation pathways as a way to increase capacity and access to high-level courses such Advanced Placement courses. However, there is no evidence that there are more opportunities for dual credit courses since graduation pathways were implemented Dual credit

enrollments dropped between 2019 and 2021, probably due to the COVID pandemic ([OSPI Dual Credit Program Report to the Legislature, 2021 Update](#)). According to many counselors, if a student does not pass the state assessment, they are directed into Bridge to College Courses, if available, or, most commonly, into CTE programs. Quality implementation of Academic Acceleration programs combined with state mitigation of the cost to students in taking dual credit courses (as advocated by the Superintendent of Public Instruction) are likely better strategies for expanding capacity and access to advanced courses. Academic acceleration is a policy that requires automatic enrollment for high school students in the next most rigorous level of advanced courses or programs based on their performance on the statewide assessments in 8th grade and high school. Once such advanced course is completed, the student is then automatically enrolled in the next most rigorous course after that.

- **No replacement for the Certificate of Individual Achievement.** The previous system of an exam with alternatives provided for alternatives specific to certain students receiving special education services (the Certificate of Individual Achievement). Several of these alternatives were eliminated. Educators who work with students receiving special education services say that there are no appropriate pathways for some of their students. Graduation pathway research suggests that students are funneled into Career and Technical Education programs in which the student has no interest, or into taking the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) test for graduation when the student is ineligible for a military career due to their disability.
- **District workload burden in implementing graduation requirements and other required educational offerings.** The Legislature sometimes recognizes the importance of learning in particular topic and adds educational requirements. These additional requirements may or may not have additional supports or state-level implementation guidance. Basic education compliance survey data indicates that a majority of districts struggle to implement all requirements, and sometimes are not aware of all requirements (based on open ended responses in the Basic Education Compliance Survey). Examples of additional requirements that are not explicitly reflected in the core course requirements include computer science learning standards, financial education learning standards, Disability History Month, the Since Time Immemorial required curriculum, AIDS prevention

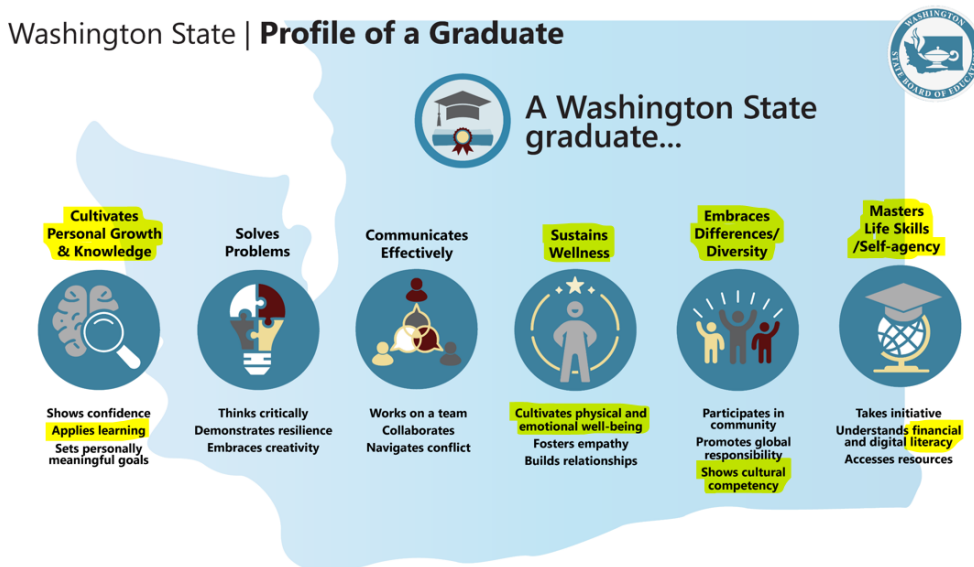
education, academic acceleration policy, College Academic Distribution Requirements, comprehensive sexual health education, and more.

Gaps Between the Profile and Current Graduation Requirements

In spring listening session, participants consistently recognized certain gaps between the Profile of a Graduate and current graduation requirements. The recommendations listed and discussed in the following section are organized according to the broad categories of the Profile where the current graduation requirements fail to support the Profile, according to participants. The recommendations are intended to address the gap in support, and intentionally help support students learning and practicing all the skills and knowledge of the Profile. The most commonly mentioned gaps, highlighted in Figure 6, were:

- Financial literacy, under the broad category of "Masters Life Skills/Self-agency;"
- Cultural competency and appreciating others' differences, under the broad category of "Embraces Differences/Diversity;"
- Cultivating physical and emotional well-being, particularly in regard to mental health, under the broad category of "Sustains Wellness;" and,
- Applies learning, where we include effective high school and beyond planning, teaching and learning of learning standards, and recording and tracking learning through the high school transcript, under the broad category of "Cultivates Personal Growth and Knowledge."

Figure 8: Areas Where Current Graduation Requirements and The Profile of a Graduate Misalign



Recommendations

Recommendations Concerning the Profile of a Graduate

The Board recommends maintaining momentum through expanded messaging, communication, and action. The Board and the Mastery-based Learning Collaborative should publicize the recommendations in this report on how to align state graduation requirements to the Profile of a Graduate, explain the skills students are expected to gain, and suggest additional policy changes and supports that are needed in the next phase to accelerate uptake of mastery-based learning routes and the Profile of a Graduate by local districts.

The Board intends to share information on mastery-based learning, the Profile of a Graduate, and equity focused work at the state and local level across all coalition partners for all students, schools, communities, and employers. This will include highlighting examples of mastery-based-learning in the MBLC schools, and encouraging local adoption of mastery-based credit, the Profile of a Graduate, and other elements of mastery-based learning.

The Board will work with partners to identify the challenges of operationalize the Profile to ensure meaningful changes are made so that it lives up to its intended purpose, that each and every student is given adequate opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge of the Profile.

As an important and useful construct, the Board also recommends that the Legislature officially establish the Profile by codifying it in statute. Codifying the Profile would encourage and allow the use of the Profile in ways that would best improve our education system:

- Identify the Profile as the goal of graduation requirements and K-12 learning strategies, so that the system can work in concert to support each and every student toward attaining the skills and knowledge of the Profile.
- Embed and incorporate Profile competencies into subject area Learning Standards as they are reviewed and revised.
- Guide policy and strategic planning at the state and local level.

Recommendations Concerning Alignment of the Profile of a Graduate with Graduation Requirements

The following recommendations are intended to better align graduation requirements to the Profile of a Graduate and create a better system for providing the state's high school students with the opportunity to develop the skills and knowledge of the Profile.

Recommendation to strengthen “Masters Life Skills/Self-agency”

1. Support the work of the Financial Education Public Private Partnership and build capacity for districts to offer high quality financial education

Among students and parents, insufficient financial education was the most frequently cited deficiency in current teaching and learning in high school.

Financial education is not a specified subject area requirement in the credit graduation requirement framework. However, Washington has financial education learning standards, and districts are responsible for providing all students in grades 9-12 the opportunity to access the financial education standards, which may be done in a variety of ways (e.g., before, during, or after school, or even at home).

Washington has been working on expanding opportunities for students to access quality financial education through the Financial Education Public Private Partnership (FEPPP). FEPPP was established in 2015 by the legislature to bring public and private stakeholders together to improve and advocate for financial education in Washington schools and communities by providing teacher trainings and quality resources ([FEPPP webpage](#)). In 2022, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 5720 establishing a grant project, to be administered by FEPPP, for integrating financial education professional development for teaching staff. In addition, the new law requires local educational agencies to adopt goals for expanding financial education instruction by March 2023.

Recommendations to strengthen “Sustains Wellness”

2. Create more flexibility in physical education and health to allow for mental health content

Students have expressed a need for more mental health content in their high school learning. This desire was expressed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, when students (including SBE student members) and educators were very concern with student mental health and creating more awareness around suicide prevention. The need for more mental health learning and mental health supports was strongly called for by students related to the pandemic. This is supported by results of the Healthy Youth Survey, which found that in 2021, 38% of 10th graders in our state felt so sad or hopeless for two weeks or more that they stopped doing their usual activities and 36% felt feelings of no or slight hope, and 20% reported they seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months.

SBE recommends revising state learning standards to include more mental health content. The Board recommends exploring whether learning standards should be revised to incorporate both physical education (PE) and health learning standards into a single content area addressing health and wellbeing. This content area learning standards should also include the required offerings of comprehensive sexual health, AIDS prevention, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, social emotional learning (which should be implemented across all subject areas), and mental health. The Board recommends increasing flexibility in health and PE to accommodate additional mental health learning. As new learning standards are being explored, SBE recommends changing graduation requirements to 1 credit of health and 1 credit of PE. If new learning standards in a single content area are developed, the graduation requirements could change to 2 credits in the new single content area of health and well-being.

3. Develop a state policy for the waiver/excusal of physical education so that awarding of mastery/competency credit is more uniform

There are many Washington regulations concerning physical education suggesting that in the view of law-makers, this subject area is of particular importance to Washington students ([RCW 28A.230.050](#), [WAC 392-410-136](#), [RCW 28A.210.365](#), [WAC 392-410-135](#), [RCW 28A.210.360](#), [WAC 392-172A-02030](#)). A common concern expressed by the public is a need to encourage healthy exercise and activity among students. A common concern of students is a greater flexibility in their schedule, and a lack of uniformity in what meets the PE requirement. PE and the waiver or excusal of PE was one of the most commonly raised issues in listening sessions.

Statute permits PE to be excused locally "on account of physical disability, employment, or religious belief, or because of participation in directed athletics or military science and tactics or for other good cause" ([RCW 28A.230.050](#)). There has been confusion on the part of some districts about whether the excusal is a waiver of the physical education requirement. SBE rules (WAC 180-51-210) clarify that the statute permits students to be excused from participating in a PE class but does not waive the PE requirement. Students who are excused must demonstrate learning of PE learning standards.

Implementation of the excusal varies by district, with some students in some districts being excused from course requirements for participation in school athletics, and some not. Participation in athletic activities unaffiliated with schools may or may not be considered for the excusal.

SBE recommends a state policy on the excusal of physical education that would include consideration of both school-affiliated athletics and extracurricular athletics, along with other routes that students learn this content area in ways that are appropriate for individual students. The policy would be updated as needed if new health and well-being learning standards are developed.

Recommendations to strengthen "Embraces Differences/Diversity"

4. Ensure districts implement the Since Time Immemorial curriculum

The Since Time Immemorial: Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State Curriculum has been a requirement since 2015. According to statute:

(1)(a) Beginning July 24, 2015, when a school district board of directors reviews or adopts its social studies curriculum, it shall incorporate curricula about the history, culture, and government of the nearest federally recognized Indian tribe or tribes, so that students learn about the unique heritage and experience of their closest neighbors. ([RCW 28A.230.170](#))

The Since Time Immemorial curriculum is available for free through the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The statute directs districts to collaborate with federally recognized tribes within the district and with neighboring tribes to expand and improve the curricular materials and to create programs of classroom and community cultural exchanges.

Districts have been slow to incorporate the Since Time Immemorial curriculum. According to the [Basic Education Compliance Briefing Paper](#), 44% of districts have yet to fulfill the requirement. Considering that other social studies curricula changes have been required since 2015, such as teaching Civics as a stand-alone course which has already been implemented by 96% of districts, implementation of this requirement is lagging. One challenge to implementation may be in building relationships between districts and tribes that could result in the collaboration called for to improve and expand the curriculum. Some tribes may have many neighboring districts and working with all of them may present a capacity issue; furthermore, given the past history of the education system such as the abhorrent practices of boarding schools, extra effort on the part of the state may be needed to demonstrate state and local districts are capable of being respectful partners. Building relationships will take time, and districts personnel may benefit from professional development such as government to government training. In the meantime, starting to teach the curriculum is a first step in fully implementing the requirements.

The Board recommends that a deadline of 2023-24 be set for districts to start teaching the curriculum. Recent bills that did not move forward would have set a deadline for districts to implement the Since Time Immemorial curriculum (2020 SSB 6262 (McCoy) and 2121 SB 5161 (Wellman) – Teaching Washington’s tribal history, culture, and government). The Board also recommends that funding be provided to districts and to tribes, for professional development and other costs to fully incorporating the Since Time Immemorial curriculum throughout districts’ educational programs.

5. Partner with advocates to build coalition on the implementation of Ethnic Studies

Figure 9: Ethnic Studies

When we talk about “ethnic studies”...



We are talking about:

- Ethnic studies seek to build greater understanding and communication across ethnic differences.
- Ethnic studies aim to eliminate racism by critiquing, resisting, and transforming systems of oppression.
- Ethnic studies are responsive to students’ cultural, historical, and contemporary experiences.
- Ethnic studies implement practices and methods that are responsive to community needs and problems.
- Ethnic studies engage students in multiple perspectives by examining how identity impacts power relations in the classroom and in the community.

We are NOT talking about:

- NOT a particular curriculum, course, lesson or unit plan
- NOT promoting the idea that any race is superior to any other
- NOT centered on blaming individuals or making anyone feel guilty about their racial identity
- NOT indoctrination



The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) staffed the state’s [Ethnic Studies Advisory Committee](#) (ESAC), as mandated by the 2019 Legislature in [SB 5023](#) and by the 2020 Legislature in [SB 6066](#). The Legislature charged OSPI to identify and make available ethnic studies materials and resources for use in grades K-12. The legislation encourages grades 7-12 to offer an ethnic studies course and grades K-6 to incorporate the materials and resources identified by the committee. The committee released their [Framework and Implementation Tools](#) in fall 2021. In addition, the Legislature charged OSPI with periodically updating state learning standards that address global citizenship to incorporate best practices in ethnic studies.

The State Board of Education believes ethnic studies should be incorporated across the K-12 system, and sent a [letter](#) in fall 2020 to the Superintendent of Public Instruction

requesting ethnic studies be incorporated across the K-12 learning standards. In the meantime, the Board has adopted [Resolution of Intent to Establish an Ethnic Studies Washington State Graduation Requirement](#) within the current credit framework.

The resolution is responsive to demands from student groups (for instance, see the [student panel](#) the SBE hosted in summer 2020 and the [NAACP Youth Coalition's](#) demands for 2020-2021), though we acknowledge this is a first step in meeting the demands of Black, Indigenous, and (Other) People of Color (BIPOC) students. The resolution also lays out some of the Board's thinking on what this requirement could look like and what will be needed to implement it. The State Board of Education recognizes that educators must have the opportunity to engage in personal growth and professional learning in order to be appropriately equipped to teach an ethnic studies course. Implementing this requirement has implications for the education system, and implementation will not be successful without funding for continuous and consistent anti-racist professional learning for all educators at all levels of our education system. The Board also committed to developing the form this requirement will take in consultation with stakeholders, particularly students, their families, and educators who are Black, Indigenous, and (Other) People of Color (BIPOC).

SBE held [listening sessions](#) in fall 2021 about ethnic studies with educators, students, families, and the public. These formed the basis of the [SBE Ethnic Studies Concept Paper](#). The paper describes the feedback received during the listening sessions, the landscape of ethnic studies efforts across the nation, and next steps for moving ethnic studies forward in Washington.

At the 2022 listening sessions, voices speaking against ethnic studies were noticeable. A number of passionate members of the public joined the listening sessions, it seemed, specifically to share their opinion that ethnic studies should not be implemented. This illustrates that ethnic studies remains controversial at least for some members of the public, and that districts may face push-back from their communities. At least some sentiment was based on misunderstanding of current educational programs. Some comments in the alignment survey expressed inaccurate understanding such as that ethnic studies takes away opportunities for students to take advanced courses, that it would replace teaching of US history, that US history is not currently required but that ethnic studies is, and there already exists a particular state curriculum for ethnic studies.

The Board has also heard strong opinions in support of ethnic studies as well, particularly from students. The Board remains convinced that ethnic studies, implemented well, will benefit all students, and recommends building coalition with advocates to implement ethnic studies. At 2022 spring and fall listening sessions, and in

the Alignment survey, educators expressed a desire for more state guidance and support for implementing ethnic studies well. Providing quality professional development for educators will be key to quality implementation. A coalition will be needed to support building toward all students having knowledge of ethnic studies as part of their diploma.

6. Support English learners in meeting graduation requirements and increase opportunities for students to earn the Seal of Biliteracy

The Washington State Seal of Biliteracy was established in 2014 to recognize public high school graduates who have attained an intermediate to mid-level proficiency in English and at least one world language including American Sign Language, Tribal languages, heritage languages, and Classical languages. The Seal of Biliteracy recognizes the achievement of both English learners and English speakers learning a non-English language. For an additional overview of the Seal of Biliteracy, see the [presentation from Dr. Veronica Trapani](#), Associate Director for Content, World Languages Secondary Education and Pathways Preparation, at the May 2022 Board meeting.

Graduates who demonstrate the intermediate to mid-level proficiency in English and in a world language (a non-English language) may be awarded the Seal, which comes with a notation placed on their diploma and their transcript. English proficiency is demonstrated by meeting the graduation standard in any graduation pathway. Apart from native tribal languages, world language proficiency is demonstrated through achieving at least an intermediate-mid proficiency level on tests aligned with the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) scale. Many different tests are available, and OSPI maintains a [list of approved assessments](#) and qualifying scores. Tribal language proficiency is determined by each tribe.

For some of the approved world language assessments, dual credit is also available. This allows English-speaking students who study world language and English learners who speak a non-English language to potentially:

- Earn high school credit in both English and a world language
 - credit may be earned through taking the approved assessment (competency/mastery-based credit) and not through classroom instruction
 - For students who earn the Seal, 4 credits are earned
- Earn high school credit toward meeting graduation requirements in English and world languages
- Meet college admission requirements
- Earn college credit

Students who do not attain the Seal but are successful at a lower proficiency level still meet or make progress toward these achievements.

Districts are “encouraged” ([RCW 28A.300.575](#)) to award the Seal of Biliteracy but are not required to award the Seal. SBE recommends that districts adopt policies permitting the Seal of Biliteracy, so all students have access to the opportunity, and the opportunity to earn language credit through mastery-based learning. The SBE supports the Superintendent of Public Instruction’s [plan to expand dual language education](#), including language learning in elementary grades.

SBE also recommends that English learners meet graduation requirements in English language arts and a world language elective when they pass an English language course or earn a credit of English through mastery-based learning. English learners must meet all graduation requirements along with their English-speaking classmates. However, non-English speaking high school students must also take elective courses (or no-credit courses) for learning English. Allowing them to meet a world language elective for their required core English language arts courses would give them back some electives to explore different subjects or practice their English language skills. This policy is similar to “two for one” policies which allow a student to meet two graduation requirements while earning one credit. In this case, students who are non-English speakers are recognized as meeting an elective in world language at the same time as they earn a credit in English. (If the student also demonstrates literacy through meeting the standard on an approved test for the Seal of Biliteracy, the student will also earn world language credit.)

Recommendations to strengthen “Cultivates Personal Growth & Knowledge”

7. Focus on learning standards rather than on seat time to support mastery-based learning and interdisciplinary learning

SBE rule already has a definition of a high school credit (WAC 180-51-050) that is not linked to seat time. There are two options for students to earn high school credit: 1) successful completion of a course taught to state learning standards or 2) satisfactory demonstration by a student of mastery of the state learning standards, as defined by local district policy.

This allows schools to implement programs where learning is the constant and time is the variable as opposed to the “traditional” model where “seat time” is the constant and learning varies resulting in the gaps that are apparent in our system today.

Despite SBE adopting rule (WAC 180-51-051) in 2020 that more explicitly laid out the process for awarding mastery-based credit (MBC) to students, real and perceived barriers to implementing MBC policies, and mastery-based learning system change more broadly, remain.

In both “traditional” models that use credits as a proxy to signify when a student has mastered enough of the learning standards to move on to the next course (e.g. moving from Algebra I to Algebra II), and mastery-based credit models with a more explicit and direct focus on student demonstration of mastery of learning standards, credit is utilized as a sort of accounting mechanism to show when a student has progressed in their learning.

Some practitioners of mastery-based learning, including schools that have been granted a waiver of graduation requirements by SBE (WAC 180-51-055), have found it useful to move away from the concept of “credits” entirely. Credits are sometimes too closely tied to the notion of students simply sitting at a desk rather than to learning.

The SBE recommends spending the next several years shifting the focus away from credits earned through seat time as a proxy of learning, to a more direct focus on mastery of learning standards.

8. Improve the High School and Beyond Plan through state support for one or a limited number of online platforms that would improve uniformity and portability

At the July 2022 Board meeting, the Superintendent of Public Instruction suggested improving the HSBP through state support for a limited number of online HSBP platforms. The Board supports this approach.

For the HSBP to become a useful tool for students, it must be more uniform around the state. This will enable:

- The many students who transfer from one district to another after 8th grade to continue their planning process uninterrupted.
- The possibility of the HSBP remaining a useful tool after a student has completed their K-12 education. Information from a student’s HSBP would be useful for informing planning their postsecondary education and training.
- Better professional development for educators to support the HSBP. For the HSBP to be a useful tool, counselors alone cannot be solely responsible for helping to guide students and parents through planning process.
- The potential to collect useful data on student interests that could better inform high school scheduling and course offerings, as well as forecast for higher

education, and the ability to direct information about higher education and training programs directly to interested high school students.

Greater uniformity in the HSBP planning process will lead to a better tool that will better meet the needs of individual students.

9. Improve the high school transcript to support better reporting of mastery-based learning, multidisciplinary learning, and more detail on how high graduation requirements are met

The current high school transcript is based on recording high school courses and high school credits. It relies on the definition of a credit WAC 180-51-050(1)(a), "Successful completion, as defined by written district policy, of courses taught to the state's learning standards." However, the current transcript is not as well suited for mastery-based learning with the definition in WAC 180-51-050(1)(b), "Satisfactory demonstration by a student of proficiency/competency/mastery, as defined by written district policy, of the state's learning standards." It is also not well suited for recording multi-subject area classes where, for example, students learn both English language arts and social studies learning standards in a single class.

For graduation pathway options and other graduation requirements to be meaningful and valued by students and others, such as higher education and potential employers, more information about graduation requirements should be recorded in the high school transcript. For example, graduation pathways met by the student should be recorded on the transcript.

The Mastery Transcript Consortium has developed a transcript that is designed for mastery-based learning, which some schools employing mastery-based learning have found useful. Washington institutions of higher education have expressed concerns that expanded use of this transcript could present capacity challenges for their admissions offices and have asked for time to better accommodate any widespread use of mastery-based transcripts. The Council of Presidents issued a [statement on the Mastery Transcript](#) that is in support of mastery-based learning approaches to instruction, and assures Washington students and families who apply with a Mastery Transcript they will not be disadvantaged in the admission process.

Current law requires school districts to use the standardized transcript, so use of the Mastery Transcript would have to be in addition to, and not in place of, the standardized transcript.

SBE recommends the standardized transcript be reviewed and updated to incorporate ways to recognize student learning that takes place outside of traditional classes and single subject areas.

State Board of Education Legislative Proposals

Agency request legislation to expand graduation pathway options

In 2019, the Legislature created graduation pathways to provide students multiple ways to show readiness for their individual education and career goals for after high school. In anticipation of potential barriers, the Legislature charged the State Board of Education with researching the first three years of implementation and providing recommendations for improvements and additional pathways. The research shows that the initial set of graduation pathway options do not meet the needs of all students. In addition, students, families, and educators expressed strong interest in more relevant, engaging, and authentic options that can be customized to better align with students' individual goals. Based on this research, and in response to the Legislature's charge, the Board proposes adding two options to the graduation pathways that school districts may offer: a performance-based pathway and a work-related pathway. These new options will allow students to show what they know and can do in real-world, hands-on ways that align with their individual goals for after high school. In addition, this proposal clarifies the purpose of graduation pathways and establishes ongoing data and monitoring requirements at the state and local levels.

Budget request to expand mastery-based learning

Mastery-based learning is a key strategy to address persistent gaps and support learning recovery in Washington. The state launched a demonstration project in 2021 to support schools transitioning to mastery-based learning with grant funding and professional learning. To ensure progress on this critical work, this request extends support for the first cohort of schools and adds a second cohort. It also funds a comprehensive evaluation and statewide resource suite. This investment (\$10M in the 2023-25 biennium) will ensure educators have professional learning, tools, and supports necessary to implement mastery-based learning successfully. It will also identify policies, practices, and support structures necessary to successfully transition schools to mastery-based learning.

Areas for Further Exploration

Examine assessment options scores

The graduation scores on state assessments originated from the graduation proficiency level on a previous state test, the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL)

that was used prior to 2008. Since then, the score has been translated to different tests through psychometric equivalency studies, or through an “equal impact” approach—setting the score so the same percentage of students passed as in the previous exam. The high school state assessment has changed several times, and the format of the current Smarter Balanced test has changed several times.

The graduation score on the SAT and ACT was originally set in 2007, based on equivalency to the WASL. Since then, the SAT and ACT have changed in format, and the state assessment has changed multiple times. It is time to review all scores on all assessments used for graduation and as state assessment.

CTE options—are the CTE course sequences that are in multiple program areas working?

The CTE graduation pathway option consists of ([WAC 180-51-230](#)):

- Core Plus programs;
- A sequence of at least two high school credits in career and technical education within the same program area; or,
- A local sequence in more than one program area if approved locally and approved by OSPI.

So far, according to the list [of Approved Local CTE Pathways](#), OSPI has approved 1,052 pathways. It was intended that once a sequence had been approved, other districts could use the same sequence without approval. It is not clear this is happening.

SBE will follow-up with [CTE at OSPI](#) for more information about the approval process. Is it effective and efficient to continue the approval process?

Industry recognized credential as a graduation pathway and alignment with the Career Connect Washington Framework

Additional potential career-focused graduation pathway options are attainment of an industry recognized credential or completing a Career Prep program as recognized by [Career Connect Washington](#).

Incorporating high school and beyond planning into a credit-bearing course or advisory

The Board would support exploring development of a state HSBP curriculum that could be used in a credit-bearing course or advisory. The curriculum would include:

- Financial Education
- Post high-school budgeting (including financial aid planning)
- Career exploration experiences recognized by [Career Connect Washington's Career Explore](#)
- Current HSBP requirements

Including financial education, content that is highly valued by both students and parents, in that curriculum would make the HSBP more meaningful and valuable for students. It also would ensure that all students were taught the content, rather than only the students who chose to take an elective course containing financial education content.

OSPI's [Career Guidance Washington Lesson](#) could provided a basis for this curriculum.

Transforming English Language Arts into a language arts requirement, similar to Oregon state's new approach to literacy in any language

The Board will continue to track Oregon's approach to transforming English Language Arts into a language arts requirement to see if a similar approach might benefit Washington's students.

In 2021, Oregon passed HB 2056, [Access to Linguistic Inclusion](#). The law is intended to provide schools and districts a way to recognize the achievement of multilingual and multicultural students through revising "English language arts" to "language arts." Districts may offer courses in any content area in languages other than English and recognize literacy in any language as meeting graduation requirement literacy standards.

Appendices [to be added]

Appendix A—Recommended and Required Educational Offerings

Appendix B—Summaries of Listening Sessions

Appendix C—Summary of Alignment Survey