



VISION STATEMENT ADOPTED BY TASK FORCE

Purpose and Intended Use: This vision statement aims to reflect the shared perspective among Task Force members at this stage of the process. It is intended as a living, working document—one that will continue to evolve as we engage more deeply and advance the work. At the same time, having a shared vision now provides a critical foundation for identifying gaps in the current system and determining where to focus our attention as we begin developing policy recommendations. By grounding our next steps in a common vision—while allowing space for that vision to adapt and grow over time—we can build consensus and ensure the work remains responsive and relevant throughout the initiative. This statement is not intended for an external or public audience, but rather to guide the work of the Task Force and the Board.

A high school diploma should signal that a student is ready to thrive in a changing world. Graduation requirements should equip students with the skills to be a lifelong learner and prepare them to thrive in postsecondary education, financial stability, civic engagement, and participation in a global community. Graduation requirements should reflect a broad definition of readiness that honors students' diverse strengths, interests, and goals—whether they choose to pursue a two- or four-year degree, workforce training, military service, or another path. Graduation requirements should uphold high expectations that keep multiple postsecondary options open as students' goals evolve.

To ensure students are truly ready, graduation requirements should support the development of essential skills – such as critical thinking, communication, problem-solving, and collaboration – as they master core academic knowledge. The diploma should signal that a student has gained both the knowledge they need and the ability to use it effectively in a variety of real-world contexts. Readiness also depends on social-emotional growth, well-being, and life skills, which are essential to navigating life's opportunities and challenges.

While ensuring all students build a strong foundation of essential knowledge and skills, graduation requirements should create space for meaningful student choice and empower students to define success for themselves. Starting early in their K–12 journey, students should have opportunities to explore a wide range of interests and gradually develop greater focus and intention as they refine their goals—with support from educators, families, and their communities. Flexibility must be paired with thoughtful structure and guidance to help students make informed decisions and keep future options open. This balance ensures all students have equitable access to opportunities and aren't unintentionally limited by their early choices.

Students should also have meaningful flexibility in how they demonstrate their learning, including through culturally relevant, accessible ways that align with their strengths and interests. Students should demonstrate readiness for graduation through multiple measures – a combination of assessments, coursework, and applied learning experiences – that provide a fuller picture of what they know and can do, and reflect the range of skills, knowledge, and experiences that matter for success beyond high school. This approach requires trust in educators’ professional judgment paired with clear accountability to ensure equity and consistency. Statewide learning standards play a critical role by setting shared expectations for what students should know and be able to do while giving educators flexibility to support deeper learning and respond to students’ individual needs.

CORE ELEMENTS OF VISION STATEMENT

Note: The core elements listed here are intentionally high-level. At this stage, the goal is not to delve into the specific components within each element or to determine how they would be implemented. Rather, we’re asking whether there is general agreement among the Board that these are the right foundational concepts to guide future policy design. This review is intended to confirm alignment on the overall direction, not to define the details.

Paragraph 1 (which roughly aligns with what is success)

- Ready to thrive
- Thrive in postsecondary education, financial stability, civic engagement, and participation in a global community
- Equip students with the skills to be a lifelong learner
- Honors students’ diverse strengths, interests, and goals
- High expectations
- Multiple postsecondary options

Paragraph 2 (which roughly aligns with what students need to ensure readiness)

- Essential skills
- Core academic knowledge
- Social-emotional growth, well-being, and life skills

Paragraph 3 (which roughly aligns with how requirements should be structured)

- Meaningful student choice
- Opportunities to explore
- Flexibility paired with thoughtful structure and guidance

Paragraph 4 (which roughly aligns with how we know students are ready)

- Flexibility in how students demonstrate their learning
- Multiple measures of readiness for graduation
- Trust in educators paired with clear accountability
- Statewide learning standards

IDEAL QUALITIES

The following list of ideal qualities was developed to guide future policy recommendations for Washington’s high school graduation requirements. These qualities reflect our shared aspirations for what graduation requirements should be like in the future, grounded in the original guiding question: What are the best words or phrases to describe what we want our graduation requirements to be like in the future? The list is intended to serve as a touchstone throughout this initiative—to help assess and shape emerging policy ideas.

The Board provided input on a draft version at its April meeting, and the FutureReady Task Force voted to move forward with a refined version that incorporated that feedback. Ninety-three percent of Task Force members agreed that the list was a good enough reflection of their shared ideals to guide our next steps.

The six qualities listed below are intended to be a living framework that may be refined over time as our work deepens.

- Relevant
- Clear
- Challenging (with high expectations and high support)
- Student-centered
- Equitable
- Flexible (with high support)