



Executive Summary

On July 24, 2025, the FutureReady Task Force held its fourth meeting virtually via Zoom.

State Board of Education (SBE) staff kicked off the meeting with a presentation on the “core elements” of the [Vision Statement adopted by the Task Force in June](#). This Vision Statement outlines the shared belief among members about what a high school diploma should represent and include. Following the presentation, members took part in small-group and full-group discussions to identify gaps between the current graduation requirements system and the shared goals for the system laid out in the Vision Statement.

In the afternoon, Board staff gave a second presentation focused on the [tools available under state law](#) to influence high school learning opportunities. These included credit requirements, required/encouraged course offerings, learning standards, and other policy levers. Task force members then built on the morning's discussion by exploring which of these policy levers would be appropriate to address the gaps identified earlier. After identifying relevant policy levers, the Task Force discussed which group would be best suited to address each gap in the graduation requirements. In some cases, the Task Force itself could take the lead—either as a full group or through a subcommittee, especially for topics that require a deeper dive or subject matter expertise. In other cases, if the gap extended beyond the scope of the initiative, the Task Force identified other groups that might be better positioned to take it on.

Next Steps

Next State Board of Education meeting: August 13-14

During this meeting the Board will review the subcommittees suggested by the Task Force.

Next FutureReady Task Force meeting: September 18 (Seattle–Tacoma International Airport)

Topic: Transitioning into Phase II and starting the development of recommendations.

Agenda & Links to Meeting Resources

Agenda Item	Facilitator / Presenter	Links & Resources
Welcome and introduction	SBE Staff	Slide Deck (Slides 0 – 14)
Data presentation on core elements of Vision Statement & Gap Analysis Reflections + Feedback from Board on Task Force Vision & Gap Analysis	SBE Staff	Link to Slide Deck (Slides 15 – 24) Link to Recording of Gap Analysis Presentation (6:31 – 31:39) Link to Board Feedback Video (0:00 – 4:52) Link to Adopted Vision Statement
Gap Analysis discussion / activity	Group Discussion	Link to Slide Deck (Slides 25 – 31) Link to Recording of Gap Analysis Activity & Group Discussions (31:40 – 49:26) Link to Group Discussion Notes Link to Policy Levers & Considerations Handout Link to Gap Analysis Resource List
Presentation on graduation requirement policy levers & Scoping primer	SBE Staff	Link to Slide Deck (Slides 33 – 46) Link to Recording of Presentation on Graduation Requirement Policy Levers & Scoping (49:27 – 1:05:36) Link to Board Feedback Video (4:58 – 7:42)
Matching Gaps to Policy Levers & Potential Sub-Committees Activity	Group Discussion	Link to Slide Deck (Slides 50 – 52) Link to Recording of Matching Gaps to Policy Levers & Potential Sub-Committees Activity (1:05:37– 1:41:25) Link to Group Discussion Notes

Meeting Objectives

- Analyze where current graduation requirements fall short in meeting the shared vision and identify key topics and issues to address in policy development
- Define the scope of the initiative, distinguishing between areas for Task Force recommendations and those requiring other avenues
- Determine subcommittees needed for deeper exploration

Gap Analysis Discussion

Prior to the meeting, SBE staff reviewed the [vision statement](#) approved by the Task Force at its June meeting and divided it into core elements that reflect the foundational concepts on which to guide future policy design for Washington’s graduation framework. Those elements are noted in the table below.

<p>Paragraph 1 — What is success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p>Paragraph 2 — What students need to ensure readiness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essential skills • Core academic knowledge • Social-emotional growth, well-being, and life skills
<p>Paragraph 3 — How requirements should be structured</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meaningful student choice • Opportunities to explore • Flexibility paired with thoughtful structure and guidance 	<p>Paragraph 4 — How we know students are ready</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility in how students demonstrate their learning • Multiple measures of readiness for graduation • Trust in educators paired with clear accountability • Statewide learning standards

SBE staff then gave a high-level data presentation and shared [resources](#) to help inform the Task Force’s gap analysis discussion.

During the meeting, the Task Force, working in four small groups assigned to one paragraph each, collaboratively identified key gaps between the current graduation system and their shared Vision Statement. During discussion, Task Force members were encouraged to consider the following:

- Where policy intent does not align with actual practice.
- Areas where data or evidence shows persistent disparities or unmet needs.
- Gaps that are clear, actionable, and need deeper analysis.
- Barriers to realizing the core elements of the Vision Statement.

After discussing as small groups the Task Force re-convened for a group-wide discussion. During this Task Force-wide conversation, each group shared their findings and worked to build shared understanding. During this discussion, and among the notes taken by groups, a few recurring themes emerged.

Students Are Not Prepared with Essential Life Skills

One of the most recurring themes during discussion was the need to better prepare students for life after high school beyond just college or vocational readiness. Examples of things that would better prepare students include financial literacy, practical application of critical thinking skills, managing insurance (medical, car, and home), cooking, social emotional skills, and how to use technology responsibly.

Task Force members also highlighted the need for civic engagement and global education that is relevant to students’ lived experiences. They expressed the importance of instruction that affirms students’ cultural identities—whether rooted locally or globally—and helps students understand their connection to both their communities and the broader world.

Not Enough Flexibility in Credit Earning Opportunities & Multidisciplinary Course Work

Although Washington explicitly permits competency/mastery-based crediting, dual-credit (e.g., Running Start or college courses), and work-based learning credits, these options remain underutilized and unevenly implemented across districts.

For example, one group suggested that if a student wants to become an automotive technician, they could meet state learning standards and earn credit through a local skill

center or an internship. While this is already allowed in state policy, local districts have not consistently implemented local policy or practice to allow for this.

The current 24-credit graduation requirement further complicates the ability for students to have flexibility in their education. Under a typical six-period, two-semester schedule, students must pass every class to stay on track—leaving little flexibility for exploration, recovery, or setbacks. Students in more resourced schools often have access to credit recovery programs, additional support staff, or flexible scheduling that allows them to recover from failure. In contrast, students in under-resourced schools may lack those opportunities, deepening existing inequities and making a single misstep much harder to overcome.

Misalignment with Postsecondary Needs and Transitions

A few Task Force members noted an ongoing interest in finding ways to better align, where possible, what students learn in high school with the needs that postsecondary institutions (and other end users of the high school diploma) are articulating.

One group specifically noted that there is a disconnect between the components of the diploma (credit and subject area requirements, HSBP, and graduation pathways) and what is expected of students in postsecondary institutions and the workforce.

Another group noted that many students end up needing to re-take coursework when they enter college, though many colleges also offer co-requisite courses where students can learn missing content needed to be successful in their college level courses. [OSPI's latest Report Card data](#) was cited to support this fact, which showed that, based on state assessment scores, a high percentage of students would likely require remediation for college-level courses with only 50% on track for college coursework in ELA and 40% for math.

Multiple members highlighted that part of this failure to properly prepare students could come from a lack of cohesion in handing students off at different stages in their educational journey. One group highlighted how Bridge to College courses might be one way to help with this. They cited how [according to the Basic Education Survey](#), less than half of districts have a transition course available like Bridge to College as a pathway option for students.

On the topic of transitions, one group highlighted the need to incorporate K-8 into the discussion of high school learning standards, recognizing that there is scaffolded learning in both academic and non-academic areas as a part of the broader continuum of K-12 learning.

Inconsistent Access to Career Exploration/Preparation Opportunities

Task Force members noted that while Washington's K-12 system offers a wide-range of opportunities for career preparation, access to those opportunities is not even across the board. Geography, district policy, and school resources create disparities in access to work-based learning experiences, internships, skill centers, CTE credits, and dual-credit options.

Regarding skill centers, Task Force members reported hearing from many students who expressed frustration with waitlists. Among students who were able to attend a skills center, some Task Force members noted that the type of credit that students can receive can be different depending on what school the student is from, even if they're taking the same coursework.

Inequitable access to **CTE opportunities** was noted amongst different groups. One group cited SBE's recent Basic Education Survey which noted that almost a third of districts offer only three or fewer CTE course sequences. It was specifically noted that access to CTE enhanced funding requires a CTE certificated instructor which it is often hard for rural districts to find. That group did clarify that even if a course doesn't have a CTE certificated instructor, students can meet their CTE graduation requirement by meeting the CTE program standards.

Outside of specific credit-earning opportunities, task force members also noted gaps in **career counseling support**. The Task Force highlighted how even though students benefit from personalized support that provides individualized, goal-based postsecondary guidance, many school counselors carry large caseloads, making individualized, goal-based planning difficult. Complex graduation requirements make planning conversations longer, leaving less time for career and college exploration. When counselors can't provide deep support, well-meaning mentors without full knowledge of postsecondary systems step in.

Students report that they feel they've missed out on work-based learning opportunities like internships, and other opportunities due to limited access to information about available programs.

Another group highlighted how the local-control nature of public schools can result in different levels of partnerships between school districts and local employers, which creates an inequitable system of opportunity.

Complex graduation requirements and limited shared information further shorten the window for meaningful college and career exploration during the school day.

Gaps in Data Collection & Feedback Loops

There was also a need for better data collection methods that can help students make more informed choices about potential career paths and help policy makers make more informed decisions about system design. One group noted that the system currently lacks data on what students say they want to do after graduation (no way to currently link individual students' planned graduation pathways from students' individual HSBPs to state level data, but perhaps this will be possible with implementation of SchoolLinks), what they actually end up doing, and whether their chosen path—particularly for those not pursuing college—was supported by the preparation they received. Without consistent High School & Beyond Plan usage or statewide measures for work-based and mastery/competency-based learning, policymakers and students lack the insights needed for informed decisions.

Similarly, some task force members noted students expressing frustration that high schools rarely offer formal mechanisms for student feedback—unlike college course evaluations—limiting student voice in shaping learning environments.

Connecting Gaps to Policy Levers

After the Task Force [developed a list of gaps](#), they received a [two-part presentation from Board staff](#).

The first part of the presentation covered background information on high school graduation requirements, course offerings, and student experiences. This part of the presentation helped the Task Force understand the scope of the issues the Task Force should dive into during the upcoming recommendation development phase (and what areas might make sense for other groups to work on).

The second part of the presentation provided an overview of [different policy tools \(levers\) that can be used to address various learning opportunities at the high school level](#). This background was important because depending on what policy goal or challenge is being addressed, some policy tools may be more appropriate than others based on their purpose and considerations. For instance, if the policy goal is to have all students learn certain material and demonstrate knowledge of that material, then it makes sense to have a graduation requirement associated with that policy goal (e.g. having all students be required to take and pass a civics course). However, if the policy goal is that all students should have the option to partake in a learning opportunity, then it can be a requirement for school districts to offer the opportunity (but not a requirement for individual students to participate in the learning opportunity).

After receiving a presentation on some of the different policy levers available in state law, task members engaged in small group discussions to begin identifying what policy levers were appropriate to address the gaps identified earlier in the meeting. Groups briefly reconvened as a whole Task Force to share notes before returning to their small groups to explore what entity would be best positioned to address the gaps in the graduation requirements using the policy levers they identified — whether it be the Task Force itself or through a subcommittee, or if the gap was beyond the scope of the initiative and thus should be explored by another group or agency outside the initiative.

Throughout this segment of the discussion, Task Force members were encouraged to stay focused on the big picture of graduation requirements, with subcommittees focused on issues of implementation or areas requiring subject matter expertise.

Find a summary of their discussion:

- [Gap Analysis, Policy Lever, and Subcommittee Crosswalk](#) (Prepared by Board staff after the meeting to help identify common themes in discussion for possible subcommittee work)
- [Group notes from gap analysis and policy lever discussion](#)

The gaps will continue to be refined and expanded as the group moves into the next phase of work focused on developing policy recommendations. Board members will also have the opportunity to review and provide input at their upcoming meeting.