

# Straw Man Proposals for October 2025 Board Meeting

For discussion during the October 2025 Board meeting.

**Please note these proposals are intended to:**

- Spark conversation and debate.
- Be intentionally provocative in some cases.
- Signal ideas for exploration based on the input from the Board and the Task Force.

**These are not:**

- Endorsed by the Board, but rather for discussion.
- Not a comprehensive set of issues; holding on some for later in the process or to give time for subcommittees to give us input (e.g., financial ed to come later).

# 1. Personalized Pathway Requirement Proposals

## Proposal 1.1 - Quantitative Reasoning PPR

Swap the second art credit in the Personalized Pathway Requirement (PPR) section of flexible credits for a senior-year math-based quantitative course.

### Description

The Personalized Pathway Requirement in the current graduation framework includes three credits that are chosen by students based on their interest and their High School and Beyond Plan. The recommended “default” pathway includes two world-language and one art credit (in addition to a core art credit). The proposed change would modify that default to include a senior-year quantitative course (e.g., Bridge to College Math, statistics, chemistry, AP Computer Science, etc). This requirement would replace the second art credit as the default course suggestion for students in the PPRs, bringing graduation requirements into closer alignment with the College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs) for admission to Washington’s public four-year universities.

### Level of support

As part of the survey, respondents had to select the level of content they felt students needed in each subject area. Choices included only some students need it, introductory, foundational, or in-depth.

### Task Force

- Math: 46.2% said foundational, 53.8% said in depth.
- Art: 26.9% said only some students need it, 38.5% said introductory, 26.9% said foundational, 7.7% said in depth.

### Board

- Math: 72.7% said foundational, 27.3% said in depth.
- Art: 18.2% said only some students need it, 27.3% said introductory, 45.5% said foundational, 9.1% said in depth.

### Notes

- Several Task Force members suggested aligning more closely with CADR’s so as not to close the door for students, noting that the skills learned would be applicable across any applicable post-high school goal.

- Some members explicitly suggested math should carry greater weight (3.5+ credits) and that quantitative reasoning is important for apprenticeships and trades as well as four-year college.
- One Task Force member said: art and CTE are important but without multiple pathways to get the credit it feels like an add on.

## **Proposal 1.2 – World Language PPR**

Ensure the world language credits in the Personalized Pathway Requirement (PPRs) align with the College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs).

### **Description**

Currently, the PPRs include two world language credits, but the courses do not necessarily need to be in the same language. To align with CADRs, this proposal would make the default two credits in the same world language.

### **Level of support**

As part of the survey, respondents had to select the level of content they felt students needed in each subject area. Choices included only some students need it, introductory, foundational, or in-depth. Responses below are for world languages.

#### **Task Force**

- 30.8% said only some students need it, 26.9% said introductory, 26.9% said foundational, 15.4% said in depth.

#### **Board**

- 18.2% said only some students need it, 45.5% said introductory, 27.3% said foundational, 9.1% said in depth.

Respondents were also asked how many high school students they thought should complete the CADRs needed for admission to Washington's public four-year colleges and universities.

#### **Task Force**

- 4.2% said few, 33.3% said some, 37.5% said most, 25% said all.

#### **Board**

- 0% said few, 12.5% said some, 37.5% said most, 25% said all, 25% said don't know.

## Notes

- On the survey, one Board member said: Keep credit requirement in line with CADR.

## Proposal 1.3 - Incorporate Pathways into PPR

Instead of having both Personalized Pathway Requirements (PPRs) and the graduation pathways, this proposal would simplify the graduation requirement framework and have the PPRs incorporate graduation pathways. Students could have one pathway, based on their High School and Beyond Plan goals, that guides their course taking in high school (they would not have to complete a separate graduation pathway requirement).

### Description

The Pathway requirement is intended to serve students leading toward three primary pathways – further academic work at a 2-year or 4-year college; workforce training, apprenticeship, or job training; or military service. In their current configuration pathways are not quite functioning towards that goal. Under this proposal the PPRs as they currently exist would be modified to incorporate the intended purpose of the pathways. As in Proposal 1.1 and 1.2 above, the default PPR courses would be two credits of the same world language and a senior year quantitative course that aligns to the [College Academic Distribution Requirement \(CADRs\)](#). This way, students would by default be meeting their CADRs to be eligible to attend a public baccalaureate institution. In addition, the default for the third credit of math would be Algebra II or Integrated Math III. Students could also take dual credit courses to be better prepared for college level coursework.

If a student planned to go into the workforce after graduation (via apprenticeship or job training programs), they could take a sequence of CTE courses instead of the default PPRs aligned to CADRs. Additionally, if the school is able to support them in doing a work-based learning experience, this would also be recommended.

If a student planned to enter the military, they would take courses aligned to their goals for their specific occupation in the military in addition to also taking the ASVAB test.

### Level of support

As part of the survey, respondents were asked if they thought the pathway requirement, in its current form as a demonstration of readiness, is a necessary part of the graduation requirements framework. Response options included: 1. Yes, needed for confirmation (Pathways serve an important role in ensuring students meet readiness expectations beyond what credits show). 2. No, not needed because redundant (Credit requirements

already demonstrate student readiness, so pathways do not provide meaningful additional confirmation). 3. Unsure/no opinion and 4. Other/Please Explain.

#### Task Force

- 12.3% said yes, 56% said no, 16% said unsure, 16% said other.

#### Board

- 40% said yes, 40% said unsure, 20% said other.

#### Notes

- One Board member said: Lowering the graduation requirements to allow for students to have more academic exploration.
- One Task Force member said: art and CTE are important but without multiple pathways to get the credit it feels like an add on.
- Another Task Force member said: Core subject areas - math, English, social studies, and science should continue to be rigorous. If it can be aligned with CADRs, that will be helpful. CTE/ Career related subjects must be better defined - like a pathway that allows a student to dive deep into one area rather than in many areas. Incorporate soft skills into all subject areas, not as a graduation requirement but as a learning standard requirement.
- Another Task Force member said: Pathways should provide students with real-life experiences in their chosen career fields, including opportunities to shadow professionals. This would allow students to make informed decisions about their future career paths, rather than relying solely on the High School and Beyond Plan.
- Another Task Force member said: I think there are some pathways that demonstrate readiness but I don't know if it's necessary as a part of the graduation requirement. It seems to be a barrier to HS graduation from our table discussion and as someone said more of a pathway out of HS not to show their readiness for the next step in life.
- A Board member said: I think pathways should be more narrow...or just less pathways.

## 2. Pathways

### Proposal 2.1- Profile of a Graduate

Replace Graduation Pathway Requirement with Profile of a Graduate Demonstration

#### Description

Replace Pathways, in their current iteration, as a graduation requirement. Instead, require students to show evidence of practicing and developing the skills in the state's [Profile of a Graduate](#). This could include a portfolio, project-based work, performance-based assessments, or other demonstrations embedded in coursework and aligned with each student's High School & Beyond Plan (HSBP). This could also include assessments for essential skills employers are seeking. One such option is through [ACT's WorkKeys](#) assessments which are currently used by eight states. This proposal is also in line with ETS and Carnegie's recent [Skills for the Future](#) work to redefine testing and instead provide a set of tools and experiences to measure real-world skills.

#### Level of support

##### Task Force

- Pathway purpose: 61% believe pathways are not needed due to redundancy with credit requirements. And 87% disagree or strongly disagree that pathways demonstrate a student's readiness for their post high school goals.
- When asked if students see the connection between their pathway choice and their future goals, 84% said they disagree or strongly disagree.

##### Board

- When asked if students see the connection between their pathway choice and their future goals, 60% said they disagree.

#### Notes

- Several Task Force members noted that current pathways are largely redundant with credit requirements and provide little additional value to students, colleges, or employers.
- Many Task Force members noted that pathways should not be narrowly focused on ELA and Math, but instead on skills students need to be successful in their goals.
- A Task Force member said: Pathways need to go. Students need to develop a personalized portrait of a graduate.
- A Task Force member suggested making the pathway requirement aligned with profile of a graduate and post high school opportunities.

- Some Task Force members suggested pathways should be incorporated into the HSBP and embody the values in the Profile of a Graduate.
- This proposal aligns with the 2021 MBL Work Group Report to better operationalize the Portrait and provide curriculum for skill development.

## Proposal 2.2 – Real-world Readiness in HSBP

Replace Pathways Requirement with real-world readiness demonstrated through the High School & Beyond Plan (HSBP).

### Description

Remove the requirement to complete a pathway and instead, strengthen the HSBP as the central mechanism where students plan, complete, and reflect on real-world experiences connected to their postsecondary goals.

### Level of support

#### Task Force

- Pathway purpose: 61% believe pathways are not needed due to redundancy with credit requirements. And 87% disagree or strongly disagree that pathways demonstrate a student's readiness for their post high school goals.
- When asked if students see the connection between their pathway choice and their future goals, 84% said they disagree or strongly disagree.
- 

#### Board

- When asked if students see the connection between their pathway choice and their future goals, 60% said they disagree.

### Notes

- Task Force and Board members noted a lack of time to authentically engage with the HSBP.
- Multiple members noted that pathways should be directly related to the post-secondary goals of students.
- Open Doors programs have pointed out how the pathways requirement inequitably impacts their students and that the pathways, particularly the SBAC, do not show that they are prepared for a life they are already living.

- One Task Force member said: What really is the point of the pathways? They are not used beyond the high school setting. These are used as a check mark to make a student graduation eligible. The focus on Math/ELA was simply to give alternate options to graduation beyond high stakes testing. Students and sometimes school staff look at pathways as "this is the only thing I can do in high school for my future". That is not what a pathway is.
- Some Task Force members saw a portfolio option within the HSBP as a good place for reflection and growth for students, particularly when it is about the individual and not simply meeting a standard.

### 3. High School & Beyond Plan

#### **Proposal 3.1 – High School and Beyond Plan Course**

Create a yearly High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) course integrating life skills and financial education.

##### Description

Establish a required HSBP course each year (grades 9-12) that provides dedicated time and curriculum for students to explore, plan, and reflect on their goals while developing life skills in connection with the Profile of a Graduate. This course would integrate tasks required in the HSBP, career and postsecondary planning, financial education, and personal development. This structure would make the HSBP a credit-bearing experience.

This proposal builds off SBE's recent [HSBP Recommendations Report \(2025\)](#) that called for structured HSBP time embedded in a student's day with curriculum to make it a more meaningful experience.

##### Level of support

As part of the survey, respondents had to select the level of content they felt students needed in each subject area. Choices included only some students need it, introductory, foundational, or in-depth.

##### Task Force

- Financial Education: 26.9% said introductory, 50% said foundational, 23.1% said in depth.

##### Board

- Financial Education: 27.3% said introductory, 45.5% said foundational, 27.3% said in depth.

##### Notes

- Many Task Force and Board members called for dedicated time for students to engage meaningfully with their plans, with staff support and guidance.
- The Task Force and Board have identified financial education and life skills as essential for postsecondary readiness and see the HSBP as a potential place some of that learning can take place.
- Task Force members noted that PD and set curriculum could improve teacher's confidence in working with students on their HSBP and dedicating a course for that allows the teacher to focus on the material.



## 4. Mastery-based Credit

### **Proposal 4.1 – Statewide Mastery-based Credit Policy**

Create a state policy for granting mastery-based credit (MBC) more equitably to students.

#### Description

Currently, school districts are required to have adopted a local mastery-based credit policy before being able to grant mastery-based credit to students (though WSSDA does have model policies and procedures local districts can adapt). Not all districts have adopted such a policy, so not all students are eligible for earning mastery-based credit (despite laws requiring this for certain populations of students, including students who have been in institutional education).

In this policy, state rule would create specific scenarios in which students would have to be granted mastery-based credit. Districts would have to do the minimum required in rule, and could do more based on their own locally adopted policy.

#### Notes

- Considerations: This would have to be done in a way to be attentive to unintentional consequences around staffing, funding, etc.
- A Board member said: Allow students to earn multiple credits for the same course (i.e. theatre as both an English and art credit) as long as the state learning standards for both are incorporated into the class content.
- A Board member said: Learners need ways to find affinity with their learning and their learning environment (school) and have ways to apply their learning (e.g., mastery-based, CTE, etc.) - how can “application to the real world” become something our system supports so that it can be a requirement.
- A Task Force member said: There needs to be different ways to meet graduation requirements. For example, a summer internship focused on a core subject like STEAM, history, English, etc. should fulfill partial if not full credit. Usually, these opportunities are only being accredited through electives which are not the type of credits students are failing to complete.

## 5. Health and PE

### Proposal 5.1 – Rebalance Health and PE

Rebalance the number of credits required for health and physical education (currently .5 for health and 1.5 for PE). Additionally, rather than the current excusal process (for students to be excused from the fitness portion of the physical education requirement per RCW [28A.230.050](#) and [WAC 180-51-210](#)), which varies widely based on what district a student is in, move to a statewide mastery-based crediting policy for fulfilling the fitness portion of the physical education requirement.

#### Description

- Based on Board and Task Force member survey responses, and prior engagement work, at a minimum, it seems that the amount of PE credit should be lowered, and the amount of health credits be increased.
- Additionally, implementation of the excusal process (for waiving the fitness portion of the PE requirement) varies by district (on what counts for excusal). The proposed change would create a uniform state policy for the excusal process. In other words, SBE would create a policy in rule (WAC) for giving students mastery-based credit for participation in PE activities outside of school. School districts would have to do the minimum in rule, and could do more based on their own locally adopted policies.

This also aligns with prior SBE recommendations from the [2022 Report](#) (Alignment of Graduation Requirements with the Profile of a Graduate) to:

1. Create more flexibility in physical education and health to allow for mental health content.
2. Change graduation requirements to one credit of health and one credit of PE.
3. Develop a state policy for the waiver/excusal of physical education so that awarding of mastery/competency credit is more uniform across districts.

#### Level of support

As part of the survey, respondents had to select the level of content they felt students needed in each subject area. Choices included only some students need it, introductory, foundational, or in-depth.

#### Task Force

- Health: 7.7% said only some students need it, 50% said introductory, 26.9% said foundational, 15.4% said in-depth.

- PE: 19.2% said only some students need it, 57.7% said introductory, 19.2% said foundational, 3.8% said in depth.

#### Board

- Health: 9.1% said introductory, 63.6% said foundational, 27.3% said in depth.
- PE: 9.1% said only some students need it, 36.4% said introductory, 45.5% said foundational, 9.1% said in-depth.

#### Notes

- A Board member noted that “PE requirement could be revisited - not the same as health”.
- Another Board member noted: “Revisiting health and maybe flipping the credit requirement with PE. 26% of the student population has special health care needs. Health as a subject is not a small matter.”
- A Task force member noted that “Physical education should be optional, waiver options.”
- Another Task Force member noted “make the PE and Health more flexible.”
- A few Task Force members mentioned that students want to learn about wellness and mental health – they want to learn about how to take care of themselves, their community, and their family. They considered whether 0.5 credit of science or health should be a course on mental health/caretaking.

## 6. Washington Diploma

### Proposal 6.1 – State Minimum Graduation Requirements

Allow students to earn a high school diploma after completing the state minimum graduation requirements (regardless of whether they have completed local requirements).

#### Description

One idea that came up during the last Task Force meeting was to allow a student to earn a Washington state diploma if they had met the state minimum requirements, and if local districts had additional requirements, students could earn a seal on the diploma to signify this (but shouldn't be prevented from graduating due to local requirements).

While practically speaking, districts can choose to waive their local requirements for students, this often happens at the end of a student's high school journey. If this policy change was made, it could change a student's journey to allow them to explore certain areas/courses throughout high school without needing to meet local requirements. In other words, a student might have more agency to say that they would forego the local seal, and they would rather focus on their areas of interest throughout high school (vs. current practice of only waiving local requirements at the end).

#### Level of support

As part of the survey, respondents had to select the level of content they felt students needed in each subject area. Choices included only some students need it, introductory, foundational, or in-depth. Responses below are for flexible/elective credits.

#### Task Force

- Flexible/elective credits: 7.7% said only some students need it, 3.8% said introductory, 30.8% foundational, 53.8% said in depth, 4.2% said don't know.

#### Board

- Flexible/elective credits: 9.1% said introductory, 72.7% said foundational, 18.2% said in depth.

#### Notes

- Per the 2025-26 basic education compliance survey, 75% of high schools had additional local requirements beyond the state requirements.
- Some districts choose to add additional local credit requirements on top of the state minimum requirements. When that happens, sometimes it limits the number

of elective credits that are up to the student's choice. It's also possible for local districts to require more than 24 credits, and this is oftentimes connected to the type of bell schedule a school district decides to use, such as a trimester schedule. Oftentimes, students end up with limited meaningful choice, as the flexible credits get functionally dictated by local graduation requirements, master schedules, and staffing.

- During the September Task Force meeting, it was noted that students who move between districts are disadvantaged when local graduation requirements differ, often forcing them to use elective slots to make up for required credits they missed elsewhere.

## **Proposal 6.2 – "Bucketing" Math / Science and ELA/Social Studies**

Allow students greater choice in meeting their math and science requirements and their English and social studies requirements by "bucketing" these subject areas into broader categories.

### **Description**

Modify existing core course requirements to allow students to select courses in consultation with their parent, legal guardian, school counselor, or principal. The requirements would be modified to include:

- Seven combined credits of social studies and English language arts, with no less than three credits in either subject.
- Six combined credits of mathematics and science, with no less than two credits in either subject.
- The framework would not increase the overall credit amount required for graduation nor alter the graduation pathway options.
- The content of any credits beyond the first two credits in mathematics and science may be chosen by the student based on the student's interests and High School and Beyond Plan with the agreement of the student's parent or legal guardian (when available), and agreement of the school counselor or principal.
- A student may substitute a computer science course for the third credit of either mathematics or science.
- Districts must offer all students the opportunity to complete the default core credits in each subject area (e.g. 4 credits of English, 3 credits of social studies, 3 credits of math, and 3 credits of science).

## Level of support

As part of the survey, respondents had to select the level of content they felt students needed in each subject area. Choices included: only some students need it, introductory, foundational, or in-depth.

### Task Force

- Math: 46.2% said foundational, 53.8% said in-depth.
- Science: 69.2% said foundational, 30.8% said in-depth.
- ELA: 3.8% said only some students need it, 34.6% said foundational, 61.5% said in-depth.
- Social Studies: 53.8% said foundational, 46.2% said in-depth.

### Board

- Math: 72.7% said foundational, 27.3% said in depth.
- Science: 63.6% said foundational, 36.4% said in-depth.
- ELA: 36.4% said foundational; 63.6% said in-depth.
- Social Studies: 63.6% said foundational, 36.4% said in-depth.

### Notes:

- Based upon a proposal from the Superintendent of Public Instruction in 2022 - SB 5902 - Concerning the implementation of high school graduation credit requirements.
  - Approval provisions in the proposal modified from the Bill based on SBE staff feedback.
- The Bill was heard in the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education on 1/24/2022.
- Concept was proposed again to the Board by Superintendent Reykdal in April 2022.

## 7. World Language

### **Proposal 7.1 – World Language in Earlier Grades**

Provide world language instruction earlier in a student’s K-12 journey.

#### Description

Provide world language instruction during earlier grades, beginning in elementary or middle school. By introducing world language earlier, students have more time to build fluency and cultural competency, while freeing up high school credit space for other electives, CTE, or advanced coursework aligned to their postsecondary goals.

#### Level of support

As part of the survey, respondents had to select the level of content they felt students needed in each subject area. Choices included only some students need it, introductory, foundational, or in-depth. Responses below are for world languages.

#### Task Force

- 30.8% said only some students need it, 26.9% said introductory, 26.9% said foundational, 15.4% said in depth.

#### Board

- 18.2% said only some students need it, 45.5% said introductory, 27.3% said foundational, 9.1% said in depth.

#### Notes

- A Task Force member said: Some of the required credits could be pushed into 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade so the subjects are covered but no high school credit is required, like the WA State History requirement.

### **Proposal 7.2 – World Language Credit for Multilingual Learners**

Ensure multilingual learners have their knowledge recognized by meeting additional graduation requirements where appropriate.

#### Description

Currently, multilingual learners (MLL) should be able to earn world language credit through world language proficiency/competency assessments. However, SBE previously recommended in its [2022 Alignment Report](#) that MLLs should be able to use their English Language Arts (ELA) courses to automatically earn/meet their world language credits

(defining “world languages” as languages other than a student’s primary language). The policy could be similar to Oregon’s [Access to Linguistic Inclusion](#) policy (see more below).

Further work could include looking at the current ELA standards to determine which skills focus more on command of the English language versus which skills could be done in multiple languages.

### Level of support

As part of the survey, respondents had to select the level of content they felt students needed in each subject area. Choices included only some students need it, introductory, foundational, or in-depth.

#### Task Force

- World Language: 30.8% said only some students need it, 26.9% said introductory, 26.9% said foundational, 15.4% said in depth.

#### Board

- World Language: 18.2% said only some students need it, 45.5% said introductory, 27.3% said foundational, 9.1% said in-depth.

### Notes

- Oregon changed their English Language Arts requirement to a Language Arts requirement and revised their definition of World Language to provide students with more [access to linguistic inclusion](#).
  - Under the policy, some students may earn two credits for completing an English Language Arts or a Language Arts class.
  - Under Oregon’s policy, in specific circumstances, a student could earn a Language Arts credit by completing an English Language Development (ELD) course.
- A Task Force member said: Reduce English and allow ELL students to earn ELA credits for their ELL courses or world language courses
- Another Task Force member said: Our Limited English Proficiency students at the high school level are negatively affected by the 4 years of ELA requirement. Allows English as a second language to meet ELA graduation requirements. Too difficult within 24 credits to do both– makes it hard to complete all the requirements for newcomer ELs in 4 years, nearly impossible, sacrifices other hands on courses that might serve them better and are part of the OSPI guidelines for serving this population. Linguistically and developmentally inappropriate to teach ELA grade level standards through the level that is asked to students who are limited English

proficiency. Unintentionally puts up a barrier to students doing hands on and then sort of pushes them out early to work because the requirements are too many.

- Another Task Force member said: We have a large problem with high school level limited English proficiency students being thrust into the current graduation requirements framework. It's nearly impossible for them to finish HS in 4 years because there are too many credits they need to gather in addition to their ELD courses. (Esp ELA at grade level, which is inappropriate for those who are below a 3 on the WIDA framework). They cannot do the hands-on courses that keep them attending school.