

**Chapter 180-111 WAC**

**EMERGENCY WAIVER OF CERTAIN GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

**WAC 180-111-010 Authority and purpose.**

(1) The purpose of this chapter is to establish an emergency waiver program to allow school districts as defined in WAC 180-111-020, and private schools, to waive certain graduation requirements on an individual student basis and emergency waiver of certain requirements for private schools in WAC 180-111-060. The intent is to help prevent students from being unduly impacted by unforeseen disruptions to coursework and assessments resulting from an "emergency or disaster" as defined in RCW 38.52.010. "Emergency" may also include a national declaration of emergency by an authorized federal official.

(2) These emergency rules are for the novel coronavirus emergency, in response to the gubernatorial declaration of emergency on February 29, 2020. They apply to the Classes of 2020 and 2021 in the 2020-2021 school year.

**WAC 180-111-020 Definitions.** The definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Demonstrated postsecondary preparation" means the student has demonstrated skills and knowledge indicating preparation for the next steps identified in their high school and beyond plan under RCW 28A.230.090 and for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, and civic engagement.

(a) The school district shall review the individual student's completed and planned coursework and other information applicable to the individual student and determine if the student has demonstrated postsecondary preparation.

(b) This individual student review may include, but is not limited to, whether the following considerations apply to that student:

(i) The student has completed a graduation pathway option in accordance with RCW 28A.655.250 and WAC 180-51-230.

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(ii) The student has completed activities consistent with the criteria for "Career Prep" or has participated in an approved "Career Launch" program through Career Connect Washington.

(iii) The student has completed a preparatory career and technical education course or a course that meets the preparatory standards as defined in RCW 28A.700.030.

(iv) The student has developed and practiced leadership and employability skills through a job, volunteer position, or a Career and Technical Student Organization that would enable them to advance in their chosen career field and has obtained external validation from an employer, tribal elder, CTE business or industry advisory committee member, or other community member that can attest to the student's preparation for their next steps.

(v) The student is a participant in a recognized apprenticeship preparation program or registered apprenticeship program or has signed an apprenticeship agreement with an employer.

(vi) The student has earned college credit in a core subject area.

(vii) The student has earned an industry recognized credential.

(viii) The student has completed minimum college admission standards for four-year institutions of higher education, in accordance with RCW 28B.77.020(7)(a).

(ix) The student placed into a college-level math or English course at an institution of higher education.

(x) The student completed a summer bridge program or a senior transition course (Bridge to College).

(xi) The student has completed an option permissive under RCW 28A.655.065(5)(c)(i), including:

(A) a college-level class in the relevant subject area;

(B) admission to a higher education institution or career preparation program;

(C) award of a scholarship for higher education; or

(D) enlistment in a branch of the military.

(2) "Eligible student" means:

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(a) The student was reasonably expected to graduate in the school year when the emergency waiver is being considered;

(b) The student has demonstrated postsecondary preparation as defined in (1) of this subsection; and

(c) The student experienced a significant disruption to their ability to complete graduation requirements due to the emergency, which could include, but is not limited to: inability for the student to access the school building or other education facility due to closure or, if online learning is a part of the school program, the student did not have a reliable internet connection or sufficient technology within their household, had to support their family by working during the emergency, had to care for family members during the emergency, illness of the student or student's household member, or other circumstances that directly compromised the student's ability to complete the credit requirements or a graduation pathway option.

(3) "Emergency" means the same as the definition for "emergency or disaster" in RCW 38.52.010. "Emergency" may also include a national declaration of emergency by an authorized federal official.

(4) "Good faith effort" means the school district considered and implemented options, determined appropriate by the school district, to support each individual student in meeting credit and pathway requirements.

(a) For each student who is being considered for the emergency waiver, school districts shall provide individual student advising to help each student determine: what supports they need to be successful; how they might meet the graduation requirements, including the feasibility of summer or a partial or full additional year of high school enrollment; and whether the emergency waiver is appropriate for the individual student.

(b) Options for supporting students to meet credit and course-based graduation pathway requirements include, but are not limited to:

(i) Provision of additional academic supports to aid student completion.

(ii) Awarding credits based on the student's demonstrated proficiency/mastery of the state's learning standards under WAC 180-

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51-050, 180-51-051, and 392-410-300, including credits, grades, and courses transcribed on the high school transcript.

(iii) Awarding credit through expanded learning opportunities, dual credit programs, work-based learning (WAC 392-410-315), traditional online, summer learning, CTE course equivalencies, and other local credit options for awarding credit outside of school.

(b) Options for supporting students to meet the exam-based graduation pathway requirement include, but are not limited to: efforts to ensure students are aware of, and can access, online or by other alternative access options, the SAT, ACT, ASVAB, AP, IB, Cambridge International, and state assessments (if applicable). School districts are encouraged to reduce or eliminate any cost to students in using these options.

(5) "Reasonably expected to graduate" means the individual student's earned credits and current or planned enrollment would have been sufficient, as determined by the school district, for the student to meet the applicable state minimum graduation requirements (as defined in WAC 180-51-056, 180-51-067, 180-51-068, and 180-51-210) by the end of the school year when the emergency waiver is granted if not for the impact of the novel coronavirus disruption.

(6) "School district" means any school district, charter school established under chapter 28A.710 RCW, tribal compact school operated according to the terms of state-tribal education compacts authorized under chapter 28A.715 RCW, state school established under chapter 72.40 RCW, and community and technical college granting high school diplomas.

### **WAC 180-111-030 Application and approval process for public school districts.**

(1) The state board of education will make an application available to school districts seeking the emergency waiver of certain graduation requirements for the novel coronavirus emergency. A school district may apply to the state board of education for the authority to waive pathway and credit-based graduation requirements for individual students. The state board of education will accept

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applications through a deadline to be determined by the state board of education.

(2) To be granted the waiver authority, the school district must certify it will administer the waiver in accordance with program rules as stated in this chapter.

(3) The application must be certified by the school district superintendent or equivalent personnel with authority to sign on behalf of the school district.

(4) The state board of education may approve applications that meet the criteria stated in subsections (2) and (3) of this section. The board may delegate this authority to its executive director for efficiency per RCW 28A.305.130(7).

(5) The state board of education will promptly post on its public website a list of all approved applications.

### **WAC 180-111-040 School District Implementation of the Emergency Waiver of Certain Graduation Requirements.**

(1) Before granting any emergency waivers, the school district board or equivalent governing body shall adopt by resolution a plan that describes the school district's process for granting and declining emergency waivers for students. The plan must include:

(a) a process for school district staff to initiate a waiver and a process for students to request a waiver if not initiated by the district;

(b) a school district process if an initial decision is made to decline a waiver for an individual student, for further review and recommendations by a panel with at least one counselor and educators with expertise in trauma-informed instruction and culturally responsive education, and if appropriate, special education, instruction for multilingual/English Language Learners, and a migrant graduation specialist or migrant student advocate;

(c) a process for students to appeal within the school district a decision to not grant an emergency waiver; and

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(d) culturally responsive ways, based on the school district's local community, to communicate with students and families about the waiver and the process to request, appeal, or decline the waiver.

(2) Beginning from the date of approval of its waiver, in accordance with WAC 180-111-030, through August 31, 2021, a school district may waive subject area credit and pathway graduation requirements stated in WAC 180-111-050 for eligible students on an individual student basis after completing all of the following requirements:

(a) Before use of this waiver for graduation credit requirements, school districts shall consider using their existing authority to waive credits through the following ways:

(i) Local graduation requirements under WAC 180-51-020 may be waived at local discretion without approval of the state board of education.

(ii) Two-credit waiver of flexible credits may be granted for individual student circumstances, in accordance with WAC 180-51-068(13) and WAC 180-51-210(2).

(iii) Students may be excused from physical education in accordance with the applicable requirements in 180-51-067(6), 180-51-068(6), and 180-51-210(4)(f).

(iv) The noncredit requirement of Washington state history may be waived in accordance with WAC 180-51-067 (4)(b), 180-51-068 (4)(b)(i) and (ii), and 180-51-210 (4)(d)(iv)(A) and (B).

(b) The school district shall review the individual student's completed and planned coursework and determine that the student was reasonably expected to graduate as defined in WAC 180-111-020 and that the student has demonstrated postsecondary preparation as defined in WAC 180-111-020.

(c) The school district shall demonstrate a good faith effort, as defined in WAC 180-111-020, to help the individual student complete coursework, address credit deficiencies, and meet core course and graduation pathway option requirements through other options that align with their High School and Beyond Plan. The school district

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shall document the steps taken to demonstrate this good faith effort in the individual student record.

(d) The school district shall consult with the individual student, and make a reasonable effort to consult with a parent or guardian of the student, and shall make a reasonable effort to provide information about this waiver in the preferred languages of the student, and of the parent or guardian of the student if applicable. The information must include, but is not limited to:

(i) In the consideration of whether waiver(s) are appropriate for an individual student, and if so what waiver(s), the school district shall advise the student to waive only those credit(s) that are least applicable to the student's postsecondary plans as articulated in the student's high school and beyond plan;

(ii) The potential benefits and limitations that could result from receiving the waiver including impacts on postsecondary plans and, if applicable to their high school and beyond plan, the recommendation to contact the student's intended postsecondary institutions or apprenticeship provider regarding potential impacts; and

(iii) The option for the individual student to decline the waiver and for the student to be provided with the opportunity to earn the credits needed or meet their intended pathway option to complete graduation requirements which may include continued enrollment beyond the planned graduation date.

(3) The school district shall ensure equity in administering the emergency waiver. The school district shall disaggregate waiver data by student subgroups as referenced in RCW 28A.300.042(3) and shall conduct further disaggregation of subgroups if data are available to do so. If disproportionality is found, the school district shall take appropriate actions to ensure equitable administration. This consideration must further be designed to identify and mitigate potential disparate impacts of the emergency waiver and to determine if any changes to the school district's approach in administering the emergency waiver, including supports under WAC 180-111-020(4) to help

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students meet the requirements, are needed before the conclusion of the school year.

(4) The school district shall:

(i) Maintain a record of the following in the individual student record: actions taken under the good faith effort to help the student meet the graduation requirements, courses (including the term and amount of credit) and requirements waived, and how the student demonstrated postsecondary preparation;

(ii) Include a notation of waived credits and graduation pathway on the student's high school transcript in accordance with RCW 28A.230.125;

(iii) Keep a record of the number of waivers requested and not granted;

(iv) Report on administration of the emergency waiver to the state board of education in a manner determined by the state board of education; and

(v) Report student level emergency waiver data to the office of superintendent of public instruction in a manner determined by the superintendent of public instruction in consultation with the state board of education.

### **WAC 180-111-050 Emergency waiver of certain requirements in response to novel coronavirus.**

(1) Waived credit graduation requirements are limited to the student's classes impacted by the novel coronavirus disruption. The school district shall prioritize student completion of core coursework and coursework related to the student's high school and beyond plan under RCW 28A.230.090. Beginning in the 2020-2021 school year, school districts may waive credits for eligible students in the Classes of 2020 and 2021:

(a) In addition to existing waiver authorities as described in WAC 180-111-040(2)(a), school districts may waive up to two additional credits under this emergency waiver, provided that students graduate with no fewer than a total of 20 credits.



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(b) The emergency waiver in (a) may be applied to core credits or flexible credits as defined in WAC 180-51-210, provided that no more than one credit in each core subject area is waived.

(2) A student's graduation pathway requirement may be waived for eligible students in the Classes of 2020 and 2021 after a school district has made a good faith effort to help the student meet their pathway requirement, as defined in WAC 180-111-020.

(3) This waiver may apply to individual students participating in the international baccalaureate diploma programme as defined in RCW 28A.230.122 to enable these students to earn a Washington high school diploma.

(4) Schools operating under the waiver defined in WAC 180-18-055 may waive graduation requirements in a manner consistent with this section.

### **WAC 180-111-060 Emergency waiver of certain requirements in response to novel coronavirus for private schools.**

(1) This section applies to private schools approved to operate in Washington for the 2020-21 school year under chapter 180-90 WAC.

(2) Private schools may waive credit-based graduation requirements for individual students who have demonstrated postsecondary preparation as defined in WAC 180-111-020, in a manner consistent with the provisions of WAC 180-111-040 and WAC 180-111-050. Private schools are exempted from the reporting requirements listed in WAC 180-111-040(4)(iv).

(3) Private schools that have implemented an online education program consistent with the provisions of RCW 28A.195.090 will be considered to have met the instructional hour requirements. Private schools have discretion to determine whether the curriculum has been adequately satisfied.

(4) For the 2020-2021 school year, the State Board of Education will maintain a private school's status as an approved private school if, due to a significant disruption caused by the novel coronavirus, the school is unable to fulfill the requirements of RCW 28A.195.010 of

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a full school year of one hundred eighty days or are unable to fulfill the annual average total instructional hours requirements.

(5) Each private school shall notify the state board of education in a format provided by the board whether the private school is waiving requirements under this section.