



MEMO: GRADUATION REQUIREMENT ALIGNMENT PROJECT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

Submitted for the May 2022 Board meeting by Linda Drake, Director of Career- and College Readiness Initiatives

Introduction

As part of the State Board of Education's (SBE) work on alignment of graduation requirements with the Washington Profile of a Graduate, two listening sessions were held in April 2022. This memo summarizes feedback from participants of these listening sessions and is intended to help inform Board member discussion at the May 2022 Board meeting. A third listening session was held for students on May 3, 2022 and a summary of student feedback will be included in additional materials for the May Board meeting.

At the May Board meeting, Board members will advance the alignment work by beginning to focus on topics for developing recommendations. Recommendations for alignment of graduation requirements are due in a report to the Governor and Education Committees of the Legislature in December 2022.

No Board action is anticipated on this work at the May Board meeting.

April 2022 Listening Sessions for Aligning Graduation Requirements and the Profile of a Graduate

Two hour-long online listening sessions were held on April 12 and 20, 2022. A total of 344 people registered for the sessions, with approximately 97 people attended the session on April 12, and 150 people attended the session on April 20. The pie chart shows how registrants identified themselves (registrants could choose all roles that applied).

During the listening sessions SBE staff Alissa Muller and Linda Drake introduced the purpose of the sessions, presented background information on graduation requirements and the Washington Profile of a Graduate, and facilitated group discussion and feedback.

Key Questions and Possible Focus Areas for May Board Discussion

Feedback from the listening sessions suggest key questions for members to consider, and perhaps suggests areas for focus for the development of recommendations. In addition, feedback in a few topics suggested a fairly strong agreement among a significant number of participants.

Confusing and Complex

The word cloud exercise indicates that people find the current system of graduation requirements too confusing and complex, and indicates they hope for graduation requirements that are more clear in the future.

- **Are there ways to simplify graduation requirements without losing flexibility?**
- **Are there ways of communicating about graduation requirements that would make them clearer?**

Listening session participant: "I love the idea of flexibility, but I am also worried about options being so complicated that students, teachers and families have trouble even understanding them."

Subject Area and Credit Requirements

Feedback on subject and credit area requirements are varied. Some participants in the listening sessions were advocates for certain subject areas, or advocated for decreasing requirements in some subjects. For example, some participants felt there was too much math and focus on core academic subjects, while others felt that was too much focus on non-academic subjects. Several participants expressed general support for the current credit requirement framework.

- **When some participants support the current requirements for a subject, while some participants want more of the subject and some participants want less of the subject, perhaps the current requirements in that subject represent a reasonable balance.**

Pathways

While a few participants expressed support for pathways and noted a benefit to engaging with students to discuss pathways, more participants felt that the current set of pathways do not sufficiently support the skills of the Profile of the Graduate, and that additional pathways would work better for more students. Several participants felt that standardized assessments continue to play too large a role in graduation, and that the standardized tests do not align well with either career preparation or preparation for higher education. This feedback is in general agreement with SBE [graduation pathway option research](#).

- **What additional pathway or pathways are needed to provide more options to students?**

Alignment with Higher Education Admissions

A number of participants noted that current requirements have a focus of preparing students for higher education, and that this is an asset of the current requirements.

- **The alignment of current requirements with preparation for higher education is an asset of the current requirements.**

Connecting to Careers and Life

Some participants indicated that current requirements do not sufficiently support career preparation or preparation for adult life. Some supported more Career and Technical Education being required.

- **How can graduation requirements better help student prepare for careers?**
- **How can Profile of a Graduate life skills be better incorporated into graduation requirements?**

Special Education Students

A number of participants felt the needs of special education students are not being met through current graduation requirements. Primarily these participants expressed that graduation pathway options did not suit some students with individual education plans (IEP). Others noted that current subject and credit requirements also do not work well for some students.

- **Should there be additional pathways or additional flexibilities to accommodate students with IEPs?**

Financial Literacy

As the SBE has heard from students, parents and partners, participants expressed that the current system of graduation requirements do not adequately incorporate financial literacy. SBE staff will be meeting with the [Financial Education Public-Private Partnership](#) (FEPPP) to discuss financial education and the Board's graduation requirement alignment work.

One participant noted: "We have financial literacy, but college-oriented students are not encouraged to take it."

- **How should financial literacy standards be included in graduation requirements so all Washington graduates have the skills and knowledge to manage their own finances?**

Table 1: A Summary of the Feedback from April 2022 Listening Session A check mark means a statement or similar statement was repeated; multiple checks means a statement or similar statement was made multiple times. In the Padlet application, participants could “like” a comment. The heart icon indicates that a statement was “liked” by other participants at the April 20 listening session.

Theme or Topic	<u>Assets in Current Graduation Requirements</u> (Padlet exercise)	<u>Skills in the Profile that are not Adequately Represented in Current Graduation Requirements</u> (Padlet exercise)	Comments, live and in chat
Subjects and Credits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have more CTE options than the past ♥6 • English, math, science ✓✓✓✓♥ • Content coverage is comprehensive • CTE equivalencies ♥4 • Current credit Framework is good ✓♥ • World languages are an asset in the system • Electives ♥ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need schedules that allow more options for credit-earning than 6-period day ♥7 • Too many credits don’t relate to student interest ♥4 • More space for remediation, credit recovery • Realities of course schedules prevent choice and access to pathways ♥4 • More creative writing • More history connected to current issues ♥2 • More arts • More pathways for CTE and fine arts • Should be art or CTE (not both), shouldn’t be required to do 2 arts ♥5 • Require more CTE • Require 2 credits of CTE ♥6 • Drop Physical Education ✓♥2 • Too much math, English, and social studies • Too much math prevents exploration ✓♥ • Too much time on non-academic subjects—more focus on core subjects • “Are we going to dilute our standards if we focus on the profile skills?” • More language choices ♥3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More arts • Offering CTE at alternative schools is challenging ✓ • Offer CTE earlier • “Balance of credits is pretty good. We have financial literacy as a CTE class, and it works well in our system. We also have equivalency credits for CTE classes in math, science. Look at applying math and science credits to specialized internships.” • Student athletes forced to take PE • PE is important (US obesity) ✓ • “For every additional graduation requirement an existing requirement should be eliminated” • Focus on core academics • Statistics, stat literacy would be good ✓ • Need more Civics ✓✓✓ • “Graduated in 2017 Strong core structure in English, math and science – good to require those core classes almost all years. Gaps I see – limited ability to specialize, especially if someone wants to specialize in foreign language, music. For example, my sister wanted to go further in Spanish but with

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			<p>other requirements couldn't take enough classes."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current grad requirements and the Profile of a Grad are good
Pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CTE pathway is good ♥6 • Pathways are good, counseling students about pathways leads to a good discussion ♥2 • Pathways provide flexibility ✓ ♥2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited pathways for students who are low-skill but not eligible for WA-AIM ♥11 • Pathways don't work well in alternative schools ♥6 • Need more pathways ✓✓♥4 • Grad pathways limit student options ✓ • Assessments don't align to career or college skills ♥3 • Standardized tests still too widely used • Limited options for students who don't test well ✓ • Need more pathways for non-4-year ed options ♥4 • "Younger students can't always take the pathway classes they want because they are just shoved into spaces where there is room." ♥5 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Corp and trade certification should be graduation pathways • Need additional pathways that are community-based • Would like to bring back the portfolio assessment
High School and Beyond Plan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High School and Beyond Plan implementation is uneven around the state ✓✓ • "Best suited for an advisory period; without it's stuffed into a core class, presented by teachers without this as a priority" ♥ 	

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Special education students		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More options for SPED students ✓✓✓✓✓✓♥7 • Unclear exactly what high need students are required to complete ♥3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited options for pathways • No more off-grade-level testing is a loss • CTE is not the best pathway for some SPED students—CTE may not be accessible or aligned with the student’s interests ✓ • Completing graduation requirements requires early skill development, which doesn’t work for many SPED students • Need a “Certificate of Completion”
Career skills and life skills		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduation requirements should have more links to career choices ✓✓✓♥4 • Job shadowing, internships, community service ♥5 • Job-finding skills/life skills ✓♥5 • Work experience options ♥9 	
Flexibility, Exploration, Personalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current flexibility is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More need for more exploration ✓♥4 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More personalization • Exploration should happen earlier • “I love the idea of flexibility, but I am also worried about options being so complicated that students, teachers and families have trouble even understanding them.”
Ethnic Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start on Ethnic Studies is good ♥ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnic studies ✓♥6 • Multicultural studies/ Global perspective • “AP classes has no course for ethnic studies making students feel less important to have ethnic studies” ♥ • Ethnic studies has the wrong ideology • Focus on academics, not ideology ♥ • Need only constructive, non-ideological ethnic studies ✓✓✓✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needs to be a grad requirement • “When students get ethnic studies in higher education they often wish they had been taught it earlier” • Concern that ethnic studies will not represent parent’s values

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Financial Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial literacy ♥3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial literacy, replacing some of the advanced math courses Need financial literacy ✓✓✓ ♥14 How to budget ♥6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Folding financial literacy into an economic requirement "We have financial literacy, but college-oriented students are not encouraged to take it" Financial literacy as one of 3 math credits
Preparation for Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation for higher education is an asset ✓✓✓✓✓✓♥5 Ability to pass placement exams at college level ♥2 College admissions alignment ♥12 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough college prep, too much one-size-fits-all ♥3 	
Advanced students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accelerated options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uneven availability of Dual Credit More opportunities for advanced students ♥5 More advanced STEM ✓♥3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Some RS students start, then get over their heads and have trouble returning to high school" Often gifted students have the most limited choices
Small District Challenges		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Too challenging to provide pathways, particularly for small districts CTE pathways difficult ✓ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No funding to provide electives and advanced courses for small numbers of students
Mastery/Competency-based learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mastery-based learning options are an asset 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More options for credit for prior learning/learning outside of school ♥6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MB credits should be more accessible MBL could help with issue of spending elective credits to retrieve credit Need more MBL and opportunities to earn credit outside of the classroom

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Social emotional learning, wellness		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy/wellness/SEL • Mental health ♥7 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “SEL and Soft Skills need to be required. Maybe included in the Health and Fitness, more emphasis on Health/Mental Health/SEL/ Executive functioning instead of just .5 Health it should be 1.0 Health and 1.0 Fitness”
Additional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native communities in our state are an asset ♥6 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need funding to reach the vision ✓ • Civic engagement ♥6 • Allow students to take more time, need space for remediation, space to fail a class and still graduate ♥6 • Student accountability • Approval of curricula (e.g., sex ed) by OSPI • More skill center options • Restore debate programs, logic, civil advocacy of ideas/ critical thinking/ rational thought and logic ✓♥7 • Digital citizenship/ Navigating social media and misinformation ♥9 • Equity—system adds to marginalization/ needs to be more inclusive • More supports • Teachers—new teachers can’t advise as well as seasoned teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrollment is way down • Districts may not communicate very well about curricula • Inequities in funding • Home Economics and Shop should be reinstated in middle school • “Reframe “on-time” graduation—four years is normalized and five years is stigmatized” • Challenge of offering diverse electives, funding for districts and teacher qualifications a challenge