



MEMO: PRELIMINARY FEEDBACK ON DRAFT ALIGNMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

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

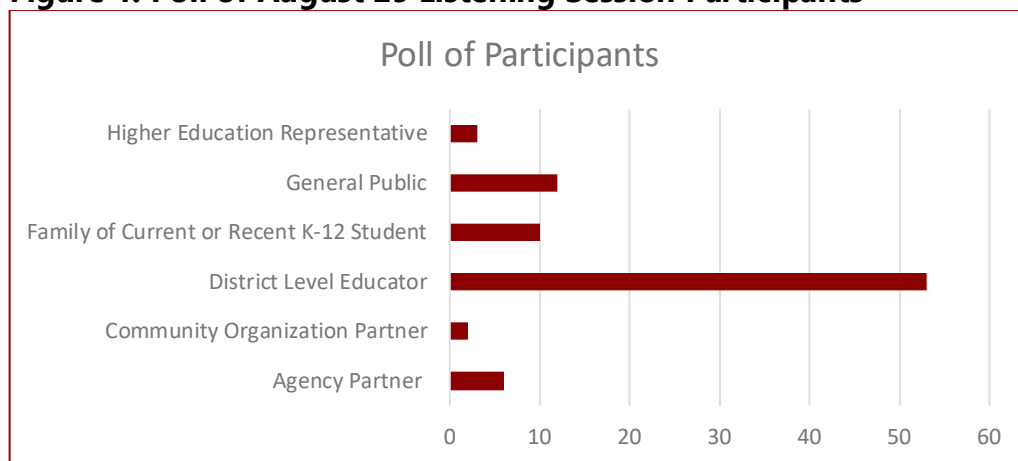
Introduction

At the July 2022 meeting, the State Board of Education discussed draft recommendations to align graduation requirements with the Profile of a Graduate. Through the summer and early fall, a series of listening sessions, meetings with partner organizations, and a Graduation Requirement Alignment Survey will be used to collect feedback on draft recommendations. This feedback will be used to refine and further develop the draft recommendations.

A listening session was held on August 29, 2022 and the Graduation Requirement Alignment Survey was available on August 23, 2022. Additional listening sessions are scheduled for September and early October, and the Graduation Requirement Alignment Survey will stay open until at least the end of September. This memo summarizes the preliminary feedback from the first listening session and the responses from the first week that the survey was available. This preliminary summary is intended to inform Board discussion at the September 2022 meeting.

August 29, 2022 Listening Session

Figure 1: Poll of August 29 Listening Session Participants



In total, about 180 people attended the August 29 Listening Session. Of people who filled out the poll, district level educators were the most numerous; however, about half of people did not fill out the poll (they chose not to, or they may have joined the session late).

Participants were able to rate and comment on draft recommendations through Padlet, an online application. It appears that perhaps a quarter to half of participants entered information into Padlet.

Table 1A: August 29 Listening Session Ratings of Recommendations

Recommendation	Rating 1 to 5 Stars
Support the work of the Financial Education Public Private Partnership and build capacity for districts to offer high quality financial education to all students	4.5
Increase opportunities for students to earn the Seal of Biliteracy by promoting the adoption of district policies and ensure English Language Learners are evaluated for earning the Seal	4.5
Focus on learning standards rather than on seat time to support mastery-based learning and interdisciplinary learning	4.5
Develop a state policy for the waiver/excusal of physical education so that awarding of mastery/competency credit is more uniform	4.0
Ensure districts implement the Since Time Immemorial curriculum	4.0
Support English Language learners in meeting graduation requirements by allowing them to meet World Language graduation requirements when taking an English Language Arts course	4.0
Improve the High School and Beyond Plan through state support for a limited number of online platforms that would improve uniformity and portability	4.0
Improve the high school transcript to support better reporting of mastery-based learning, multidisciplinary learning, and more detail on how graduation requirements are met	4.0
Create more flexibility in physical education and health to allow for mental health content	3.5
Partner with advocates to build coalition on the implementation of Ethnic Studies	3.0

Table 1A shows the average ratings of the draft recommendations given by participants at the August 29, 2022 listening session.

The recommendations that received the highest average ratings were recommendations involving:

- Support for financial education
- Increasing opportunities for students to earn the Seal of Biliteracy
- Focusing on learning standards over seat time

Based on comments in Padlet and from participants who gave oral comments during the August 29 listening session, some participants were highly engaged in advocating against ethnic studies. The draft recommendation involving building a coalition to implement ethnic studies received the lowest rating.

Table 1B shows the rating of each recommendation plus a few selected comments on each recommendation, and some selected responses to general questions. The general questions included:

- Do you have suggestions for additional topics for recommendations?

- Are there other aspects of the current graduation requirements that you would want to change?
- Is the Board on the right track?

Table 1B: August 29 Listening Session - Selected comments on draft recommendations

Recommendation	Rating 1 to 5 Stars	Select Comments
Support the work of the Financial Education Public Private Partnership and build capacity for districts to offer high quality financial education to all students	4.5	<p>I support this! I've had young cashiers not able to count out change, so it is SO important students graduate with financial literacy. Financial literacy is essential and is needed in life after high school to understand taxes, interest rates, markets, etc.</p> <p>This has good potential. We should include building knowledge around paying for education after high school as part of this.</p> <p>I think that this is a critical need for high school students.</p>
Create more flexibility in physical education and health to allow for mental health content	3.5	<p>Flexibility in PE and health is needed to accommodate mental health needs. Kids have PE from Kindergarten through high school, and I'm certain that we can cut back in the PE needs area and build an opportunity to provide students with skill sets needed for positive mental health development. So much grift and pseudoscience laced into wellness culture today -unless specified otherwise, I'm not confident this effectively replaces physical activity in health.</p>
Develop a state policy for the waiver/excusal of physical education so that awarding of mastery/competency credit is more uniform	4.0	<p>Physical education seems less of an essential graduation requirement than other content areas. Health/fitness, yes. An actual PE requirement seems outdated. I do understand the need to support overall wellness for students, but am not sure requiring them to take a PE class is the way to go.</p> <p>I think this should be up to each district to make policy, not the state making a state-wide policy. The more the state is involved, the more local control we lose and this is not a one size fits all issue.</p>
Ensure districts implement the Since Time Immemorial curriculum	4.0	<p>Necessary!</p> <p>This has been in law since 2015 and implementation should have begun in 2017. There needs to be a timeline.</p>
Partner with advocates to build coalition on the implementation of Ethnic Studies	3.0	<p>Ethnic Studies is explicitly political indoctrination and does not belong in the K-12 system. Liberatory Ethnic Studies is explicitly opposed to equality and civic responsibility in a democracy.</p> <p>Ethnic studies should not be made a graduation requirement. It is too political and creates a social justice counternarrative</p> <p>Awareness of other cultures and ethnicities around the world is something US schools do not do well yet. Adding something to address this gap is important</p> <p>This is critically important in the education of our students. Being aware of, understanding differences, and embracing diversity is essential. Students want these discussions and learning in their schools.</p>
Support English Language learners in meeting graduation requirements by allowing them to meet World Language graduation requirements when taking an English Language Arts course	4.0	<p>I don't think this should be necessary. It is highly likely that a student receiving EL services could test for World Language Comp Credits for their home language. Also, the WL credits are not a "true" high school graduation requirement since they are optional. Finally, for college admissions it would not make sense to accept "world language" credits based on English classes.</p> <p>Support this. Students who learn English as a second (or third) language should have opportunities to gain credit for that in world language.</p>

Recommendation	Rating 1 to 5 Stars	Select Comments
<p>Increase opportunities for students to earn the Seal of Biliteracy by promoting the adoption of district policies and ensure English Language Learners are evaluated for earning the Seal</p>	4.5	<p>Is cost going to be a barrier or will there be a plan go provide the test free to students?</p> <p>I support this recommendation, because multilingualism is a gift/asset that should be recognized/valued.</p>
<p>Focus on learning standards rather than on seat time to support mastery-based learning and interdisciplinary learning</p>	4.5	<p>This makes sense, but the important consideration is ensuring that learning standard achievement is well-assessed. We have to be careful about unintentionally diminishing standards.</p> <p>Support districts to move to standards based scoring. While it may be highly recommended, some districts haven't fully made the shift and this undergirds much of the challenges to set the stage for competency based learning.</p>
<p>Improve the High School and Beyond Plan through state support for a limited number of online platforms that would improve uniformity and portability</p>	4.0	<p>Consistency across schools would be very helpful.</p> <p>Portability absolutely should be the highest priority. It's not a "beyond" plan if it's embedded in a particular school's system.</p>
<p>Improve the high school transcript to support better reporting of mastery-based learning, multidisciplinary learning, and more detail on how graduation requirements are met</p>	4.0	<p>We must make sure that colleges and universities, including private schools and schools outside of WA will recognize these transcripts</p> <p>I would like to see more of a focus on learning recovery since COVID. The clock is ticking for the state and districts to utilize federal relief dollars for learning recovery. I would like to see bold ideas, like extending the next two school years to help students get caught up academically.</p>
<p>General Comments:</p>		<p>Profile of a grad... Shows confidence, applies learning, thinks critically, demonstrates resilience, works on a team, etc... could we ask schools to identify through which courses or experiences those POG qualities are taught/developed? Help draw a line from credits to graduate profile qualities</p> <p>We need more pathway options, such as work pathway. State testing is difficult for many students, especially in an online environment.</p> <p>One of the exciting things about going to high school is the opportunity to explore electives and discover interests that may lead to future career preferences. Experiences are essential when moving a person's thinking from an interest level to a preference level. It seems like there is a greater focus on locking down goals and plans before students are given sufficient opportunities for exploration. I am wondering about this piece and if it has gotten lost in policy setting.</p> <p>While these priorities are wonderful and a good focus, I worry that we will add new grad requirements without removing others, making it more difficult</p> <p>I'm not sure. I look at our context of drops in K-12 enrollment, rising rates of absenteeism, big declines in academic achievement in reading and math, and declining rates of post secondary enrollment, and I feel like these ideas don't really meet the moment.</p> <p>Graduation pathways create and intense amount of additional compliance and technical oversight for districts and students, and don't serve the original intent. Please eliminate them and/or allow full district local control on how they mark that requirement met. Our time can be used much better elsewhere to ensure students are ready for their next step.</p> <p>Student numbers and the resources that accompany them are being disrupted by political agendas. We need to focus our resources on helping students become successful.</p>

Preliminary Alignment Survey Results as of August 31, 2022

After the first week the Graduation Requirement Alignment Survey was open, 57 people completed and submitted the survey.

Figure 2: Survey Respondents as of August 31, 2022

19. Please describe yourself (click all that apply).

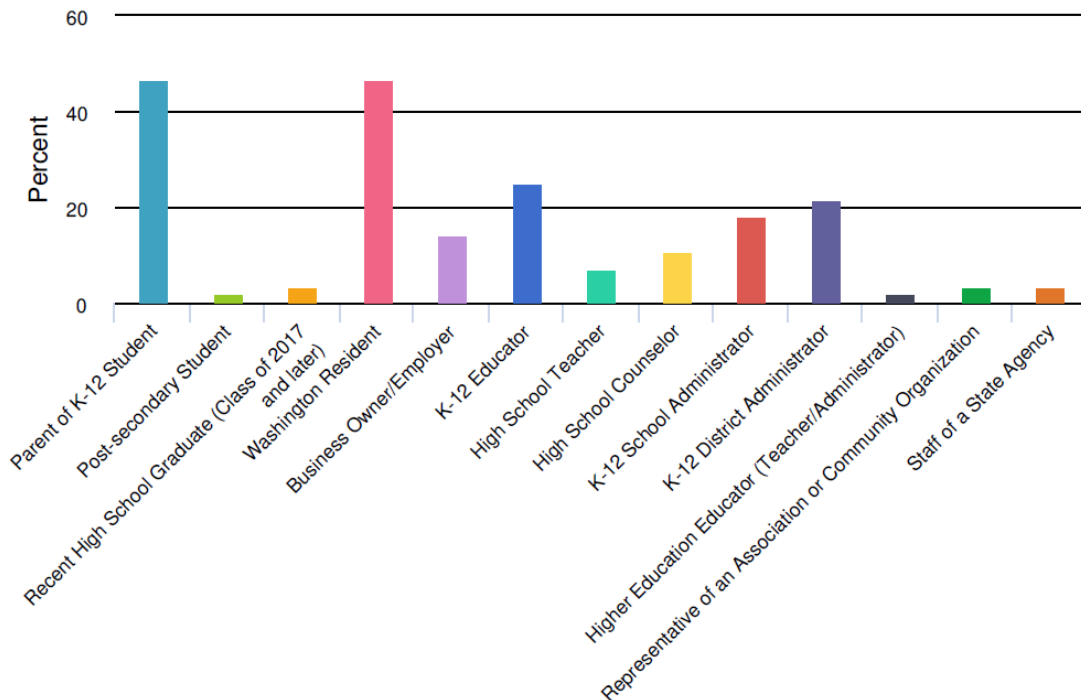


Figure 3: Survey respondents by Race / Ethnicity (as of August 31, 2022)

Value	Percent	Responses
American Indian, Alaskan Native or Indigenous	3.7%	2
Asian	7.4%	4
Black, African, African-American, Ethiopian, or Haitian	9.3%	5
White, Caucasian, European-Russian, Middle Eastern or North African	64.8%	35
Other (Please specify):	1.9%	1
Prefer not to answer	24.1%	13

Among participants, 8.9 identified themselves as Hispanic or Latinx, 69.6 did not, and 21.4 % preferred not to answer.

Figure 4: Survey respondents by urbanicity (as of August 31, 2022)

Value	Percent	Responses
Rural	28.6%	16
Suburban	53.6%	30
Urban	17.9%	10
Totals: 56		

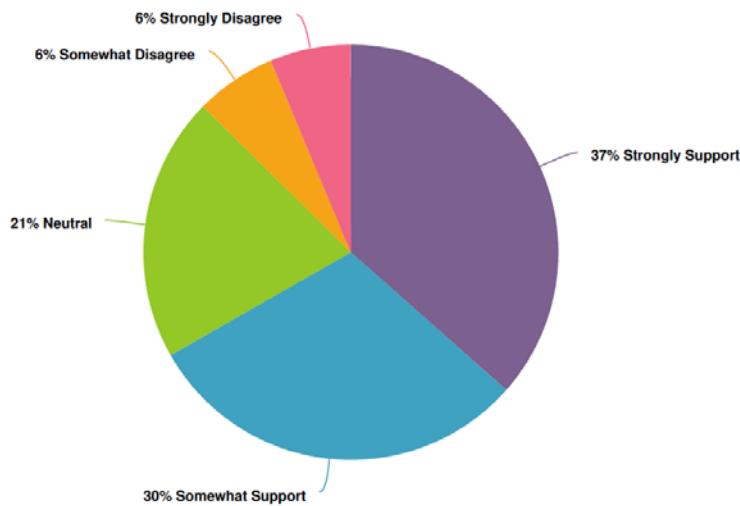
Figure 5: Survey respondents by region (as of August 31, 2022)

Value	Percent	Responses
Southwestern Washington	5.4%	3
Northwestern Washington	26.8%	15
Seattle/Puget Sound Region	55.4%	31
South Central Washington	1.8%	1
Southeastern Washington	1.8%	1
Eastern Washington	8.9%	5
Totals: 56		

Draft recommendation 1: Develop a statewide policy for granting credit for participation in sports and extracurricular activities and advocate for all students to have access to these credit-earning opportunities.

Figure 6: Level of support for draft recommendation 1 (as of August 31, 2022)

1. What is your level of support for draft recommendation 1 shown above?



Some selected comments on this recommendation (complete comments may be found in the [full preliminary report](#)):

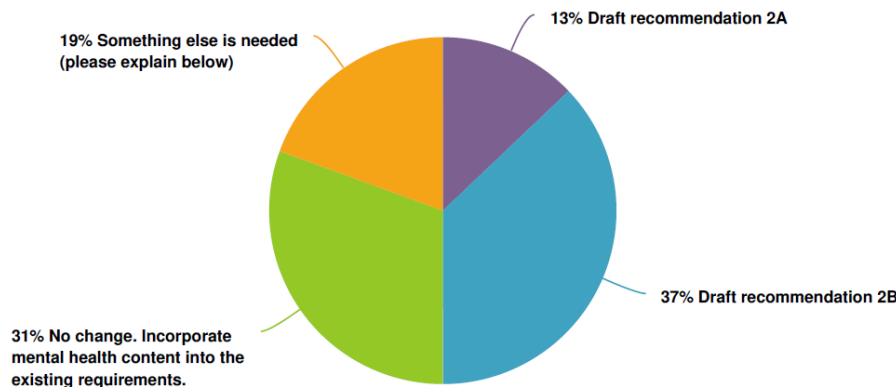
- Yes. It shouldn't be restricted to just varsity sports. Instead, it should be based on participation hours in school or outside of school activities.
- Would be great to have a policy across the state so it is more equal and not dependent on local opinions on the subject.
- There are some exceptions that can come up. As principal, I would still like some freedom to review these on a case-by-case situation.

Draft recommendation 2A: The current graduation requirements include .5 credits of Health, and 1.5 credits of physical education (PE). Change this to 1 credit of Health and 1 credit of PE to leave more room in a student's schedule for learning about mental, physical, and emotional health and wellness.

Draft recommendation 2B: Change the current graduation requirement of .5 credits of Health, and 1.5 credits of physical education (PE) to 2 credits that can be divided in any way to accommodate individual student needs for mental, physical, and emotional health, wellness, and physical fitness.

Figure 7: Support for draft recommendations 2A and 2B (as of August 31, 2022)

4. Which of the following do you feel would best allow graduation requirements to incorporate mental health and wellness learning?



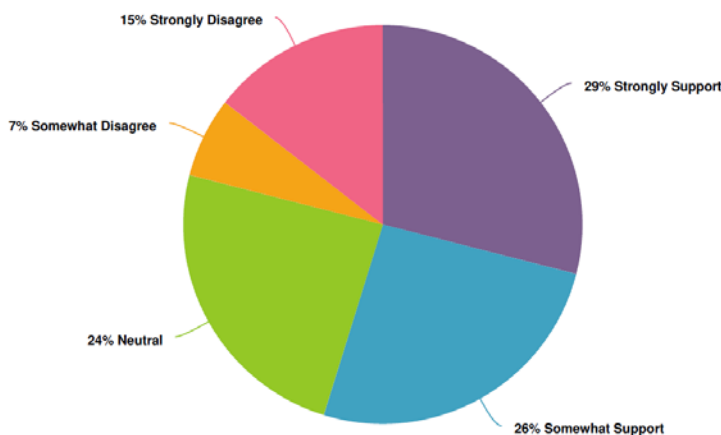
Some selected comments on this recommendation (complete comments may be found in the [full preliminary report](#)):

- 2B will allow greater flexibility when addressing the physical and mental health of students, especially special education students.
- Providing flexibility to make the requirements relevant for all students is always good.
- I am very concerned about ideological bias in the education system, and it seems especially strong in "mental health" programs. 2B appears to give an out to participating. Great!
- These types of changes place different requirements and constraints on staffing.

Draft recommendation 3: Permit English Language Learners to meet both English and World Language graduation requirements when they take English Language Arts courses.

Figure 8: Level of support for draft recommendation 3 (as of August 31, 2022)

7. What is your level of support for draft recommendation 3 shown above?



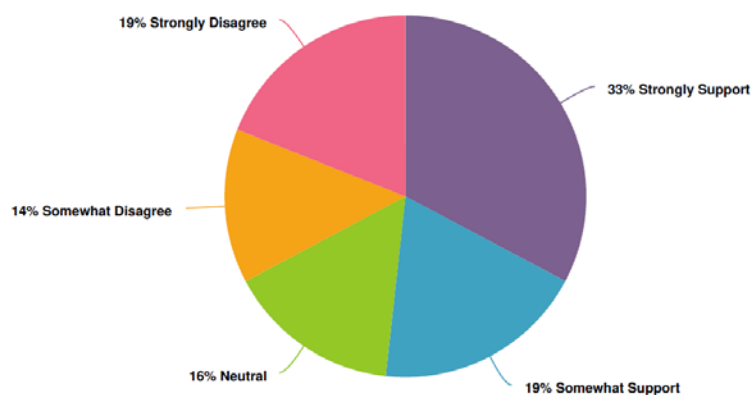
Some selected comments on this recommendation (complete comments may be found in the [full preliminary report](#)):

- I never think lowering the bar is effective.
- The Seal of Biliteracy alone should be sufficient for World Languages credits for students who are already proficient in a non-English language.
- If a student doesn't earn the Seal of Biliteracy, but they meet with World Language grad requirements, how will colleges view this?
- Let English language learners take their native language in school for their language requirement. But English needs to be English. They live here, they need to be able to read and write in the language of this country.
- My support depends: If you mean ELL students would receive WL credit for taking ESL course, I support the recommendation. If it means EL students receive WL credit for any ELA course I don't. Scaffolding instruction in the target language is as important.

Draft recommendation 4: The State Board of Education will expand current work to promote individualized student learning through an MBL grant program designed to support learning recovery, ensure school districts employ equitable MBL policies, and develop more options for students to demonstrate meeting learning standards.

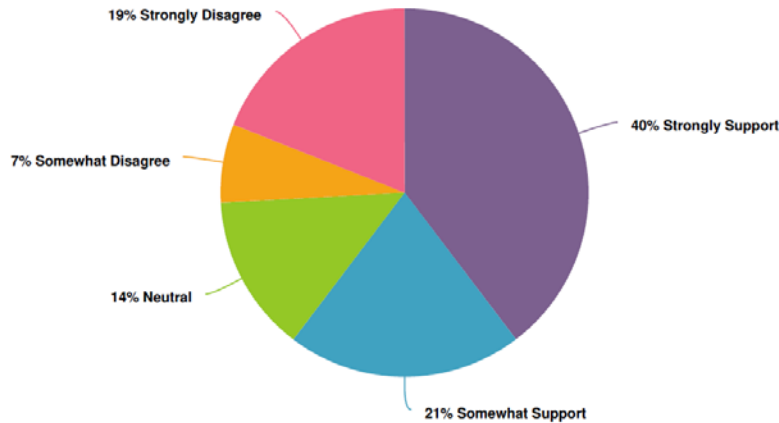
Figure 9: Level of support for draft recommendation 4 (as of August 31, 2022)

(Open-ended comments were grouped together for questions on recommendations 4 through 7, and 8 through 10)



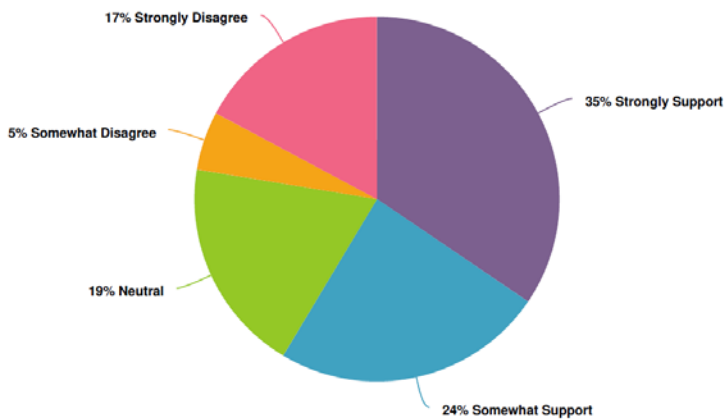
Draft recommendation 5: Define the purpose of Graduation Pathways and add more pathway options, including a performance-based pathway and a work-based pathway.

Figure 10: Level of support for draft recommendation 5 (as of August 31, 2022)



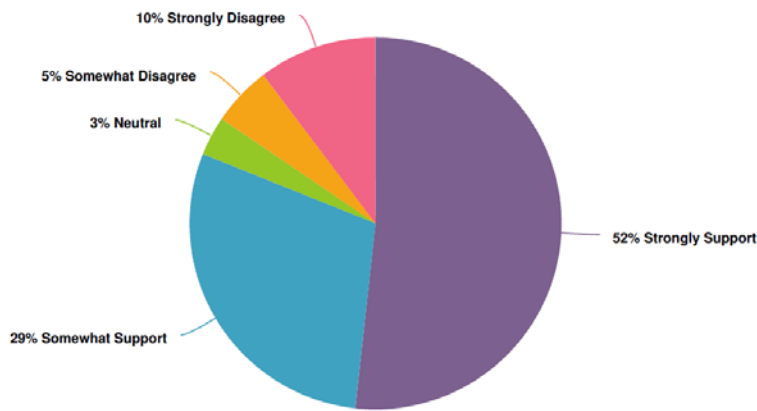
Draft Recommendation 6: Support a limited number of state-funded online platforms and incorporate high school and beyond planning into credit-bearing courses or a credit-bearing advisory.

Figure 11: Level of support for draft recommendation 6 (as of August 31, 2022)



Draft recommendation 7: Support the [Financial Education Public Private Partnership](#)'s (FEPPP) work on expanding district capacity to offer high quality financial education for all students. Support incorporating financial education into the high school and beyond planning processes.

Figure 12: Level of support for draft recommendation 7 (as of August 31, 2022)

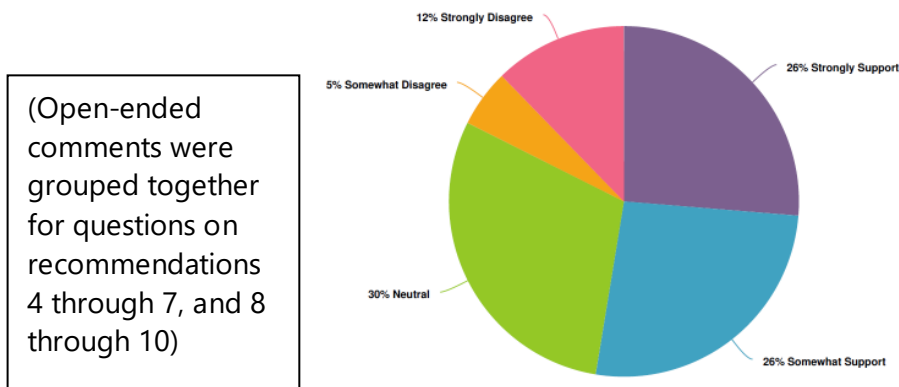


Some selected comments on recommendations 4 through 7 (complete comments may be found on the [full preliminary report](#)):

- The current graduation pathways create a major inequity for students with disabilities or students who fall behind due to extenuating circumstances. The clear reasoning behind the need for these pathways should include how the choices created equitable access for students with a variety of needs and identify where obvious gaps are still occurring. This list of grad pathways seems to present significant barriers to many students even after they complete the over-rigorous 24 credit diploma.
- The HSBP should be transferable between schools in WA so that student work follows them and is not lost. If this is really a long-term priority, deep development of ONE platform that works with the student information systems used in the state would be most beneficial.
- I recommend we remove Algebra 2 and replace with personal finance.
- Mastery-based learning is the platform already taking place in many Open Doors programs. The HSBP is a meaningless document for student who are disengaged, dropped out or involved int eh juvenile justice system.
- Pathways and HSBP are useless busy work.
- Financial literacy is so important and definitely part of a life skill. If kids had more education in this, they wouldn't be so burdened with student debt.
- Do not add more requirements without removing an existing one.
- MBL is very difficult to institutionalize with integrity and at a standard of rigor comparable to traditional pathways, so I'd recommend a high degree of scrutiny on equity grounds so that MBL pathways don't become a way to graduate students without educating them.

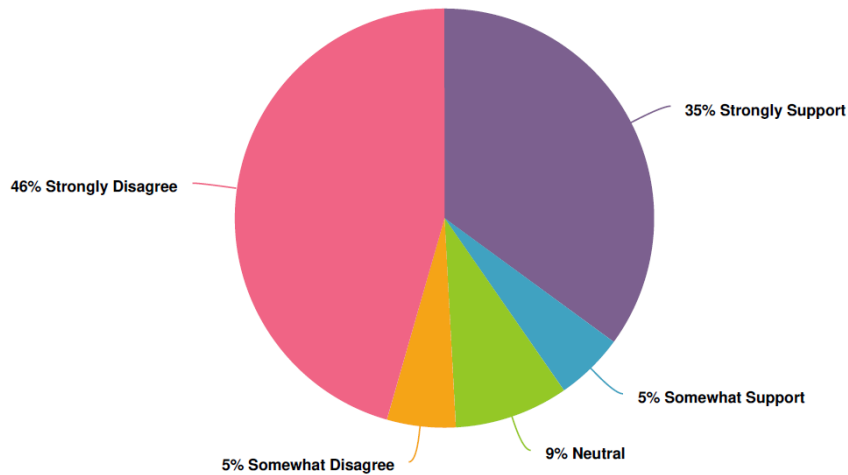
Draft recommendation 8: Modify the standardized transcript format to better allow for recording multidisciplinary learning and mastery-based learning. In addition, encourage the use of a nationally-recognized mastery transcript for schools that are primarily mastery-based learning schools.

Figure 13: Level of support for draft recommendation 8 (as of August 31, 2022)



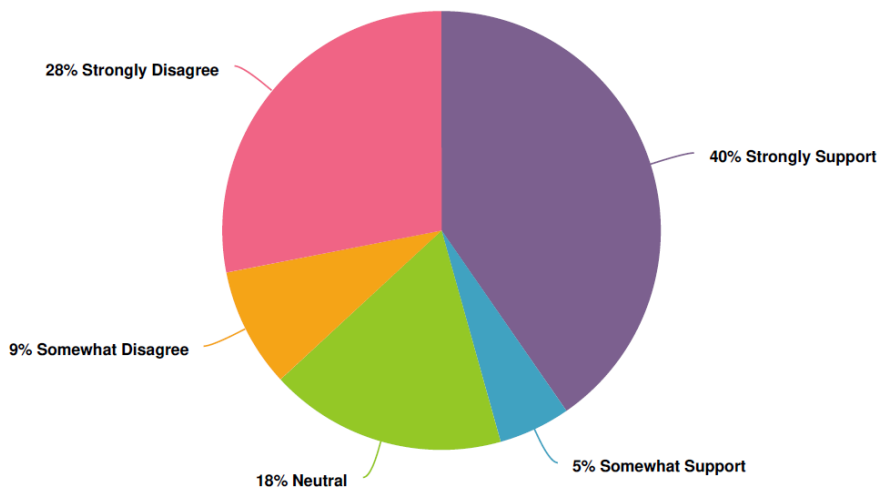
Draft recommendation 9: The Board recommends statewide building of coalition around the implementation of Ethnic studies.

Figure 14: Level of support for draft recommendation 9 (as of August 31, 2022)



Draft recommendation 10: Set a deadline for districts to implement the Since Time Immemorial curriculum.

Figure 15: Level of support for draft recommendation 10 (as of August 31, 2022)



Below are some selected comments on recommendations 8 through 10. Many of the comments were against ethnic studies. Some did not show an understanding of current graduation requirements. (Complete comments may be found in the [full preliminary report](#).)

On ethnic studies:

- It is absurd that students are losing opportunities to take courses valuable to them, like advanced math and AP courses, while being forced to take increasing amounts of the same so-called "ethnic studies"

- Please do not allow a small group of parents/community members to upend the important and crucial work of preparing our students to be well-rounded, culturally competent, empathetic and compassionate humans.
- Ethnic studies is explicitly political and bringing it into schools as a graduation requirement is political indoctrination.
- Get politics out of schools.
- Ethnic studies should not be made a graduation requirement. It is too political and creates a social justice counternarrative.
- If we teach native tribal history, in my opinion, we need to also teach US History, as well, otherwise we open ourselves up to the same CRT indoctrination so many of us oppose.
- Much more support and guidance is needed for districts around social studies in general and ethnic studies in particular. There is extremely limited support from OSPI for these areas leaving districts to try to figure out how to implement these complex requirements on their own.

On other recommendations:

- Students and families need to self-select what kind of transcript they want because NOT all colleges will accept the recommendation proposed. For example, Evergreen State College has such an alternative grading and transcript system and their graduates cannot transfer to traditional degree programs. Their transcript is useless.
- Seek input from postsecondary institutions, including some outside of WA, to ensure legibility/ease of interpretation of our transcripts for postsecondary admissions. Provide all schools to easily communicate their unique features and graduate profiles to colleges across the US and globally.