

**WASHINGTON STATE
WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
MEETING NO. 175
JANUARY 6, 2014**

CAREER AND COLLEGE READY GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

In 2006, the Legislature directed the State Board of Education to revise the definition of the purpose and expectations of a public high school diploma. In 2010, after extensive committee work, stakeholder input, and research, the State Board of Education approved the 24-credit Career and College Ready Graduation Requirements. However, these requirements were not implemented due to associated cost factors. At the November 15, 2013 State Board of Education board meeting, a draft revision of the Career and College Ready Graduation Requirements were presented as part of a draft 2014 Legislative agenda. These proposed changes are being considered by the State Board of Education and may be adopted at their January 9, 2014 meeting.

In 2010, the Workforce Board endorsed through formal motion the State Board of Education proposal for requiring two credits of a career concentration, a two-for-one policy for career and technical education courses deemed equivalent to core academic courses. The board also endorsed the proposed rules for the High School and Beyond Plan and the Culminating Project. Further, the Workforce Board emphasized that the Legislature should re-prioritize state spending to accommodate the fiscal impacts of the proposed new requirements.

Under this tab you will find the draft Career and College Ready Graduation Requirements, background outlining concerns with the proposed framework, and a list of proposed policy enhancements to the Career and College Ready framework designed to address those concerns.

Possible Board Action Requested: Board members requested this special meeting to determine a policy platform to guide the Workforce Board's participation in 2014 Legislative discussions on this topic.

Career and College Ready

The first goal in *High Skills, High Wages*, Washington's 10-Year Strategic Plan for Workforce Development, is to establish multiple pathways for youth to utilize our state's workforce development system to better connect to living-wage careers. This goal expands beyond the traditional education experience to heighten a student's understanding of career opportunities, as well as the student's perception of how classroom learning relates to the world of work.

Currently, nearly one in five high school students will drop out before crossing the graduation stage. Of those that do graduate, 36 percent will not go on to any education or training within a year of completing high school. This results in long-term economic impacts for not only the individual, but for the state as a whole. It costs the state an estimated \$10,000 per year per high school dropout for his or her entire lifetime. Unemployment rates for those with no diploma, or little to no education or training beyond high school, is almost three times the statewide average.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) is a pathway that provides alternatives and learning enhancements for students. For students who, for a number of reasons, may not be considering a traditional four-year college or university route immediately following high school graduation, Career and Technical Education offers courses of study to help ensure students explore, compete, and succeed in other post-secondary tracks and the world of work. For students who desire a four-year degree or any other pathway, CTE's applied learning modality can enhance and accelerate academic learning.

Students who seek hands-on, career-relevant education through Career and Technical Education need equitable access to utilize their high school experience to prepare them for a broad range of success outcomes (career and college). Some have argued that previous iterations of a 24-credit high school diploma framework limited a student's ability to pursue a Career and Technical Education Program of Study.

By restricting individual student choice and limiting options that allow students to pursue Career and Technical Education programs at both comprehensive high schools and Skills Centers, there is concern that many of these alternatives will become inaccessible. Washington must ensure that every child receives a world-class education while at the same time equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary to realize their individual potential and personal vision of success in the workforce.

There are structural elements within our K-12 educational system that, if carefully designed and supplemented, can ensure that students have a greater likelihood of success. Student success will increase when students have access to the necessary education and training, guidance and support, orientation to the world of work, and flexibility to pursue their individual goals and aspirations.

Many of these elements and expectations are presented to students, parents, and educators through established graduation requirements.

The State Board of Education recently released a draft 24-credit Career and College Ready diploma framework. This framework is different from previous proposals in that it more explicitly expresses individual student choice options, allowing for increased understanding of course-taking flexibility. The substantive changes are as follows:

- Stating that world language may be substituted for a personalized pathway requirement
- Establishing the number of available electives to four credits
- Requiring the development of a personalized pathway plan that may include non-baccalaureate postsecondary education and training

As a supplement to the proposed changes, the State Board of Education is also considering advocating for the development of statewide model course modules and frameworks that allow students to fulfill math and science academic credit requirements at Skills Centers and Career and Technical Education programs across the state.

The proposed 24-credit Career and College Ready High School Graduation requirements promote multiple pathways to success, giving students, parents, and educators more explicit direction while at the same time leaving room for individual student choice. Through the new framework, the State Board of Education is ensuring that students, parents, and educators see clearly the points of student choice and flexible course-taking in proposed graduation requirements.

However, the flexible elements are contingent on students, parents, and educators receiving the necessary information through comprehensive career guidance and counseling to empower informed individual decisions about course taking. This proposal is also contingent on equal accessibility to course equivalencies across the state. Currently, just 101 of our state's 295 school districts have one or more course equivalencies in place.

Further, due to the multi-district nature of school district-to-Skill Center relationships, there are holes in our system creating unnecessary barriers to advancement and success for students who wish to pursue a Career and Technical Education Program of Study. The inconsistent application of course equivalencies between school districts may cause a Skill Center situation where two students are taking the same class, but only one is receiving academic credit from their sending school district towards high school graduation.

These complications can be addressed through a number of policy options that ensure proposed 24-credit Career and College Ready Graduation Requirements provide students with multiple pathways to success in both intent and application.

Structured and Supported High School and Beyond Plan and Personalized Pathway Plan

The State Board of Education's proposed Career and College Ready Graduation framework is designed to better accommodate individual student choice options for high school course work. Using this framework, students will outline their personalized pathway plans in the High School and Beyond Plan, informing the courses they take in high school and after high school completion. However, the utilization of student choice is dependent on students, parents, and educator's ability to recognize and understand the full spectrum of options available to them and the steps necessary to capitalize on those options. Districts must make full use of the tools and resources at their disposal to help ensure students thoroughly evaluate their individual choice options. One element of the proposed framework is a High School and Beyond Plan developed by students in collaboration with their parents and counselors. Currently, the guidelines for such plans are defined at the local level, therefore plan rigor, usefulness, parental engagement, and even the process for periodic updating varies from district to district. The Legislature could help by outlining key elements of the High School and Beyond Plan as they look to adopt a 24-credit Career and College Ready Graduation framework.

Students should create the High School and Beyond Plan by the end of their 8th grade year with the help of parents and educators. An effective plan is a living document that informs a student's high school education. Ideally, this plan will outline at least one career area of interest to a student. Further, the plan should be looked at every year, and possibly revised just as often, as a student develops a personalized pathway plan for high school graduation and post high school education and training. A successful High School and Beyond Plan brings together a student's goals and aspirations, along with his or her academic and extracurricular activities. As the state implements a 24-credit Career and College Ready framework, careful evaluation, planning and guidance on what constitutes an effective High School and Beyond Plan should take place at the same time. This will help ensure the plan is a useful tool that is widely implemented and adequately resourced.

Statewide List of Model Career and Technical Education to Academic Course Equivalencies

All students should have the ability to capitalize on their personal interests and personalized goals. A statewide list of model course modules and frameworks that allow students to fulfill math and science credit requirements at Skill Centers and other Career and Technical Education programs across the state can help make this happen. Currently, just a third of Washington's school districts (101 of 295) have established course equivalencies. As a result, there is considerable disparity in credit attainment, depending on where a student attends school. This is particularly obvious when two students from different school districts attend a Skills Center. In many cases, one student receives academic credit, while the other does not. A statewide list of model course modules would help address some existing disparities and likely expand the use of course equivalencies to more school districts across the state.

Dedicated Instructional Hours for Comprehensive Career Guidance and Counseling

The process for developing and reviewing a structured High School and Beyond Plan is something that requires careful review and consideration on the part of students, parents, and educators. As districts plan how to use additional instructional hours, some of that time should be set aside for career guidance and counseling, to ensure students have the ability to develop and review their High School and Beyond Plan. Students require additional time to explore a career, including work-based learning opportunities, job shadows, and other activities. This helps students develop a more fully realized vision of themselves and their place in the work world. Students need the opportunity during the school day to build this vision in collaboration with their teachers, counselors, and parents or guardians. This dedicated time would allow students to thoroughly review available career guidance materials and resources and see how those resources align with their High School and Beyond Plan.

Professional Development

Professional development days must be provided to districts to support educators as they implement new state policy reforms, including new educator evaluation models, Common Core and Next Generational Science Standards, and to address the increased need for comprehensive career guidance and counseling. Dedicated professional development time will ensure that students, parents, and counselors have the ability to work collaboratively to help every student graduate with an individual plan for post-high school education that leads to living-wage jobs and a prosperous economy.

Student Support for Academic Success: Dropout Prevention

In transitioning to a new Career and College Ready Graduation framework that requires an increased number of credits, difficulties may arise. For example, some students may drop out or consider dropping out because of the increased credit requirements. It is important that as attention and resources are given to increased credit requirements, that equal effort be put into dropout prevention, intervention, and reengagement programs across the state. Washington must also implement or improve district early warning dropout systems, which allow resources and interventions to be applied early enough to keep students on track to meet graduation requirements.