

**WASHINGTON STATE  
WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD  
MEETING NO. 126  
May 14, 2008**

**HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

**Background**

E2SHB 3098, enacted in 2006, requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to propose a revised definition of the purpose and expectations for a high school diploma, including whether a diploma is intended to signify college readiness, readiness for work, or a combination. SHB 2973, also enacted in 2006, directs the SBE to reevaluate the graduation requirements for students enrolled in vocationally intensive and rigorous career and technical education programs.

At its August 2007 meeting, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) adopted a motion that established a position regarding requirements for a high school diploma that staff have utilized in advocating before the SBE. A copy of the adopted resolution is included in this tab.

Recently, the Meaningful High School Diploma Committee of the SBE has developed a draft set of graduation requirements (included in this tab) for public review and consideration by the full SBE. The Washington Association of Career and Technical Education has adopted a position paper on the current draft SBE graduation requirements (also included in this tab). Workforce Board staff have prepared a recommended motion for consideration by the Board based on its previous deliberations on this matter and positions currently taken by critical stakeholders.

**Board Action Requested:** Adoption of the recommended motion.

## RECOMMENDED MOTION

**WHEREAS**, Objective 3.1 of 2006 *High Skills, High Wages*, the 2006 State Strategic Plan for Workforce Development, calls for implementation of the Best Practice Comprehensive Guidance System, Navigation 101, across the K-12 system; and

**WHEREAS**, there is no clearly articulated definition of the High School and Beyond Plan or the Culminating Project in the current State Board of Education regulations; and

**WHEREAS**, Objective 4.1 of 2006 *High Skills, High Wages*, the 2006 State Strategic Plan for Workforce Development and the 2006 Washington Learns report both call for expanding opportunities for secondary students to take career and technical education preparation programs; and

**WHEREAS**, the Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee established by the Legislature is preparing guidelines for local school districts to establish equivalency credits and identifying career and technical education coursework that will likely meet the criteria; and

**WHEREAS**, the State Board of Education Meaningful High School Diploma Committee has prepared a draft proposal for high school graduation requirements that will prepare students for college and/or work; and

**WHEREAS**, K-12 Education should be student-centered—offering education that prepares students to fulfill their future education and career goals;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board supports the direction of the March 27, 2008, Draft Proposed Graduation Requirements in providing options for students that are based on preparing students for college and/or the world of work, including providing a three-credit career and technical education option;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board suggests the following specific components be added to the “Core 24” requirements proposed by the Meaningful High School Diploma Committee to help prepare all students for careers and provide flexibility for a more personalized and relevant program of study in high school:

1. Align the criteria for the High School and Beyond Plan with the critical components in Navigation 101, the comprehensive career guidance curriculum.
2. Change the occupational education credit to a career and technical education credit for students planning to attend a baccalaureate institution.
3. Require the Culminating Project to be aligned with the High School and Beyond Plan and adopt a requirement that students must “apply” the skills learned in high school in their project.
4. Either allow students to receive “double credit” for equivalency courses or allow equivalency courses to satisfy more than one requirement for graduation.



## MEANINGFUL HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA RESOLUTION

Adopted the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 2007 by the Workforce Board

**WHEREAS**, Objective 3.1 of 2006 *High Skills, High Wages*, the 2006 State Strategic Plan for Workforce Development, calls for implementation of the Best Practice Comprehensive Guidance System, Navigation 101, across the K-12 system; and

**WHEREAS**, Objective 3.2 of 2006 *High Skills, High Wages*, the 2006 State Strategic Plan for Workforce Development, calls for integrating Individual Education Plans with the 13<sup>th</sup> year plan required for graduation; and

**WHEREAS**, there is no clearly articulated definition of High School and Beyond Plan in the current State Board of Education regulations; and

**WHEREAS**, Objective 4.1 of 2006 *High Skills, High Wages*, the 2006 State Strategic Plan for Workforce Development and the 2006 Washington Learns report both call for expanding opportunities for secondary students to take career and technical education preparation programs; and

**WHEREAS**, the Washington Learns report proposes a goal that all students in Washington complete a rigorous high school course of study and demonstrate abilities needed to enter a post-secondary education program or career path; and

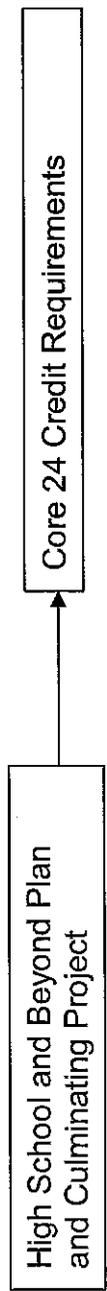
**WHEREAS**, K-12 Education should be student-centered—offering education that prepares students to fulfill their future education and career goals;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board recommends to the State Board of Education that the following issues be addressed to make the high school diploma “meaningful” for students in preparing for careers and the world of work:

1. Provide a more clearly-articulated definition of the High School and Beyond Plan and integrate all individual student planning requirements. The focus of the plan should be on personalizing the secondary education experience for each student. All students should be engaged in setting career and educational goals and identifying a program of study to meet their goals, including any postsecondary education or training that may further prepare them for 21st Century careers and citizenship.
2. Students should pursue a program of study in high school that provides them with the opportunity to successfully meet their postsecondary career and educational goals. Such a program of study should provide them with a curriculum that is relevant to their educational plans and includes rigorous academic skills, work and life readiness skills, and technical skills. Students should have the option to learn these skills in career and technical education programs as well as those programs that fully integrate academic and technical knowledge and skills. Specifically, all students should gain mathematics knowledge and skills that will offer them the ability to seamlessly transition from high school to college and/or work without needing mathematics remedial instruction in college or on-the-job.

# One Diploma, Many Pathways: Opening Doors with Core 24<sup>1</sup> [DRAFT]

- Equipping Every Student for Life-long Learning After High School
- Creating Flexibility to Make High School as Meaningful as Possible
- The Rigor of 24 Credits—With the Relevance of Flexible Pathways
- A Diploma that is Intentional---Flexible---Meaningful
- Preparing Students for Success In Postsecondary Education, Gainful Employment, And Citizenship



## Core 24 College and Work Ready

English:	4
Math:	3
Science (2 lab)	3
Social Studies	3
Arts	2
Fitness	1.5
Health	0.5

### Technical/Career Emphasis

Career and Technical Education	3
World Language	0
Electives	4

### Four-Year College Emphasis

Career and Technical Education/Occupational Education	1
World Language	2
Electives	4

<sup>1</sup> Core 24 is the set of credit requirements in which all students would automatically be enrolled unless they elect to use the personalization provisions of Core 24. Two examples of such elections are shown above - others are possible. Core 24 satisfies all of the minimum entry requirements to public four-year colleges in Washington established by the Higher Education Coordinating Board. Notes: 1) Where appropriate, CTE equivalent courses may be substituted. 2) One math credit must be taken in the senior year. 3) Some requirements (example: math, arts, world language) may begin to be satisfied in middle school. 4) One science lab credit must be an algebra-based lab. 5) Fitness credits can be waived and an equivalent experience substituted.

What is the Core 24? The Core 24 is the new draft credit framework that the State Board of Education is considering. The framework requires students to choose a defined pathway. In order to receive a diploma, every student will develop and follow a coherent personal plan of study that prepares them for the next step after high school—whether that’s a trade, an apprenticeship program, or college. Core 24 creates concrete options: under this plan, every graduate should be prepared for work, postsecondary education, or both.

Why is the State Board of Education putting forth this new proposal? Since 1985, when the credit requirements were last reviewed and revised, our society and economy have changed dramatically. Current credit requirements simply don’t prepare students adequately for success. Our state can no longer afford to have students drift through high school without a plan, or to drop out of high school without motivation. Core 24 is designed to increase the rigor of high school learning while also increasing its relevance.

## **Core 24 Principles**

1. Equip Everyone. Commits the State to assist all students to prepare for a living-wage job or successful entry into postsecondary education.
2. Expect More. Recognizes that students need better preparation to meet the changing requirements of the labor market and the increasing wage premium paid for higher levels of educational attainment. Supports raising the overall level of educational attainment among Washington’s younger citizens—one of the key goals of Washington Learns.
3. Create Intentional Pathways. Insists that students choose a pathway that will prepare them for work, postsecondary education, or both.
4. Provide Options. Provides the flexibility for students to choose a pathway that works for them, with electives to give students the freedom to explore new areas and to delve into areas of interest. Supports a variety of mechanisms for students to meet requirements by demonstrating competency, taking CTE-equivalent classes, earning credit online, or meeting requirements beginning in middle school.
5. Start Early. Recognizes the importance of preparation in middle school for high school and the value of helping students realize that they can begin to meet high school graduation requirements in middle school.
6. Plan Ahead. Elevates the significance of the High School and Beyond Plan by calling for schools to offer personalized guidance beginning in middle school and helps guide student course taking so students are positioned for success after high school.

**Washington Association for Career and Technical Educators  
WAVA – An Association of Career and Technical Administrators**

**Position Paper on the State Board of Education Proposed  
'Core 24' High School Graduation Requirements**

The Washington Association for Career and Technical Education and WAVA – An Association of Career and Technical Administrators support the State Board of Education proposed Core 24, High School Graduation Requirements as drafted and presented March 27, 2008.

We would make the following recommendations:

- At least one of the CTE credits should be required and inflexible; and
- The Culminating Project should not be tied to the CTE credit or any other specific course;
- CTE equivalency credits earned should be eligible to receive dual credit, thus providing additional flexibility in students' schedules.

We appreciate and support the following currently included in the proposal:

- Science – 3 credits CTE equivalents can be used to meet requirements;
- Ability of students to utilize credits for high school Art and World Languages received in Middle School;
- Math – 3 credits – flexibility to meet requirements with a CTE course or to elect a different third math credit pursuant to a student's Plan;<sup>1</sup> and
- Maintaining .5 Health requirement

In addition, we believe a comprehensive career guidance system beginning in middle school will be necessary to prepare and help students and their parents/guardians make appropriate choices about their coursework under the plan outlined by the State Board of Education. The Board can reinforce sound career guidance through the criteria it establishes for the High School and Beyond Plan.

Rationale: CTE is a core subject

The 21<sup>st</sup> century economy needs people with technical and human service skills. Career and Technical Education benefits ALL students. CTE, the hands-on learning it provides, and the connection with mentors, including teachers and adults from a more varied background than the conventionally trained humanities-based teacher...also make it our most powerful dropout prevention tool<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This will need more discussion, as vertical alignment of math coursework can create the scenario where it would be highly unlikely for a student to choose the CTE option for their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of math. Should there be a three-year sequence of CTE math? Could the '3<sup>rd</sup> year' be taken in the first or second year as an enrichment class, but one not sequential with the core math curriculum. Etc.

<sup>2</sup> See University of Minnesota, St. Paul, National Research Center for Career and Technical Education. (2001). Career and Technical Education in the Balance: An Analysis of High School Persistence, Academic Achievement, and Postsecondary Destinations. Retrieved August 19, 2005, from the National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education Web site:  
[http://www.nccte.org/publications/infosynthesis/r&dreport/CTE\\_in\\_Blnce\\_Plank/CTE%20in%20Blnce\\_Plank.html](http://www.nccte.org/publications/infosynthesis/r&dreport/CTE_in_Blnce_Plank/CTE%20in%20Blnce_Plank.html)

Career and Technical Education is 21<sup>st</sup> century education. It will increase the number of youths who live meaningful lives, and it will rescue and strengthen our economy. Career and Technical Education is about our young people's quest to continue building the world. It is about ethical business that serves our great society; human services that nurture the wellness and caring relations we all depend upon; media that increases communication and decreases distance in the global village; and the science, engineering & industry that will preserve our environment, feed our poor, house and transport us for all generations.

The most reliable tradition of applied learning— that that leads students to academic and adult life success—is Career and Technical Education. The stories of students who finally master math, learn to write and speak clearly and with purpose, find a reason to stay in school, put history in a meaningful economic context, discover passion, pride in product, and their career pathway...are endless.

A strong and sustainable economy will require millions of educated technical workers, child-care providers, schoolteachers, entrepreneurs, agricultural scientists, nurses, engineers, information technology professionals and the like. The myth that any kind of technical training focus at the secondary level repudiates educating citizens for active participation in a democracy, or that it 'dumbs-down' literacy and numeracy skills has been disproved for decades by the success of European economies and nations who provide serious technical training to a populace who are politically aware, historically conscious, and democratically active. Data consistently show that Career and Technical Education programs increase college enrollment and reduce dropouts, and do not negatively impact test scores.<sup>3</sup>

In other words, our responsibility is to do more than deliver on the career-related skills and standards found in our curriculum. We must also ensure that graduates of our programs are finding adult success. That is the only real accountability measure that matters. State exams pale in comparison to the truly high stakes of our commitment to prepare students for an adult life well-lived and prosperous, with not a single life wasted.

The way to accomplish this is through a reinvigoration and reinvention of our CTE programs, with the full support of the State Board of Education and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and in a manner that is fully connected to all postsecondary systems (apprenticeship; community and technical college; four-year universities; proprietary technical schools; etc.), and integrated with the mainstream life of the comprehensive secondary school, or of each and every comprehensive and small (middle or high) school and skills center.

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<sup>3</sup> Plank, S. (2001). Career and technical education in the balance: An analysis of high school persistence, academic achievement, and postsecondary destinations. Maryland: Johns Hopkins.