THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Accountability | World-Class Math and Science Standards | Meaningful Diploma/CORE 24

Old Capitol Building
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Olympia, Washington 98504

CORE 24 Implementation Task Force Notes – March 2, 2009

ITF Task Force Attendees: Michael Christianson, Jean Countryman, Linda Dezellem, Lynn Eisenhauer, Larry Francois, Lisa Hechtman, John Heley, Sergio Hernandez, Julie Kratzig, Bridget Lewis, Karen Madsen, Dennis Maguire, Mark Mansell, Mick Miller, Harjeet Sandhu, Jennifer Shaw, Sandra Sheldon, Brad Sprague, and Michael Tolley

SBE Board and Staff Members: Steve Dal Porto and Jack Schuster (ITF Board Leads), Bunker Frank, Kathe Taylor (Policy Director), and Aaron Wyatt (Communications Specialist)

Former SBE Member: Linda Lamb

Welcome and Introductions. Jack Schuster, Steve Dal Porto, and Kathe Taylor opened the meeting with introductions. Task Force members introduced themselves.

Origins of CORE 24. Kathe Taylor introduced the role of the State Board, the evolution and philosophy of CORE 24, and the work that remains. Questions raised during the discussion are in the endnotes.[i,ii] A copy of the PowerPoint presentation viewed at the meeting can be found at: http://www.sbe.wa.gov/documents/CORE24ITFpresentationMarch209.pdf

What the Task Force Can Do. Steve Dal Porto introduced the charter for the CORE 24 ITF, emphasizing that this is not purely an academic group, nor a rubber stamp group for the State Board. Rather, the ITF represents a diverse and experienced group of stakeholders who can advise SBE on strategies needed to implement the requirements. This will include a proposed implementation schedule, ways to operationalize competency-based methods of meeting graduating requirements, ways to assist students with credit retrieval, issues of phase-in, and scheduling. This process will take the ITF through 2009 and beyond. See endnotes for questions/issues raised.[iii]

Where We Are: Current District Requirements and Students' Coursetaking Patterns. Duane Baker, President of the BERC Group, Inc., presented the findings of a transcript study the BERC Group conducted for the SBE. Copies of the transcript study were distributed to the ITF members and can be accessed on the SBE Web Site at: http://www.sbe.wa.gov/documents/SBETranscriptStudy2008_FINAL.pdf. Since the transcript study was conceptualized before CORE 24 was adopted, Baker added information about the percentage of students in the sample of almost 15,000 2008 graduates who would have met CORE 24 requirements overall, and the percentage of students who would have met CORE 24 requirements by subject area. Baker's presentation can be accessed on the SBE Web Site at: http://www.sbe.wa.gov/documents/BERCTranscriptStudyPresentationtoITF3-2-09.pdf. Task members discussed specific information pertaining to failure rates and senior year coursetaking patterns. Some of the questions raised are in the endnotes.[iv]

How We Proceed. Kathe Taylor led a large group discussion that covered six different components of CORE 24 (i.e. phase in, scheduling, flexibility, career concentration, middle school connections and a catch-all category of other issues). In response to the question, "What would you need to know about each one of these issues to provide the Board with well-analyzed recommendations?" the large group

brainstormed a list of relevant questions. Small groups honed in on each issue to suggest strategies for getting the needed information, then participants "dotted" issues that could be considered as topics for the next Task Force Meeting. A synopsis of each issue follows. Questions in **bold** received the most dots.

PHASE-IN: What is the optimal strategy for phasing in the CORE 24 requirements?

- **Where are districts, as a whole, closest to meeting CORE 24 requirements, and how can we use that information to begin designing a phase-in strategy?**
- **What is our capacity for math, science, arts, world language, and CTE teachers, and what needs to be done to increase capacity?**
- What facilities do we need for upper level science labs, CTE classrooms, and arts classrooms?
- In what ways do we need to consider collective bargaining agreements as a component of phase-in?
- Money and phase-in have to be in sync! Budgeting and premium pay is key.

<u>General Strategies to Address Phase-in Questions</u>

1. Use the transcript study to find out what schools are closest to CORE 24 and use them as a model
2. Get data from colleges, education departments, re: the number of teachers being trained in CORE areas to see if there really is an adequate number of teachers coming into the field in each area
3. Survey to see if schools have the facilities to deal with CORE 24 requirements
4. Survey principals/superintendents for their perspectives on scheduling flexibility.

FLEXIBILITY: What flexibility is needed to make CORE 24 requirements work for <u>all</u> students? (struggling, ELL, IB, gifted, etc.). Flexibility might include issues such as competency-based credit, credit "plus" approaches" (2 requirements, 1 credit), limited credit waiver authority, credit retrieval, etc.

- **What will the system need to do to support struggling students?**
- **What models exist for evaluating competency-based student performance?**
- Are there districts that measure/assess for competency-based credit?
- What protocols or standards are there for meeting competencies? (e.g., fluency in world language) (issue: should be the same for any content area)
- How do we make more electives available for freshmen and sophomores?
- What are the online possibilities, particularly for small schools?
- How do migrant kids fit into the system?
- How do transient/mobile kids fit into the system?
- How do ELL students fit into the system?
- Are all schools giving English credit for ESL classes?

<u>General Strategies to Address Flexibility Questions</u>

1. Redefining basic education – look at RCWs
2. Survey districts that have a competency credit and see what they are doing—maybe use "zoomerang" through AWSP or WSSDA, etc.
3. Lake Stevens might have some information.
4. The Secondary Education for Migrant Youth (SEMY) organization may be a resource for migrant student information.

MIDDLE SCHOOL CONNECTIONS: What issues need to be considered to determine the viability of satisfying some requirements in middle school, including initiating the High School & Beyond Plan?

- **Under what circumstances can students earn credit in middle school? (issues: some districts award high school credit for middle school work; some subjects are not allowed to earn high school credit)**
- **What districts are awarding high school credit in middle school? How does that work? What models are there of middle and high school collaborations and for effective communication between the two levels?**
- What has to happen prior to high school to make CORE 24 work? (issues: core understanding of

content, study skills, motivation to succeed, high school and beyond plan; success in CORE 24 starts with an early opportunity for credit within a safe environment where there is no fear of failure—middle school students know they will get other opportunities; consideration of developmental issues in middle school students' readiness for high school work)

- How do we deal with the problem of social promotion vs. academic promotion? What bridges exist between levels K-5, 6-8 and 9-12?

General Strategies Suggested to Address Middle School Questions

1. Find out what the RCW's allow or not allow for credit
2. Find out when students are getting credits in middle school and how those grades transfer to the high school.
3. Investigate success rates of students who earn high school credit in middle school in the next level of the class (i.e., if they earn a credit in world language in middle school, how successful are they in their second year of that language in high school?)

CAREER CONCENTRATION: What should the career concentration requirement look like in practice, and what principles from the current occupational education requirement should it include? (Board intent: Student must complete a CTE program of study or a course sequence which helps a student prepare for their intended postsecondary studies or career field.)

- **What is an operational definition of "career concentration?"** (issues: amount of flexibility in what students can choose, how CTE programs of study fit; what career concentration means to all kids)
- How do small and rural schools make the career piece fit, especially if they don't have teachers certified in CTE?
- How does a skills center student fit into CORE 24, and how is skills center time allocated?
- How many students/districts in the state have access to a skill center?
- How are career concentration choices tied to the high school and beyond plan as well as to student learning plans?
- What districts cross-credit/have course equivalencies, and what standards do they use?
- How do we get kids into courses that they are passionate about earlier? (possibility of 9th and 10th graders taking more elective courses)

General Strategies Suggested to Address Career Concentration Questions

1. Get a representative group to really define what this means: principals, skill center directors, etc.
2. Edmunds/N. Thurston has career pathways laid out that could serve as examples for program studies outside of CTE
3. John Aultman or Kathleen Lopp could provide CTE data
4. Look into certification issue – it can be hard to find math/science/CTE teachers, so possibly an alternative road to teaching.
5. Perhaps we have exemptions – rather than just a catch-all system.

SCHEDULING: What scheduling approaches assure sufficient opportunities for students to earn 24 credits and meet the 150-instructional hour definition of credit established in rule?

- **How do we look at flexible schedules and scheduling outside of the box of the "regular" day?**
- **How are the districts that currently require 23 or more credits doing it? How are they structured? What kinds of districts require higher numbers of credits?**
- **What is a credit? What do students earn credit for?** (issues: consistency of meeting standards and accountability for what that means; comparison to how other states, countries, universities define credit; classroom-based assessments; instructional hours; cross-crediting; competency-crediting; end-of-course requirements; online; alternative settings—flex time, project-based opportunities)
- What are the implications of scheduling issues and negotiated agreements?
- What do we need to know about scheduling and year-round schools?

General Strategies Suggested to Address Scheduling Questions

1. Find out what schools that require 24 credits are doing (what does it look like, etc).
2. Find data on summer schools and credit retrieval
3. What is written in the collective bargaining agreement that directly impacts high school schedules? Could WEA compile some sort of database?

OTHER ISSUES: What other issues will need to be addressed?

- Where does juvenile justice credit and national guard credit fit into CORE 24?
- How many teachers stay over five years?
- How can private school students do CORE 24 and still accommodate the religious electives?

General Strategies Suggested to Address Other Issues

1. For juvenile justice credit, look at schools who already utilize that information.
2. Talk to private schools to see how religious courses are assigned/scheduled.

NEXT STEPS

The next scheduled meeting is April 13, 10:00-4:00, at the Puget Sound ESD in Renton. Other meetings have been scheduled for May 18, August 7, September 28, and November 2. All are scheduled at the Puget Sound ESD.

Closing comments were provided by Steve Dal Porto, Jack Schuster, and Kathe Taylor.

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[i] One member of the panel mentioned that her district requires a different number of credits than the slides indicated. Kathe Taylor said she would look into this.

[ii] Question: What is meant by funded/unfunded mandate?

[iii] Who are the stakeholders that will be affected? Steve Dal Porto mentioned that we don't have enough teacher representation, and that perhaps work with the WEA might be a way to go. Mark Mansell mentioned the importance of getting as many different perspectives as possible. State conferences might be a way to further discussion, and it might be nice to get a list of what conferences the ITF will be individually attending to eliminate crossover and ensure maximum coverage/discussion. Another panelist expressed concern that representatives from teacher preparation programs were not on the panel.

[iv] Task members expressed concern that students were graduating without completing the required science credits. Duane Baker emphasized that the data only includes graduating students who received credits for their classes. A question was raised about how college fine arts requirements can be different than the statewide fine arts. Students are graduating without meeting the minimum high school requirements. A task member wanted to make sure that running start credits were reflected in the data. Another task member made the comment that oftentimes schools financially rely on seniors taking less than a full load. The data does include potentially fifth year seniors. Another question was how many English credits were provided to ELL/ESL students.