THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Accountability I Graduation Requirements I Math I Science

WASHINGTON HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

HECB EDUCATION COMMITTEE AND SBE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MEETING NOTES
June 2, 2010

HECB Education Committee members: Jesus Hernandez (HECB Chair), Sam Smith (Education Committee Chair), Ethelda Burke, Bill Grinstein

SBE Executive Committee members: Jeff Vincent (SBE Chair), Steve Dal Porto (SBE Co-chair), Sheila Fox, Mary Jean Ryan

Staff: Jan Ignash and Randy Spaulding (HECB); Edie Harding and Kathe Taylor (SBE)

Purpose of Meeting/Discussion of Common Goals. The purpose of the meeting was to: 1) Explore ways for the two policy boards to work together to keep the state moving forward on shared goals, and 2) Consider ways to align high school graduation requirements and college admission requirements.

Members of both boards agreed that they shared common interests and would like to work together to help students become productive citizens and navigate the system successfully. The current governance system is fragmented and creates artificial lines between K-12 and higher education. By working together, the boards can help extend the state's commitment to education.

Improving Alignment between High School and Four-year Public College Admission Requirements. Two questions were posed for discussion:

1) **Could HECB and SBE move concurrently to a 3 credit science requirement?** Members of the two committees agreed to move together on this requirement and directed staff to develop a proposal for concurrent implementation. SBE may take action on a science requirement in July, although rules would not be implemented until funding is secured. If SBE chooses to move to a 3-credit science requirement, they would like to do so with the knowledge that HECB supports the move and will take a similar step with the revisions to the admission standards. Ethelda Burke wanted to ensure that the change would be phased in over time to allow districts and schools to adapt. The SBE will be considering the phase-in recommendations of its Core 24 Implementation Task Force in their overall review of Core 24.

2) **Would there be strategic value in agreeing to a common, minimum number of requirements?** The consensus of the group was that there would be value in a common number of requirements. Staff were directed to develop a proposal for a shared, minimum number of total requirements that would include a set of courses both boards would hold in

common. Twenty credits were suggested as a reasonable target for the common set of requirements.[1] The Core 24 Implementation Task Force (ITF) Final Report recommendation for courses that would constitute "automatic enrollment" will act as a starting point for conversations about what constitutes the common core.

Competencies vs. Credits (based on policy recommendations 2, 3, and 5 from Core 24 Implementation Task Force (ITF) Final Report). Three questions were posed for discussion:

1. **What are the implications for higher education if SBE moves away from seat-time requirements? (competencies vs. credits).** States define credits in different ways. A little more than half (27), including Washington[2], define credit in terms of time. The ITF recommended that the SBE consider eliminating the time-basis of a credit. Some additional research will be necessary on the part of HECB staff but HECB does not expect objections to elimination of a specific hour requirement that equates to a credit. However, HECB anticipates that baccalaureate institutions might have some concerns if students were awarded credit based solely on competency, with no corresponding coursework. One exception might be competency-based credit for world languages. The members of both boards supported further work in this area and would like to see a staff recommendation.

2) **The ITF suggested that districts could count "2 for 1"; how would four-year publics respond? (e.g., can courses double count?).** Again, further investigation with the universities is required. HECB staff did not expect concerns with courses that meet a secondary requirement that is not currently a HECB CADR (e.g., students who earn credit for science while meeting a second graduation requirement in Career and Technical Education (CTE)). However, there might be concerns about courses that met two academic area requirements (e.g., students who earn credit for physics while meeting a second graduation requirement in math). Staff will investigate further and develop a proposal.

3) **How could HECB and Transition Math Project (TMP) College Readiness Definitions be incorporated into high school requirements?** The HECB and TMP developed college readiness definitions for science, English, and math, including content standards and attributes or "habits of mind" that would help students be successful in college. A crosswalk of the science college-readiness definitions with K12 science standards showed that the college-readiness science content had been incorporated into the new K-12 science standards, but some of the attributes had not. Staff were asked to look at the standards in English and math to see whether these attributes were addressed in other disciplines, and how (if at all) they might be highlighted or incorporated into graduation requirements; for example, perhaps through the culminating project.

Additional / regular meetings in the future. Issues had been listed as a possibility for discussion at future meetings, and were addressed briefly.

- **Competency assessment of world language and other subjects.** World language, because of its national standards and assessments, may be the most accessible discipline

[1] The HECB requires 15-16 Common Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs). The SBE's Core 24 Graduation Requirements Framework proposes 24 credits/requirements.

[2] Washington defines a credit as 150 hours of planned instructional activities <u>or</u> satisfactory demonstration of clearly identified competencies defined in written district policy.

to pursue the awarding of competency-based credit (i.e., the "low hanging fruit"). Both boards encouraged staff to pursue this and to identify other areas where competency-based credit may be appropriate.

- **Role of middle school courses in high school graduation and college admission.** The HECB currently stipulates that students can earn designated credits in middle school in world language and math and satisfy CADRs; it also stipulates that students cannot earn credits in middle school in other subjects. The HECB will propose a broader approach to how requirements might be met in middle school, particularly in sequenced courses.

- **Alternatives to Algebra II.** More work is needed here - this will likely be a longer term issue. Two key issues were identified – the need to recognize alternative approaches to teaching algebra II content to meet college admission requirements and exploring the possibility of an exception to the algebra II requirement with substitution of another course (e.g., statistics).

- **Statewide implementation of SAT or ACT testing**. Members discussed the value of seeking state support for all students to take the SAT or ACT tests prior to high school graduation. HECB staff will cost out statewide implementation of SAT or ACT tests (funded by the state for all public HS juniors) for a possible budget decision package.

- **IB/Cambridge diploma.** The SBE's Core 24 ITF Final Report encourages the SBE to explore the possibility of allowing students who earn an IB or Cambridge diploma to have met the requirements for a WA diploma. The SBE has not formally considered this issue yet, and it could be considered by the HECB, as well. This is likely a larger impact for high school graduation than for college admission, but it would be good to list it in both places.

- **Legislative strategies**. Staff were directed to arrange a follow-up meeting in August or September to discuss a proposal for common standards and develop a common legislative strategy to support the new standards and present a united front. An important part of the message needs to be the role of education in preparing young people to participate fully in society.

Final Comments

Jesus Hernandez – need to make recommendation to encourage and support parent education and involvement.

Mary Jean Ryan –would like to discuss College Bound Scholarship at a future meeting. She notes that K-12 need to do its part to support the program.

Ethelda Burke – supports the notion that we need to increase parent capacity to increase student's ability to be successful.

Sheila Fox – suggests we can't ignore the persistent issues in K-12 that need to be addressed in order to see the changes in student success we want.

Bill Grinstein – suggests we need to address advising and counseling issues in high school and the need for math and science teachers. Higher Ed's role is to prepare these folks.

Steve Dal Porto – emphasized the need to continue the conversation and continue to work together.

Jeff Vincent – reinforced the need for these meetings – breaking out of silos. Asked staff who else we might need to bring into the conversation.