UPDATE ON CORE 24 IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

BACKGROUND

The State Board of Education (SBE) adopted the purpose of a diploma, CORE 24 Graduation Requirements Framework, and chartered the CORE Implementation Task Force (ITF) before ESHB 2261, the 2009 Legislature's education reform bill, was passed. Although ESHB 2261 incorporated key elements of the SBE's work on the purpose of a diploma and meaningful high school graduation requirements, it created a timetable for full implementation of all reforms different from the Board's timetable for CORE 24. When CORE 24 was approved, the SBE expressed its intent to implement CORE 24 graduation requirements fully for the graduating class of 2016, contingent upon funding.[1] ESHB 2261 expressed the legislative intent to phase in all education reforms by 2018, with phase-in beginning no later than September 1, 2013.

ESHB 2261 supports the SBE's work in several ways; most fundamentally, by including graduation requirements in its definition of basic education.

> *The legislature defines the program of basic education under this chapter as that which is necessary to provide the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the state-established high school graduation requirements that are intended to allow students to have the opportunity to graduate with a meaningful diploma that prepares them for postsecondary education, gainful employment and citizenship...*[2].

Furthermore, ESHB 2261 calls for each school district to make available to students the following minimum instructional offering each school year:

> *For students enrolled in grades one through twelve, at least a district wide annual average of 1000 hours, which shall be increased to at least 1,080 instructional hours for students enrolled in each of grades seven through twelve…*[3]

It also requires the instructional program of basic education provided by each school district to include:

> *Instruction that provides students the opportunity to complete twenty-four credits for high school graduation, subject to a phased-in implementation of the twenty-four credits as established by the legislature.*[4]

[1] The SBE passed the following motion: Establish the CORE 24 Graduation Requirements Policy Framework, per the attached Adoption Document, consisting of subject area requirements, Culminating Project, and High School and Beyond Plan to be phased in over four years, beginning with the class of 2013 and becoming fully implemented with the class of 2016, contingent upon funding approved by the Legislature.

[2] ESHB 2261, Section 101, 2.
[3] ESHB 2261, Section 104, 2.
[4] ESHB 2261, Section 104, 3(b).

Where graduation requirements fit in the overall package of funding reforms is the issue the SBE will be working on with the Quality Education Council and legislature. The SBE asked the ITF to advise the Board on strategies needed to implement the CORE 24 graduation requirements. The ITF met for the first time in March 2009, and has met six times to date, steered by Board Co-Leads Steve Dal Porto and Jack Schuster.

ITF Preliminary Phase-in Recommendations

The ITF devoted its entire November 2, 2009, meeting to the discussion of phase-in recommendations. A presentation on the Education Finance Reform Bill, ESHB 2261, laid the foundation for the discussion. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Senior Budget Analyst, Isabel Muñoz-Colón, described the factors contributing to the current fiscal issues districts face and the proposed solutions outlined in ESHB 2261. She provided examples of ways that different groups (including Superintendent Dorn, representing OSPI) have proposed to address the various categories of funding needs (e.g., class size, educational staff support, guidance counselors, etc.). These values are subject to change, and other groups (including the QEC) have not yet weighed in.

After much debate, the ITF landed on the following general recommendations. The ITF believes:

- CORE 24 can be implemented once funding is attained.
- CORE 24 funding must incorporate funding for middle school CORE 24-related requirements.
- Six years will be needed once funding begins: one year for planning, and five years to make the relevant changes needed, beginning with students in the eighth grade of the first graduating class affected by the new requirements.
- Funding should begin as soon as possible.
- The ultimate success of CORE 24 depends on the funding of systemic changes in K-12, not just in the high school.

Since the meeting of the ITF, there has been a new development. Ever since CORE 24 emerged, the SBE has asserted that funding for six instructional hours would be needed for CORE 24 to be implemented—and in fact, the 1,080 instructional hours included in ESHB 2261 was a nod to this concern.[5] However, the Funding Formula Technical Work Group provided a different perspective when it informed the QEC at its November 2-3, 2009 meeting that the state is already paying for six instructional periods, plus a planning period. Districts are choosing to increase class size to a state average of 28.77 in order to provide the six periods. At this time, the issue has not been definitively resolved.

Timeline for SBE/ITF/QEC/Legislative Work

The Quality Education Council (QEC), created by ESHB 2261[6] to "recommend and inform the ongoing implementation of an evolving program of basic education and the funding necessary to support such program," has met several times since August, 2009. State Superintendent of Public Instruction Randy Dorn chairs the QEC. The QEC will consider as one of its first priorities "phase-in of the changes to the instructional program of basic education and the implementation of the funding formulas and allocations to support the new instructional program of basic education…"

[5] 1,080 hours divided by 180 days = 6 instructional periods per day
[6] http://apps.leg.wa.gov/documents/billdocs/2009-10/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Law%202009/2261-S.SL.pdf

The charge of the QEC is much broader than the implementation of CORE 24, and the work of the QEC will be informed by working groups formally-established by ESHB 2261[7] and key stakeholders. The SBE's representation on the QEC assures that key SBE initiatives will be voiced. The CORE 24 ITF will advise the SBE on graduation-related issues (e.g., phase-in) that may come before the QEC in the next six months.

The table in Attachment A illustrates the intersections of the work of the SBE, ITF, QEC, and Legislature. Briefly, key checkpoints are:

- May 2010—SBE begins to review ITF recommendations and consider policy changes.
- Fall 2010—SBE reviews draft CORE 24 graduation requirement rules.
- Winter 2011—SBE forwards proposed CORE 24 graduation requirements changes to legislature with OSPI fiscal impact statements.
- Summer 2011—SBE adopts CORE 24 graduation requirement rules.

NEXT STEPS

The SBE acknowledged in the ITF charter the challenge of maintaining momentum in an uncertain funding environment:

> *Although it is the SBE's intent for the CORE 24 requirements to be fully implemented by the graduating class of 2016, assuming funding by the Legislature, the ITF should take into consideration ways to move the system forward toward CORE 24 requirements in the event only partial funding is attained.*

Given the complexity and timetable of the state's education reform process, staff will work further with the ITF to prioritize the funding elements that are essential for the implementation of CORE 24. The ITF's advice will assist the SBE with its advocacy for the implementation of this graduation requirement component of education reform, and will help the SBE consider what steps to take if only partial funding is attained initially.

[7] The following working groups have been established: Funding Formula, K-12 Date Governance, Levy and Levy Equalization, Compensation

Attachment A

CORE 24 2009-2011 Work Plan for SBE and Its Work With Implementation Task Force, Quality Education Council and Legislature

SBE Task	Date	State Board of Education (SBE)	Quality Education Council (QEC)	Legislature
Receive second interim report from the ITF on phase-in.	November/ December 2009	SBE receives second interim report with preliminary recommendations from ITF on: phase-in.	Brief QEC on CORE 24 and advocate for graduation requirements funding priority (QEC initial report due January 1, 2010).	
Work with OSPI on fiscal impact of proposed changes.	Fall 2009 through Summer 2010	SBE staff works with OSPI staff on fiscal impact of key elements of CORE 24—instructional hours, struggling students, comprehensive guidance, and curriculum/materials.	Continue to represent SBE interests to QEC during its meetings.	
Refine policy for High School and Beyond Plan and Culminating Project.	January 2010	SBE reviews policy recommendations from MHSD work group.	Continue to represent SBE interests to QEC during its meetings.	
Conduct outreach on ITF considerations.	Fall 2009 and Winter/ Spring 2010	SBE staff, Board members, and ITF members seek and receive feedback on implementation considerations.	Continue to represent SBE interests to QEC during its meetings.	Advocate for funding during the 2010 session.
Receive final report from the ITF.	May 2010	SBE receives final report with recommendations on each of the assigned tasks given to the ITF. Each recommendation will include advantages and disadvantages. SBE begins consideration of policy implications of ITF recommendations.	Continue to represent SBE interests to QEC during its meetings.	
Adopt CORE 24 Implementation Policies.	July 2010	SBE adopts implementation policies and gives direction to staff for development of draft CORE 24 rules.	Continue to represent SBE interests to QEC during its meetings.	
Review draft CORE 24 rules.	Fall 2010	SBE reviews draft CORE 24 rules.	Continue to represent SBE interests to QEC during its meetings.	
Conduct outreach on draft CORE 24 rules.	Fall 2010/Winter 2011			
Present CORE 24 to legislature.	Winter 2011		Continue to represent SBE interests to QEC during its meetings.	Present proposed changes to the high school graduation requirements to

SBE Task	Date	State Board of Education (SBE)	Quality Education Council (QEC)	Legislature
				education committees for review, in conjunction with OSPI fiscal impact analysis. Advocate for funding and go-ahead from Legislature.
Adopt CORE 24 rules for the Class of 2016.	Summer 2011	SBE adopts rules for the Class of 2016. (The Class of 2016 will enter 9th grade in 2012).	Continue to represent SBE interests to QEC during its meetings.	

.