

CORE 24 Implementation Task Force Notes – April 13, 2009

ITF Task Force Attendees: Michael Christianson, Jean Countryman, Linda Dezelle, Lynn Eisenhauer, Larry Francois, 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 (ITF Board Co-Lead), Amy Bragdon, and Kathe Taylor (Policy Director)

Invited Guests: John Aultman (OSPI), Steve Burch (Sno-Isle Skills Center), Dennis Kampe (Clark County Skills Center), Betty Klattenhoff (OSPI), Mark Madison (Edmonds SD), Dennis Milliken (Northshore SD), Teri Pablo (North Thurston SD), Gerry Ringwood (Tri-Tech Skills Center)

Welcome, Legislative Update, Overview of Agenda and Task Force Work Plan. Steve Dal Porto and Kathe Taylor welcomed the group, reviewed the results of a recent survey for the organization, Stand For Children, that demonstrated strong support for raising high school graduation requirements, and gave a brief legislative update. The Task Force Work Plan was distributed.

Skills Centers, Course Equivalencies, and Career and Technical Education (CTE): An Overview. John Aultman and Betty Klattenhoff each presented PowerPoint presentations (attached to e-mail) to provide a snapshot of the current status of skills centers and career and technical education in Washington.

Perspectives on the Interactions Among CTE, Skills Centers, and CORE 24: A Panel Discussion
The following questions, with follow-up queries and questions from the ITF, were posed to the panel of six skills centers and CTE directors.

1. In what ways does CORE 24 “work” for CTE or skills center students?
2. What concerns do you have about the impact of CORE 24 on CTE or skills center students?
3. What could you do in your school or district to make CORE 24 work better for CTE or skills center students?
4. What could the Board do to make CORE 24 work better for CTE or skills center students?
5. What components of the current occupational education requirement are critical to include in the 3-credit career concentration requirement of CORE 24?

1) In what ways does CORE 24 “work” for CTE or skills center students?

- Talks about postsecondary education options, not just 2 or 4-year colleges; college is really anything that continues to help prepare students after they leave high school
- Assuming we can move to 100% of districts having course equivalency policies, it will create more flexibility
- Should encourage increased interest in equivalency crediting
- Pathway model is good, but need to be careful that it doesn't suggest that students in CTE programs are not 4-year bound; may need to create a third pathway with greater flexibility in requirements
- Name, “career concentration” works
- Plan for apprenticeship works

1a. Do the added credits in arts and science present growth opportunities for your programs?

- Yes, through equivalency crediting
- There is opportunity for the education system to tap CTE as a way of providing access to students to another way of learning
- Need to establish relationships with teachers to identify the equivalencies; great variability across districts, which means that for a skills center, some of the districts feeding into the skills center may consider something equivalent; others, won't
- No common definition of lab science means that local science departments define it; may be limited only to biology or chemistry lab; can't overstate departmental turf issues--if we add more science credits, science department will expect to garner the FTEs

1b. Do course equivalencies work both ways?

- Traditionally, academic courses considered equivalent to occupational education
- Recently, more emphasis has been placed on getting CTE classes to be considered equivalent to academic courses
- It would take quite a bit of work for academic courses to align with the standards of an exploratory CTE course
- Skills centers may have to work individually with each district in the cooperative

2. What concerns do you have about the impact of CORE 24 on CTE or skills center students?

(Note: Some of these concerns would apply to the current graduation requirements, as well)

- Scarcity of resources; finding ways to maximize resources in a time of fiscal stringency
- Trying to serve between 6-9% of juniors and seniors within the cooperative
- Biggest challenge is access to students; some students need considerable travel time to get to skills center; student demand is there, but students may need to make up credits
- CTE completers who want to go to four-year college may have difficulty
- Increased requirements may remove some of the low-rigor, hobby, leisure time options from the schedule
- No room for failure
- Scheduling challenges—particularly for students who fail courses. Are juniors really going to be able to attend skills centers?
- Requirement for students to meet with parents/HS official to select a third credit of math different from Algebra II or Integrated Math III is cumbersome
- Rural districts don't have the staffing
- Master schedule may prohibit flexibility in the ability of students to take skills center courses because some required academic courses may be offered only at certain times

3. What could you do in your school or district to make CORE 24 work better for CTE or skills center students?

- Seek ways to collaborate with postsecondary education to create opportunities for programs that may only meet enrollment if both high school and college students can take classes; Need 18 students in a class to run a program
- With 1.6 FTE funding, Skills centers can offer extended day and summer school programs which enable more flexibility; however, poor students may need to work at jobs instead of coming to school
- Actively seek more cross-crediting (guidance from state would help alleviate some inconsistency and bias about whether a course is truly equivalent, particularly in higher level math)
- Find ways to get remedial courses (e.g., math) at skills centers by accessing I-728 money to hire math specialists—would provide greater flexibility and opportunities for credit-deficient students

4. What components of the current occupational education requirement are critical to include in the 3-credit career concentration requirement of CORE 24?

- Occupational education may be vulnerable because it no longer exists formally as a requirement; even now, even though occupational education is a requirement, there is rampant waiving of the requirement in some places; without it as a requirement, rigor of enforcement will decrease even more
- Leadership, employability skills are important. CTE courses have to be state approved; academics often shy away from exploratory standards for occupational education

5. What could the Board do to make CORE 24 work better for CTE or skills center students?

- Make an occupational education class part of the “career concentration” requirement. Could make it part of the core and move career concentration to 2 credits
- Allow students more flexibility to choose *between* arts or occupational education credit;
- Support Navigation 101
- Encourage more discussions across academic and CTE about course equivalencies
- Work with the HECB around acceptance of CTE credits
- Provide flexibility around the “credit-plus” or “two-for-one” option

Operationalizing the “Career Concentration” Requirement. The group broke into small groups to respond to a worksheet suggesting different ways to define the “career concentration” requirement. After reporting out, there was general consensus around the following definition:

Career concentration. Fulfill three (3) credits of career concentration courses by taking: CTE courses; credited, work-based learning experiences; approved independent study, and/or general education courses that prepare students for postsecondary education based on their identified program of study in their high school and beyond plan. One of the three credits should meet the standards of an exploratory CTE course.

The ITF emphasized flexibility for students to allow for the very real possibility that students change their mind about their interests, and underscored the importance of connecting the decision making about course selection to the high school and beyond plan.

Building Flexibility Through Policy: Practical Implications of a Two for One (Credit Plus) Policy.

Background. One suggestion for enhanced flexibility around CORE 24 has been to allow students who take a career and technical education equivalent class to earn one credit for the course, but satisfy two requirements. In other words, a student who takes a CTE-equivalent science class might record the science credit on his or her transcript, but “check off” that a CTE requirement (in the case of CORE 24, a career concentration requirement) has been met. The rationale is that CTE courses have clearly defined standards students must attain, and a teacher could verify that the competencies have been met.

Currently, students satisfy only one requirement when they take an equivalent course. For example, Health Occupations is determined by the local district to be equivalent to Anatomy and Physiology (lab science). The student elects to take the course as equivalent to Anatomy and Physiology, and it is recorded on the student’s transcript as an Anatomy and Physiology lab science. Conversely, the student might elect to take the course as an occupational education credit. In that case, the course would be recorded on the student’s transcript as Health Occupations.

The ITF was asked to work in small groups to identify the pros and cons of a “two for one” (credit plus) policy.

The following pros were identified of a two for one/credit plus policy:

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- Greater flexibility—would open up elective opportunities, and enable students to take courses they need for extra support
- Easier for students at skills centers
- The process of establishing equivalencies might contribute to professional learning communities among teachers

The following cons were identified:

- Would need clear state parameters to increase consistency of interpretation (limits on number of opportunities for “two for one” credit—perhaps only one credit of “double dipping” permitted; circumstances under which the policy could be invoked—only a CTE requirement could be “checked off”, districts have to have established clear course equivalencies, etc.)
- Might be challenging to transfer credits across schools—inconsistencies due to local control
- Would need to work with standardized transcript or it will be difficult to track graduation requirements

Policy Questions and Preliminary Recommendations. At the end of the meeting, the group attempted to summarize key ideas that had emerged from the discussions that day. Recorded by Steve Dal Porto on a flip chart, they included:

- Will need to think about ways to address the challenges for 11th graders to enter skill centers, especially if credit deficient
- Need flexibility within career concentration
- Career concentration should be unified within CTE and academic pathways—students can choose from both areas to create a concentration
- There needs to be greater consistency/standardization in providing guidance for course equivalencies or a 2 for 1 policy—what are the rules/ limits?
- Revisit flexibility within CORE 24 framework
- 2 for 1—difficult to document—need standard way to document across state.

Next Meeting: Monday, May 18, 2009 at Puget Sound ESD, 10:00-4:00