## BACKGROUND

The State Board of Education (SBE) created the Core 24 Implementation Task Force (ITF) to examine the implementation issues associated with the Core 24 high school graduation requirements framework, passed by the State Board of Education (SBE) in July 2008. The SBE chartered[1] the ITF to advise the SBE on strategies needed to implement the requirements, including a phase-in process that would begin with the graduating class of 2013. Specifically, the SBE charged the ITF to produce three deliverables:

1. Recommendations with analyses of advantages and disadvantages related to the issues itemized in Motion #3, passed in July 2008. These issues included:

   A. An implementation schedule that prioritizes phase-in of new credit requirements.
   B. Ways to operationalize competency-based methods of meeting graduation requirements.
   C. Ways to assist struggling students with credit retrieval and advancing their skills to grade level.
   D. Phasing in Core 24 to address issues such as teacher supply, facility infrastructure, etc.
   E. Ways to provide appropriate career preparation courses, as well as career concentration options.
   F. Scheduling approaches to 24 credits that can meet the required 150 instructional hours.

2. Recommendations with analyses of advantages and disadvantages related to other relevant issues the ITF identifies.
3. Regular feedback from the field on CORE 24 perceptions, concerns, and support.

In addition, the SBE asked the ITF to look at the issue of **automatic enrollment** and to recommend a process connected to the **High School and Beyond Plan** for students to elect and formally declare a college <u>or</u> career emphasis if they want to elect an alternative to pursuing the default college <u>and</u> career-ready requirements.

Members of the Core 24 Implementation Task Force (ITF) (see Attachment A) were selected from over 150 applicants. The ITF members collectively brought to the table a depth and breadth of expertise in diverse student populations, as well as school and district sizes, types, and locations. The ITF met nine times[2] between March 2, 2009 and March 15, 2010 to form recommendations, and convened via webinar to review the draft report on April 14, 2010. Their work was informed by the feedback they solicited from the groups and organizations listed in Attachment B.

[1] The SBE approved a charter for the work of the ITF in November 2009.
[2] All meeting materials are posted on the State Board of Education website.

The SBE asked the ITF to consider its recommendations in the context of the approved Core 24 graduation requirements framework; the Board did not ask the ITF to suggest amendments to the framework. The ITF was in general agreement that:[3]

- More demanding requirements will better prepare students
- Multiple pathways will enable students to pursue preparation that best fits their goals

At the same time, ITF members expressed reservations about the implementation of Core 24, citing most frequently concerns about funding, science and arts facilities, two credits of arts, sufficient supply of highly-qualified teachers, and the challenge that Core 24 poses for struggling students who need more time and support, and often lose elective opportunities because they need to take remedial classes.[4]

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This technical table provides a reference to the recommendations that correspond to each task assigned by the SBE to the ITF.

| Task | Recommendation |
|---|---|
| Phase-in: implementation schedule, teacher supply, facility infrastructure, etc. | 1 |
| Competency-based approaches | 2,3,5 |
| Struggling students: assisting struggling students with credit retrieval and advancing their skills to grade level. | 7 |
| Career concentration: providing appropriate career preparation courses, as well as career concentration options. | 6 |
| Scheduling approaches to 24 credits that can meet the required 150 instructional hours. | 2,3,4,9 |
| Automatic Enrollment | 10 |
| High School and Beyond Plan | 8,9,10 |

**Process.** With the exception of the phase-in recommendations, which had already been presented to the SBE in November, 2009, the 15 (of 19) ITF members present at the March 15, 2010 meeting voted on each recommendation, using an audience response system to tally the votes. The vote count is provided by each recommendation.

1. **Phase-in Policy Recommendation. (**The SBE asked the ITF to deliver its phase-in recommendations in fall 2009, in order to factor them into the deliberations of the Quality Education Council prior to the 2010 legislative session.)

The ultimate success of students' meeting the requirements of Core 24 depends on a

[3] Based on ITF members' individual responses to a March 5, 2010 e-mail query, "Which aspects of Core 24 help meet the Board's graduation requirements policy goal to better prepare students for the job, career, and postsecondary education demands they will face after high school?" (better means better than current state-prescribed requirements do).

[4] The e-mailed prompt asked ITF members, "What is your primary concern about the implementation of Core 24?" All of the responses are listed in a document called "Draft Key Messages" posted on the SBE website under "Meeting Materials" for the March 15, 2010 ITF meeting. http://www.sbe.wa.gov

systems approach across the K-12 spectrum. The ITF believes the framework articulated in ESHB 2261 addresses much of the necessary supports needed to meet this essential work on behalf of the students across the state. With that in mind and based on the ITF's current awareness of the issues with this work, the following recommendations are put forward for consideration by the SBE:

1. Stable funding in categories articulated in ESHB 2261 must be provided to support the implementation of Core 24 for at least grades 8 through 12. In particular, funding to meet class size standard, extra support for high poverty schools, guidance and counseling, as well as resources aimed at supporting struggling students are essential.

2. Once funding begins, the ITF believes districts will need one year for planning purposes and five years to make the relevant changes needed to graduate the first students meeting Core 24 expectations (beginning with students in the eighth grade of the first graduating class affected by the new requirements).

3. The ITF also remains concerned about the facilities needs associated with the increase in graduation requirements. We believe that many high schools will need to create and/or repurpose space to provide appropriate learning environments to meet these increased course requirements.

| Advantages of a 6-year Phase-in | Disadvantages of a 6-year Phase-in |
|---|---|
| • Reinforces the importance of middle level preparation in achieving the goals of Core 24<br>• Provides adequate lead time for districts to assess needs and make the needed changes, including repurposing of space | • Does not meet the Board's goal of implementation for the graduating Class of 2016 |

**2. Two-for-One Policy Recommendation**. **[Vote: 14 yes. 1 no].** Encourage districts to explore competency-based methods of awarding credit by creating a state policy that would enable students to earn one credit and satisfy two requirements when taking *either* a CTE course that has been designated by the district to be equivalent to a core academic course <u>or</u> two academic courses with clearly defined competencies (e.g., marching band and physical education; human anatomy/physiology and health). Standardized transcripts would note whether the student met the graduation requirement by equivalency or by credit. Districts would establish an equivalency process to ensure that the standards for both graduation requirements are met in one course, and would set the limit on the number of "two for one" classes a student could take. Students would still need to earn a total of 24 credits.

Credits and requirements would be satisfied according to the district policy where the student took the course. For example, District A might offer human anatomy/physiology for science credit, but not for health credit. A student who earns that science credit, then transfers to District B, where human anatomy/physiology is considered equivalent to

health, would still receive only the science credit. Reciprocity across districts must be honored.

| Advantages of a Two-For-One Policy | Disadvantages of a Two-For-One Policy |
|---|---|
| • Provides greater flexibility for students to build other courses into their schedules<br>• Provides greater flexibility for students in skills centers<br>• Will encourage districts to establish course equivalencies<br>• May encourage development of professional learning communities as teacher collaborate to establish equivalencies<br>• Builds on expertise of CTE community<br>• Leads to more integrated coursework | • Without clear state parameters, the policy could be interpreted inconsistently within and/or across districts and make it difficult for students to transfer credits across schools and/or districts<br>• Would require changes to standardized transcript<br>• Would need to clarify with the higher education community whether, or under what circumstances, colleges would accept one course meeting two requirements |

3. **Redefine "credit" in WAC Policy Recommendation**. **[13 yes. 2 no].** High school credit is defined in rule by the State Board of Education[5] as:

   a) One hundred fifty hours of planned instructional activities approved by the district; or

   (b) Satisfactory demonstration by a student of clearly identified competencies established pursuant to a process defined in written district policy.

While recognizing the importance of investing time in learning, the ITF recommends that the SBE eliminate in the above WAC the time-based (150 hours) definition of a credit[6] (a), and maintain the competency-based definition of a credit (b). This policy would place the focus on student-centered learning and allow districts the flexibility to determine, and individualize, how much course time is needed for students to meet the state's standards.

| Advantages of Eliminating the Time-based Definition | Disadvantages of Eliminating the Time-based Definition |
|---|---|
| • Shifts the emphasis from time to rigor; places responsibility on districts to assure that rigorous standards are | • May be viewed as less objective, measurable and easy to understand<br>• Lacks the power of a time-based |

[5] 180-51-050

[6] Washington is one of 27 states that define credit in terms of time. Among these states, only Louisiana, which requires 177 hours for a six-period day, exceeds Washington's 150-hour requirement. The most frequently occurring (modal) time-based definition is 120 hours (held by nine states, or 33% of the 27).

| Advantages of Eliminating the Time-based Definition | Disadvantages of Eliminating the Time-based Definition |
|---|---|
| applied to all courses, and that the time needed to achieve those standards is provided.<br>• Consistent with the state's direction toward standards-based learning<br>• Does not artificially connect learning to time<br>• Creates more flexibility for districts to focus on student-centered learning that will enable students to progress at their own rates<br>• Eliminates existing inconsistencies created by differences in schedules; evidence[7] suggests that districts on block schedules are less likely to meet the 150 hour requirement<br>• Eliminates inconsistencies across districts in the ways districts define and count "instructional hours". | requirement to act as an equalizer—a form of standardization that reduces the likelihood that districts will cut corners<br>• Establishes no minimum, measurable threshold of expectation<br>• It could decrease student-teacher contact time.<br>• The state might be able to argue that it is already funding Core 24[8] |

4. **Limited Local Waiver Authority Policy Recommendation. [13 yes. 2 no].** Give limited waiver authority to local administrators by delegating to each school board the authority to adopt policy that prescribes administrator latitude and discretion for waiving required credits, using these parameters:
   - Waivers are limited to no more than two graduation requirements (not credit).
   - The waiver(s) must be based upon student need as articulated in the High School and Beyond Plan.
   - The waiver(s) must be documented on the standardized transcript.
   - No waivers in a content area are authorized if the student has failed to meet standard on the required state assessment in that content area (e.g., math, reading, writing, science).
   - A district must have a written policy regarding waivers before any waivers are authorized.
   - Students must still earn 24 credits.

[7] See *Analysis of School Bell Schedules and Graduation Requirements* prepared by SBE staff for the May 18, 2009 meeting of the ITF.

[8] According to OSPI fiscal staff, the definition of a credit does not affect the funding formula 1080 hour high school requirement or the class size calculations in the prototypical school funding model.

| Advantages of Limited Local Waiver Authority | Disadvantages of Limited Local Waiver Authority |
|---|---|
| • Allows flexibility to meet requirements<br>• Acknowledges the professional judgment of local staff (principals)<br>• Acknowledges that there are many variables in the way students learn<br>• Gives small schools needed flexibility | • It's only as good as the people/systems giving the waivers<br>• Inconsistencies will occur<br>• Protects against waiver only those subjects for which there is a required state assessment, and then only when the student has not met standard on the required state assessment. |

5. **Competency-based Credit Policy Recommendation. [8 yes. 7 no.]** This policy was debated spiritedly, and the resulting vote reveals the divergence of views on the topic. The recommendation is to authorize through rule the opportunity for students who meet standard on state-approved end-of-course assessments to earn credit for the associated course, even if the student fails the class.

| Advantages of State WAC on Competency-based Credit Related to State End-of-Course Assessments | Disadvantages of State WAC on Competency-based Credit Related to State End-of-Course Assessments |
|---|---|
| • Provides consistency across state<br>• Provides guidance to districts about one form of competency-based credit<br>• Consistent with the state's direction toward standards-based learning | • Takes away local control<br>• No single assessment can test the breadth of material covered in a class<br>• May reward students for the wrong reasons (If students know they can earn credit as long as they pass the EOC, they may choose to disregard other course requirements.) |

6. **Career Concentration Policy Recommendation. [13 yes. 2 no][9].** Use the following definition to define career concentration:

   *Fulfill 3 credits of career concentration courses that prepare students for postsecondary education and careers on their identified program of study in their high school and beyond plan. One of the three credits shall meet the standards of an exploratory career and technical education (CTE) course, as currently defined in the SBE's graduation requirements WAC[10].*

[9] This definition did not pass on the first vote (5 yes, 10 no) because the last sentence only suggested that one of the three credits "should meet" the standards of an exploratory CTE course. When "should" was changed to "shall," the vote changed.
[10] WAC 180-51-066

| Advantages of This Career Concentration Definition | Disadvantages of This Career Concentration Definition |
|---|---|
| • Provides sufficient flexibility to address different students' needs<br>• Retains core (employability and leadership skills) of occupational education requirement<br>• Connects High School and Beyond Plan with course selection | • Relies on a High School and Beyond planning process that may not exist yet in some schools |

7. **Credit Recovery Advocacy. [15 yes. 0 no].** The SBE should advocate for:
   - resources needed to implement and staff programs necessary to assist struggling students in credit recovery. Funding could be similar to the new LAP funding model.
   - the state to develop a database of intervention options so that each district has possible models to implement.

| Advantages of Credit Recovery Advocacy | Disadvantages of Credit Recovery Advocacy |
|---|---|
| • Consistent with Board's formal support for funding assistance for struggling students as part of Core 24[11] | • Requires funding<br>• Board can advocate, but only the legislature can provide funding |

8. **High School and Beyond Plan Starting at Middle School Policy Recommendation. [15 yes. 0 no].** A plan should be started at the middle level with a focus on exploring students' options and interests. The ITF recommends increasing the comprehensive counseling services available at the middle level.

| Advantages of High School and Beyond Plan at Middle Level | Disadvantages of High School and Beyond Plan at Middle Level |
|---|---|
| • Consistent with Board's desire to initiate the High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) at the middle level.<br>• Specifies the focus of what the HSBP should be at the middle level.<br>• Consistent with Board's formal support | • Board has no authority to require that the High School and Beyond Plan begin at the middle level—can provide only guidance |

[11] *Affirm the intention of the Board to advocate for a comprehensive funding package and revision to the Basic Education Funding formula, which among other necessary investments, should link the implementation of CORE 24 directly to sufficient funding to local school districts for a six-period high school day[11], a comprehensive education and career guidance system, and support for students who need additional help to meet the requirements. The Board directed staff to prepare a funding request for the 2009-2011 biennium to begin implementation of CORE 24. (SBE motion passed in July 2008)*

| Advantages of High School and Beyond Plan at Middle Level | Disadvantages of High School and Beyond Plan at Middle Level |
|---|---|
| for funding for a comprehensive education and career guidance system as part of Core 24 | |

9. **Flexibility to Meet High School Requirements At Middle Level Standards Policy Recommendation [10 yes. 5 no].** Provide opportunities for students to begin meeting high school graduation requirements at the middle level when courses meet rigorous standards as determined by the local districts. As provided by law,[12] credits may be awarded if the course meets the same standards as the high school equivalent, and the student and parent elect to record the credit on the transcript.

| Advantages of Flexibility to Meet High School Requirements at Middle Level Standards | Disadvantages of Flexibility to Meet High School Requirements at Middle Level Standards |
|---|---|
| • Opens up scheduling flexibility in 9-12<br>• Provides local control for districts to determine the number and type of courses that could be satisfied at the middle level<br>• Provides more opportunities for students to begin meeting high school requirements in middle school (currently, students may meet only for-credit requirements) | • Creates statewide inconsistency by allowing variations across districts in which requirements can be met at middle level standards<br>• Could create a perception that courses that "meet a requirement" are less important than those that "earn credit".<br>• Requires a philosophical shift on part of SBE; Board would have to acknowledge that districts could allow some high school requirements to be met after being taught to middle level standards (e.g., WA State History).<br>• Would require highly qualified teacher for 4-12 in middle school<br>• Could displace what middle level students are already taking<br>• Creates a registrar's nightmare without some prescription of district reciprocity |

10. **Automatic Enrollment Policy Recommendation [14 yes. 1 no].** Automatic enrollment means all students will take the core 18 credits. Students will develop a plan by the end of 8th grade for the entire Core 24 requirements. Comprehensive guidance—including review of the plan-- will be provided to all students annually. Distribution of the remaining six credits would be determined by the student's chosen pathway.

[12] RCW 28A.230.090

Core Credits for
Automatic Enrollment

| Subject | Credits |
|---|---|
| English | 4 |
| Math | 3 |
| Science | 3 |
| Social Studies | 3 |
| Fitness | 1.5 |
| Health | .5 |
| Arts | 2 |
| Career Concentration | 1 |
| Total | 18 |

| Advantages of Automatic Enrollment Policy Recommendation | Disadvantages of Automatic Enrollment Policy Recommendation |
|---|---|
| • Creates a more rigorous common core of graduation requirements than those for the Class of 2013<br>• Allows flexibility for students to determine the distribution of the remaining six credits<br>• Aligns with four-year public college admission requirements except for the 2-credit world language requirement | • This is a different view of automatic enrollment than what the SBE has expressed to date<br>• Board does not have authority to require students to develop a plan in 8th grade (and this recommendation may conflict with recommendation #8 in its stated focus of the middle level HSBP)<br>• If world language is not part of the automatic enrollment process, many students who have not made a clear decision about their postsecondary goals may not be prepared to enter a four-year university. |

**FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION**

The ITF considered, but did not formally vote on the possibility that local administrators could waive state-mandated graduation requirements for students who receive an International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma or Cambridge Diploma. The Board may want to consider the merits of such a policy.

| Advantages of Waiver for IB or Cambridge Diploma | Disadvantages of Waiver for IB or Cambridge Diploma |
|---|---|
| • Each is a rigorous, internationally-benchmarked curriculum<br>• Gives students flexibility<br>• Without it, IB students in schools with 6-period days would find it to be almost impossible to meet all requirements<br>• The IB or Cambridge Diploma would still require 24 credits, contain rigor, and would prepare students for college. | • Most districts can't offer IB or Cambridge<br>• Would need to have provisions for students who take IB classes but don't get the IB diploma |

**Attachment A**

**Core 24 Implementation Task Force Members**

**Alex Otoupal**, Associate Principal, Evergreen School District

**Brad Sprague**, Principal, Auburn School District

**Bridget Lewis**, Executive Director of Instructional Programs, Spokane Public Schools

**Charles Hamaker-Teals**, Social Studies Teacher, Kennewick School District

**Dennis Maguire**, Associate Superintendent for Instruction, Pasco School District

**Jean Countryman**, Counselor, Ellensburg School District

**Jennifer Shaw**, Principal, Franklin Pierce School District

**Julie Kratzig**, Counselor, Bellingham School District

**Karen Madsen**, Board of Directors, Everett Public Schools

**Larry Francois**, Superintendent, Northshore School District

**Linda Dezellem**, Principal, Brewster School District

**Lisa Hechtman**, Principal, Issaquah School District

**Lynn Eisenhauer**, K-12 Arts Facilitator, Tacoma Public Schools

**Mark Mansell**, Superintendent, La Center School District

**Michael Christianson**, Career and Technical Education Director, Bethel School District

**Michael Tolley**, High School Instructional Director, Seattle Public School District

**Mick Miller**, Superintendent, Deer Park School District

**Sandra Sheldon**, Superintendent, Warden School District

**Sergio Hernandez**, Superintendent, Freeman School District

Note: Harjeet Sandhu, Principal, Tacoma School District and John Heley, English and Spanish Teacher, Asotin-Anatone School District were originally selected for the ITF and participated in its initial meetings; however, both withdrew.

Attachment B

## ITF Outreach Efforts

The Board asked the ITF to provide regular feedback from the field on CORE 24 perceptions, concerns, and support. Members elicited feedback in a variety of ways, from formal surveys and presentations to informal conversations. The following list depicts some of the groups that provided feedback.

**School Districts/Boards**

Auburn
Bellingham
Bethel
Brewster
Evergreen
Freeman
Issaquah
La Center
Northshore
Pasco
Spokane
Tacoma
Warden

**Organizations**

**ArtsEd** Washington Board
**AWSP** (Association of Washington School Principals)
**Bilingual Advisory Committee**
**NEWASA** [Does this mean Northeast WASA???]
**WA-ACTE** (Washington Association for Career and Technical Education)
**WALA** (Washington Association for Learning Alternatives)
**WASA** (Washington Association of School Administrators)
**WASSP** (Washington Association of Secondary School Principals)
**WA State PTA** (survey)
**WAVA** (An Association of Career and Technical Administrators)
**WEA** (Washington Education Association) (local and state representatives)
**WSCA** (Washington School Counseling Association)
**WSSDA** (Washington State School Directors' Association) (survey)
**WSTA** (Washington Science Teachers Association) (survey)

**Groups**

Brewster-area principals, CTE directors
Clark County Superintendents
ESD 101 Superintendents (survey)
ESD 123 Superintendents
ESD 112 Principals' Association
ESD 113 Superintendents
PSESD Superintendents
Grant County Superintendents
IB Coordinators
North Central ESD Superintendents
OSPI Arts Leadership groups
Pasco-area principals' groups
Rural Education Centers
Skills Center Directors
Spokane County Superintendents
Spokane Valley Administrative Group
Tri-Cities Superintendents
WASA Small Schools Conference