



Washington State
Board of Education



Working to Raise Student Achievement Dramatically

Meaningful High School Diploma

SUMMARY OF POLICY ISSUE/SBE STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL

Washington State statute¹ assigns the Board authority to establish graduation requirements:

The State Board of Education shall establish high school graduation requirements or equivalencies for students, except those equivalencies established by local high schools or school districts under RCW 28A.230.097.

Rigorous graduation requirements are one strategy for meeting the Board's strategic plan goal to improve student preparation for success in postsecondary education, 21st century world of work, and citizenship.

BACKGROUND

The 2006 Legislature² directed the Board to develop and propose a revised definition of the purpose and expectations for high school diplomas issued by public schools. The 2007 Legislature³ directed the Board to increase math graduation requirements from two to three, and to prescribe the content of all three credits.

The Board built upon these two tasks by electing to review all graduation requirements (credits, culminating project, and high school and beyond plan) for which it has authority. In acknowledgement of 2003 rule language that affirmed the Board's commitment to "high, meaningful, and fair requirements every student can meet,"⁴ the Board established a Meaningful High School Diploma committee of Board members and an advisory committee of stakeholders to assist with the work, which began in early 2007.

During this multi-year process, the Board has reviewed national research, conducted a study to establish a comprehensive state picture of current district-level requirements, consulted with stakeholders, surveyed the public, heard public comment, and held outreach sessions to provide face-to-face opportunities for input and feedback. The following table outlines milestones—some past, some yet to come—that provide a guide to the timeline the Board has followed and will continue to pursue.

¹ RCW 28A.230.090

² E2SHB 3098 of the 2006 Legislative session

³ E2SHB 1906 of the 2007 Legislative session

⁴ WAC 180-51-003

Milestone	Date
Review math and science standards	2007-2008
Conduct public outreach on proposed graduation requirement principles	Fall 2007
Approve purpose of a diploma	January 2008
Increase math graduation requirements from 2 to 3 and prescribe the content of the credits	July 2008
Propose new CORE 24 graduation requirements framework and gather public input on revisions to credits, culminating project, and high school and beyond plan	March-July 2008
Revise CORE 24 framework in response to stakeholder feedback and approve a new graduation requirement policy framework, contingent on funding	July 2008
Cost out and submit a budget request for graduation framework	August/September 2008
Establish an implementation task force to assist the Board in understanding and making decisions about implementation (phase-in, flexibility, facilities impact, teacher impact, etc.)	Fall 2008-Spring 2009
Respond to the Memorandum of Agreement with the Tribal Leader Congress on Education	Fall 2008
Write rules for graduation requirements, informed by outcome of 2009 legislative session	Spring/Summer 2009

Additional detail about three of the milestones listed in the table is provided below. More information about the CORE 24 graduation requirements framework appears later in the paper.

Purpose of a Diploma

In January 2008, the Board approved a statement of purpose for a diploma, which will guide its review of the current high school graduation requirements.

The purpose of the diploma is to declare that a student is ready for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship, and is equipped with the skills to be a lifelong learner. The diploma represents a balance between the personalized education needs of each student and society's needs, and reflects at its core the state's basic education goals. The diploma is a compact among students, parents, local school districts, the state and whatever institution or employer the graduate moves on to—a compact that says the graduate has acquired a particular set of knowledge and skills. How the student demonstrates those skills may differ. Whether a student earns credit by participating in formal instruction or by demonstrating competency through established district policies is immaterial; they are equally acceptable.

Math Credits

The Board released a first draft of a revised math rule for public review in March 2008. The draft reflected months of study of other states' experiences and national research about math skills needed for the 21st century, as well as input received through public outreach. The message was clear: To better prepare students, many of Washington's employers, trades, community and technical colleges, universities, community leaders, elected officials and parents have called for students to graduate from high school with a stronger math education.

The draft rule calls for students to take a progressive sequence of mathematics courses: Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II, Integrated Mathematics I, II and III. Career and technical education courses that are the equivalent of any of these courses may be substituted. Students who have a defined career path will have the opportunity to substitute another math course for Algebra II, but they must obtain approval from a parent/guardian and high school official. The Board will adopt a final rule on the math credits in July, with the rule scheduled to take effect for the class of 2013. A draft copy of the rule language can be found on the Board's Web site.

Math and Science Standards

The foundation of excellent graduation requirements is excellent standards. In response to the 2006 report, *Washington Learns*, which called for the state to establish international performance standards for math and science, the legislature⁵ asked the Board to review math and science essential academic learning requirements and recommend to the superintendent of public instruction revisions to the standards. The Board has been engaged in this work since early 2007. The Board will review the final revised math standards at the July 2008 meeting, and the final revised science standards at its January 2009 meeting.

WASHINGTON'S CURRENT GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Washington currently requires students to complete five types of graduation requirements. Four are state-mandated; the fifth is locally-determined:

1. Minimum credit requirements; currently 19 credits that have been effective for every class since 1985 (Board-determined)
2. Culminating Project, effective for the class of 2008 (Board-determined)
3. High School and Beyond Plan, effective for the class of 2008 (Board-determined)
4. Washington Assessment of Student Learning in designated subject areas, effective for the class of 2008 (Legislature-determined)
5. District credit and non-credit requirements (Locally-determined)

⁵ E2SHB 1906

Minimum Credit Requirements

Subject	Credits
English	3.0
Mathematics	2.0
Science	2.0
Social Studies	2.5
Arts	1.0
Health & Fitness	2.0
Occupational Educ	1.0
Electives	5.5
Total	19.0

What Factors Are Driving Change?

Standards and requirements are dynamic; as conditions change, they need to be revisited periodically to determine if they are still serving students well. The world has changed dramatically in the 23 years since Washington's minimum graduation credit requirements were last revised, driven by globalization, technological advances, and demographic shifts that affect the economy, workplace, and social and cultural environments in which we live. Four considerations driving change will be highlighted here:

- Changing workplace
- Lack of alignment between high school graduation requirements and college admissions requirements
- National trends in credit requirements
- Washington district trends in credit requirements

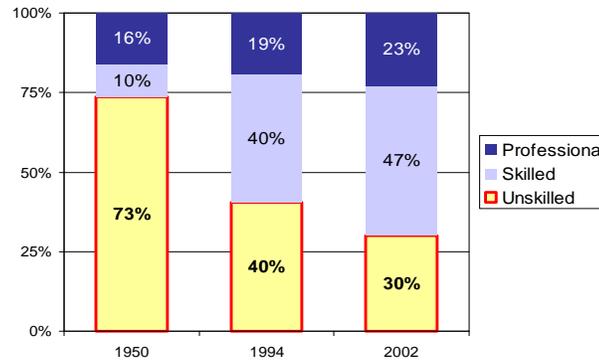
Changing workplace. Technology (e.g., e-mail, Internet, personal computers, etc.) that we take for granted now was not commonplace in 1985; jobs that exist today were not in existence then, and today's kindergarteners will take jobs that have not yet been created.

The ability to communicate globally is so improved that people can live in one state or country and work in another. Companies routinely "outsource" jobs to other countries. Googol, a mathematical term for a 1 followed by 100 zeros, has been transformed into "google"--a verb to describe a way of accessing the vast amount of information available on the Web—an information database that exploded in growth only since the 1990's. Students today cannot imagine a world where the Internet did not provide ready access to information.

Increasingly more opportunities are available for "knowledge workers" who work with their head, not hands, and produce ideas, knowledge and information, although no worker does not use their brain, and all workers produce some knowledge. At the same time, many manual and technical jobs have become more complex, demanding a greater level of knowledge, training, and cognitive skill. Knowledge has become both product and tool.⁶

⁶ Friedman, Thomas L. (2005). *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the 21st Century*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Unskilled jobs are disappearing and the demand for higher skills is rising.⁷ By 2014, 77% of new family-wage jobs to support a family of three will be held by workers with education or training beyond high school.⁸ Of these jobs, more than half will be held by workers with four-year college degrees.



The move to a knowledge-based economy requires education and training that would not have been needed, or needed by only a few, in the 20th century--and it requires that education and training of an increasingly diverse population. Washington is more diverse than it was in 1985,⁹ making it imperative (and more challenging) to consider the impact of policy on all students.

Lack of alignment between high school graduation requirements and college admission requirements. Washington currently requires students to take 13.5 credits of prescribed subjects and 5.5 credits of electives. The 13.5 credits are inadequate preparation for most postsecondary education degree and certificate programs, as evidenced by the number of students who require remedial course work at the postsecondary level. Fifty-two percent (52%) of community and technical college students who graduated from high school in 2006 took pre-college (also known as remedial) classes in 2006-07. These students – totaling 12,468 – enrolled in pre-college math, English or reading. Remediation costs the state and students; in 2006-07, the tuition and state support for recent high school graduates (those entering college within three years of graduation) to take remedial courses was \$17.5 million.¹⁰

Current minimum graduation requirements do not align with four-year college entry requirements, falling short in the number of credits (English, mathematics, social studies, world language) and/or the specificity of the credits (3 credits of math through Algebra II with 1 credit in the senior year; 2 lab sciences, with one being algebra-based). Only in arts does the high school graduation requirement and the college admission requirement match. The shaded area in the following table draws attention to the subject requirements common to both systems.

⁷ American Diploma Project; U.S. Bureau of Census and Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (Pennsylvania statewide)

⁸ Partnership for Learning; US Bureau of Labor and Statistics

⁹ US Census Bureau

¹⁰ Role of Pre-College (Developmental and Remedial) Education for Recent High School Graduates Attending Washington Community and Technical Colleges. Research Report. 07-2. Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. December 2007.

**Minimum High School Graduation Credit Requirements vs.
Minimum Four-Year Public College Admission Requirements**

Subject	High School Credits	WA Minimum Public College Admission Requirements
English	3.0	4
Mathematics	2.0	3
Science	2.0	2
Social Studies	2.5	3
Arts	1.0	1
World Language	0.0	2
Health & Fitness	2.0	0
Occupational Educ	1.0	0
Electives	5.5	0
Total	19.0	15

This lack of alignment has a disproportionate impact on some students. Students of color in Washington, as in other states, are less likely to take the classes they need to get into a four-year college.¹¹ Similarly, studies have shown that more low-income students complete college when they take a rigorous high school curriculum.¹²

National trends in credit requirements. Although Washington’s graduation requirements policy is not dictated by what other states are doing, it is useful to take a snapshot of the national picture to assess the amount of preparation students in other states will have relative to Washington students. Following is a summary of total minimum state requirements. Two states adjacent to Washington, Idaho and Oregon—states where Washington students might seek jobs relatively close to home—will require 23 credits (effective 2013) and 24 credits (effective 2012), respectively.

¹¹ Based on a transcript study of 42 Washington schools by Fouts & Baker using transcript data of graduating classes of 2005 and 2006

¹² Adelman, Clifford (2006). The Toolbox Revisited. Available online at: <http://www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/toolboxrevisit/index.html>

Total Minimum State Requirements

**Total Graduation Credit Requirements of
50 States and District of Columbia**

Number of Credits	Number of States 2008	Number of States 2009+
0	5	3
.5-18	7	8
19	2 (WA and NH)	2
20	9	8
21	8	5
22	11	8
23	4	3
24	5 (TX-- recommended curriculum only)	13 (AL, DE, DC, FL, HI, LA, MO, MS, ND, OR, SC, UT, WV)
25	0	0
26	0	1 (TX--recommended curriculum only)
TOTAL	51	51

Thirty-seven states and the District of Columbia (73%) require more minimum credits than Washington; that number will increase slightly to 38 states (75%) after 2008. (When the percentages are calculated based upon the number of states with state-mandated requirements, 80% of the states and the District of Columbia require more minimum credits than Washington.)

Subject Area Requirements

Although credits in and of themselves are not synonymous with rigor (more credits does not necessarily mean more rigor or guarantee quality instruction), it is reasonable to presume that credits indicate the amount of exposure a student has been given to a field of study. Following are state summaries of credit requirements by subject area.

**English Graduation Requirements of
50 States and District of Columbia**

Number of Credits	Number of States 2008	Number of States 2009+
0	7	4
1	0	0
2	0	0
3	6	2
4	38	45

After 2009, virtually all states with state-mandated requirements will require four credits of English. Higher requirements in seven states will take effect between 2009-2012. California and Washington are the only two states with 3-credit requirements that have no pending changes.

**Math Graduation Requirements of
50 States and District of Columbia**

Number of Credits	Number of States 2008	Number of States 2009+
0	7	4
1.0	0	0
2.0	15	8
3.0	24	23
3 or 4	2	2
4.0	3	14

Beginning in 2009, the majority of states (39 or 76%) will require three or more math credits. Within four years, 14 states (27%) will require four credits, compared to the three states (6%) that require four credits in 2008.

**Science Graduation Requirements of
50 States and District of Columbia**

Number of Credits	Number of States & DC 2008	Number of States & DC 2009+
0	7	4
1	1	0
2	17	12
2-3 or 2-4	2	2
3	22	28
3-4	1	1
4	1	4

Beginning in 2009, 33 states/DC (65%) will require three or more science credits. Twenty-one (21) states/DC (41%) require labs, with lab credits varying from one to three.

**Social Studies Graduation Requirements of
50 States and District of Columbia**

Number of Credits	Number of States & DC 2008	Number of States & DC 2009+
0	5	3
.5	2	1
1	0	0
2	9	7
2.5	6	6
3	22	26
3-4	1	1
3.5	2	2
4	4	5

The majority of states and the District of Columbia (57%) require three or more social studies credits. After 2008, that percentage will increase to 67%. Sixteen states (31%, and including four states with no state-mandated graduation credits), currently require two credits or less.

**Arts Graduation Requirements of
50 States and District of Columbia**

Number of Credits	Number of States & DC
0.0	11
0.5	4
1.0	17
1.5	1
TOTAL	33

Arts as a Choice	Number of States	Number of Credits Students Might Choose
Choice of Arts or Occupational Education	5	0-1; All specify 1 credit of either subject
Choice of Arts or World Language	2	0-1; All specify 1 credit of either subject
Choice of Arts, Occupational Education, or World Language	7	0-3, depending on the state;
Choice of Arts or Another Specified Academic Subject	1	0-1
Other (requirements differ depending on college or career pathway)	3	0-4 credits, depending on state and pathway
TOTAL	18	

Twenty-two (43%) states require all students to earn credits in fine arts. The majority (17) of those states require 1 credit. Eleven states (22%) require no credits in the arts. Of those states, five have no state-mandated requirements in any subject. Fifteen states (29%) offer students a choice between the arts and vocational education, world language, and/or another academic subject. Three states (6%) require fine arts only for students enrolled in particular curricular pathways.

**Health and Fitness Graduation Requirements of
50 States and District of Columbia**

Number of Credits	Number of States & DC
0	9
.5	7
1.0	13
1.5	10
2.0	8
2.5-3.0	4

Only four states exceed Washington’s two-credit health and fitness requirement. The majority of states (39 or 76%) require fewer health and fitness credits than Washington. Twenty-one states (41%) award a separate credit for health. Most (17) require .5 credits of health. Only three states (Idaho, Illinois, Mississippi) require only health, although South Dakota allows students to take .5 credit of health or fitness.

**Occupational Education Graduation Requirements
of 50 States and District of Columbia**

Number of Credits	Number of States & DC	Notes
0.0	16	
0.5	3	
1.0	7	
1.5	2	
2.0	0	
3.0	1	Delaware—3 credits in a career pathway
6.0	1	Arkansas—6 credits of “career focus” electives
7.0	1	Kentucky—7 credits of “academic and career interest standards-based learning experiences”
TOTAL	31	

Occupational Education as a Choice	Number of States	Number of Occ. Ed Credits Students Might Choose
Choice of Occupational Education or Arts	5	0-1; All specify 1 credit of either subject
Choice of Occupational Education or World Languages	1	0-2; Maryland allows students to choose 2 credits from advanced technology, world language, and or CTE
Choice of Occupational Education, Arts, or World Language	7	0-3, depending on the state
Choice of Occupational Education or Other Specified Academic Subject	4	0-6, depending on the state
Other (requirements differ depending on college or career pathway)	3	0-4 credits, depending on state and pathway
TOTAL	20	

Considerable variability exists in terminology and the specificity of subjects included in this area. “Occupational education” is used by only one state (Nevada) other than Washington. Other general terms include: Career and technical education (8), vocational education (4), applied or practical arts (3). Some states address specific requirements, such as computer: applications, education, keyboarding, literacy or science (AL, MS, NH, RI, SC); technology applications (TX); personal finance or financial literacy (MO, UT). Twelve states require all students to take a business, technology, or career-related course, while 16 states require no credits in a vocational area. (Four of the 16 have no state-mandated requirements in any subject.). Three states create career pathways or concentrations. The largest percentage (20 states or 39%) allow student choice of some kind (occupational education or another subject area).

World Language Graduation Requirements of 50 States and District of Columbia

Number of Credits	Number of States & DC 2008	Number of States & DC 2009+
0	34	26
1	2 (NJ, NY)	2 (NJ, NY)
2	2 (DC, RI)	4 (DC, DE, RI, MI)
TOTAL	38	32

The majority of states (34 or 67%) do not require world language of all students. Delaware and Michigan will join New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and the District of Columbia in requiring world language of all students. Michigan will require two credits effective for the class of 2011—credits that can be completed by course work or other learning experiences in grades K-12 equivalent to two credits of world language, and may be completed wholly or partially through online course work.

Thirteen states (25%) permit students to choose world language from a specified list of subjects: arts, occupational education, or another academic class. That number will increase to 19 (37%) after 2008.

**Electives Graduation Requirements of
50 States and District of Columbia**

Number of Credits	Number of States
0	13
1	1
2	2
3	4
4	2
5	4
6	10
7	8
8	4
9	3
TOTAL	51

Thirteen states require state-mandated credits and no electives. The median number of elective credits is 5.5—Washington’s current requirement.

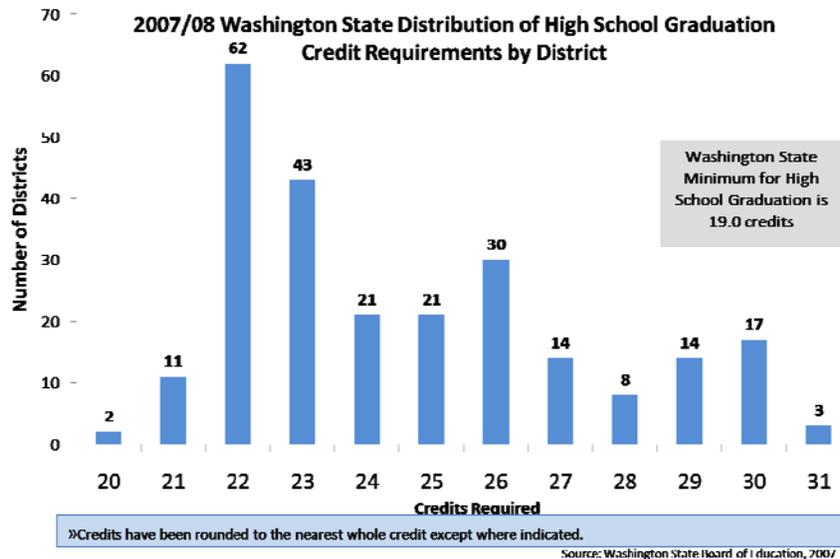
Washington district trends in credit requirements. Although Washington requires a minimum number of state-mandated credits, districts can enhance those requirements locally. In the spring of 2007, the Board surveyed all 246 districts with high schools to determine the credit requirements of every district, finding considerable variation across districts in the number of credits required of students to graduate, specifically:

- The greatest number of districts (62 or 25%) require 22 credits.
- Just over half the districts (52%) require 24 credits or more.
- All districts exceed the state’s minimum credit requirements, with credit requirements ranging from 20-31.¹³
- Districts were most likely to exceed the state’s minimum required credits in English, social studies, occupational education, and electives.¹⁴
- Generally, larger districts were more likely to require *fewer* credits. (25% of districts with 3000 students or more required 24 credits or more; 77% of districts with fewer than 700 students required 24 credits or more)

¹³ Districts with higher number of credits are likely to be on a block schedule that permits students to earn up to 4 credits per semester.

¹⁴ 92% of districts exceed the state’s minimum 3 credits of English; 87% of districts exceed the state’s minimum 2.5 credits of social studies; 89% of districts exceed the state’s minimum 5.5 electives (137 districts require 8-14 electives); 54% exceed the state’s minimum 1 credit of occupational education.

The bar graph below summarizes the range of credits required by Washington districts.



Public Feedback About Graduation Requirements

The Board conducted nine formal public outreach sessions throughout the state in fall 2007 and spring 2008 attended by 643 people. The fall 2007 sessions elicited public feedback about the guiding principles for graduation requirements. Three themes emerged prominently from those sessions: agreement with the concept of one diploma for all, endorsement of multiple pathways, and an urgent message for no unfunded mandates.

The spring 2008 sessions sought feedback to the draft CORE 24 graduation requirements proposal (see appendix A for graphic of CORE 24 proposal). In addition, the Board conducted a survey that elicited 373 responses, met with over 35 stakeholder groups (see Appendix B), and received over 65 letters and e-mails offering reactions and suggestions.

People expressed strong support for preparing students for postsecondary education, the 21st century workplace, and citizenship, and for a system with sufficient flexibility to create many paths to one diploma. Although survey respondents tended to be neutral about the possibility of asking all students to complete a high school requirement in middle school, the majority agreed that students should begin working on a high school and beyond plan in middle school. The majority also agreed that the state should establish guidelines for the culminating project to provide consistency across districts.

Stakeholders disagreed on the most effective strategies to accomplish those ends. Concerns centered on implementation issues: funding; flexibility to adjust requirements, particularly for certain groups of students (those failing classes, English language learners, International

Baccalaureate candidates); the impact of increased requirements on local control; facilities implications of adding more science, arts, career and technical education (CTE); teacher shortages, particularly in math and science; capacity issues for small school districts, particularly in the areas of CTE, science, arts, world languages, and the need for more guidance counselors and a comprehensive educational and career guidance system.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

Vision and rationale. Since the inception of the meaningful high school diploma work, the Board has evolved a vision of what makes a diploma meaningful—a vision that is captured in the carefully-chosen words that describe the purpose of a diploma and in the principles guiding the CORE 24 proposal. The Board conceptualized the diploma as a social compact among students, parents, local school districts, the state and whatever institution or employer the graduate moves on to—a compact that says the graduate has acquired a particular set of knowledge and skills. Students need to be equipped with the knowledge and life skills to be productive, engaged citizens who can adapt to new challenges, opportunities and circumstances.

The central tenet of CORE 24 is preparation of *all* students for *all* options—whatever they choose to do after high school. Many students of high school age are not certain of their future path, and change their minds frequently. For this reason, students need to keep all options open so they do not foreclose possibilities too early.

CORE 24 will provide all students with a strong foundation of core subjects and the opportunity to personalize their course choices to pursue their individual postsecondary and career goals. While all students will be automatically enrolled in CORE 24's college and career ready requirements, students will have the option to pursue a more in-depth career or college emphasis based on a well-thought out high school and beyond plan. The high school and beyond plan, subject-area requirements, and culminating project are separate but related parts that together should comprise an integrated, goal-directed course of study that will provide sufficient breadth and depth to educate the whole student.

This approach contrasts with current policy. Students can satisfy the state minimum requirements today and be unprepared for any postsecondary choice—whether the choice is more education, training, or a job that makes a living wage. While districts augment the state requirements, in 2008, only one district (Mabton) required all students to meet the minimum four-year public college admissions *credit* requirements. Bellingham has established policy that will align with college entry requirements in 2014. If world language is taken out of the picture, 90 districts currently meet all other college admission *credit* requirements. It is not known how many of these districts meet the English content, math content and science lab requirements stipulated by the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Districts vary in the degree to which they can provide individual advising, and students vary in the degree to which they have access to informed adult guidance. A strong, coherent set of graduation requirements will help address these issues.

Guiding principles. The Board’s proposed graduation requirements policy framework is based on the following principles:

- **Equip everyone.** Prepare all students for life after high school—in gainful employment, an apprenticeship, or postsecondary education
- **Expect more.** Align requirements to meet the increased expectations of the 21st century workforce.
- **Provide flexibility.** Allow students to customize their education, creating relevance to their interests.
- **Give focus.** Encourage students to align course work to achieve their future career goals.
- **Plan ahead.** Emphasize the High School and Beyond Plan to offer students personalized guidance to prepare them for work, postsecondary education or both
- **Start early.** Prepare students to enter high school and create opportunities to meet high school graduation requirements in middle school.

Credits. Although subjects are “counted” through credits, credits are proxies for learning. Credits in Washington can be earned in two ways¹⁵:

- Achievement demonstrated and assessed through 150 hours of instruction
- Achievement demonstrated and assessed through competencies established through local district policies

Washington has established competencies for most subjects and grades through essential academic learning requirements (EALRs) and grade level expectations (GLEs). By defining high school credit through both competencies and seat-time, and by recognizing each approach as equally viable in the purpose of the diploma, the Board strongly encourages districts to pursue both strategies to help students meet their educational goals and the state’s requirements with greater flexibility.¹⁶

In this policy framework, specific credit recommendations per subject are based on a review of other states’ requirements, local district requirements, recommendations of stakeholders, review of research, public four-year admissions requirements, and legislative direction.

¹⁵ WAC 180-51-050.

¹⁶ Other state policies recognize competencies, as well. The Higher Education Coordinating Board has established minimum college admission standards or College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs) that provide a means for math and English competencies to be recognized when students achieve proficiency on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). Proficiency on the reading WASL satisfies the first two CADR credits of English; proficiency on the math WASL satisfies the first two CADR credits of math (algebra I and geometry, or integrated math I and II).

CORE 24 Graduation Requirements Policy Framework

The CORE 24 Graduation Requirements Policy Framework consists of a set of subject-area requirements, a culminating project and a high school and beyond plan. Implicit in all of the requirements are competencies defined by the state’s essential academic learning requirements, grade level expectations, basic education goals, program standards (e.g., career and technical education), and district-determined policies.

The following table contrasts the CORE 24 requirements with current graduation requirements and minimum public four-year college requirements. Comparisons to the Higher Education Coordinating Board’s (HECB) minimum admissions requirements are provided because they represent the highest set of codified requirements students would need to meet in order to keep all of their postsecondary options open, including satisfying the minimum entrance requirements of a four-year public Washington college or university. All students would be enrolled in the CORE 24 requirements unless they chose a career emphasis. Students pursuing a career emphasis could substitute other courses for world language and would not be required to take a math credit in their senior year.

CORE 24 Graduation Requirements Policy Framework

Subject	Current Reqs.	HECB Minimum	CORE 24	CORE 24 Notes
English	3.0	4	4.0	
Math	2.0	3 (through Algebra II and in senior year)	3.0 (math or math-based quantitative course in senior year)	Students pursuing a “career emphasis” may <i>elect</i> to take, but are not required to take, a math credit in their senior year.
Science	2.0 (1 lab)	2 (2 lab)	3.0 (2 lab)	
Social Studies	2.5	3	3.0	
Arts	1.0	1	2.0	
Fitness	2.0	0	1.5	
Health		0	.5	
Career Concentration	1.0 (Occ Ed)	0	3.0	Students must complete a CTE program of study <u>or</u> a course sequence which helps a student prepare for their intended postsecondary studies or career field.
World Language	0	2	2.0	Students pursuing “career emphasis” requirements may substitute other courses for world language
Electives	5.5	0	2.0	Students pursuing “career emphasis” requirements will have 4 elective credits if they waive the world language credits
Culminating Project	Yes	No	Yes	
High School and Beyond Plan	Yes	No	Yes	
Total	19	15	24	

Revision based on public input. The Board conducted a work session on July 14, 2008 to consider three revisions to the CORE 24 framework that responded in different ways to concerns that greater flexibility was needed to address struggling students, system capacity, and personalization for students with focused interests in distinct subject areas. Twelve members attended the meeting. After a lengthy discussion and input from advisors, the majority of Board members indicated that they preferred the version that is presented above, with a few suggesting that a 22-credit option might also be considered. In this version, the Board broadened the career and technical requirement contained in the original CORE proposal to a “career concentration.” A career concentration includes, but is not limited to a career and technical education (CTE) program of study, and could be a course sequence that helps students prepare for their intended postsecondary studies or career field. This change creates more flexibility and provides room in a student’s schedule to pursue interests more intently. It also explicitly addresses issues raised about possible unintended negative consequences for students required to take three credits of CTE in districts with limited or no CTE options.

Current statutes and rules, and pending rules provide additional flexibility:

- A third credit of math other than Algebra II can be elected, per new SBE rule, once adopted.
- Course equivalencies can be substituted per district policy¹⁷.
- Students can earn credit in middle school for world language or math per statute¹⁸ and HECB policy¹⁹.
- Students can earn competency-based credit, per rule.²⁰
- Physical education can be waived per statute²¹

Following are examples of ways students could configure the requirements to focus on arts, science/mathematics/technology, or skills center-based CTE.

¹⁷ RCW 28A.230.097

¹⁸ RCW 28A.230.090

¹⁹ <http://www.hecb.wa.gov/research/issues/documents/MCASCADRGuidelineBinder.pdf>

²⁰ WAC 180-51-050

²¹ RCW 28A.250.250

Examples of Ways Students Could Use CORE 24 to Explore Their Interests

Arts Focus

Subject	CORE 24	CORE 24 Notes
English	4.0	
Math	3.0	
Science	3.0	
Social Studies	3.0	
Arts	7.0	Student uses 2 electives plus 3 credits of career concentration to enhance the 2 arts requirements to pursue interests in dance, theater, music, and visual arts
World Language	2.0	
Fitness	1.5	
Health	.5	
Career Concentration	0.0	
Electives	0.0	
Culminating Project	Yes	
High School and Beyond Plan	Yes	
Total	24	

Skills Center Focus

Subject	CORE 24	CORE 24 Notes
English	4.0	
Math	3.0	
Science	3.0	
Social Studies	3.0	
Arts	2.0	
World Language	0.0	
Fitness	1.5	
Health	.5	
Career Concentration	7.0	Student uses 4 electives to expand the 3 career concentration requirements to study at a skills center
Electives	0	
Culminating Project	Yes	
High School and Beyond Plan	Yes	
Total	24	

Science, Math, Engineering and Technology Focus

Subject	CORE 24	CORE 24 Notes
English	4.0	
Math	4.0	Student uses 2 electives to increase science and math credits plus 3 career concentration credits to pursue interests in technology
Science	4.0	
Social Studies	3.0	
Arts	2.0	
World Language	2.0	
Fitness	1.5	
Health	.5	
Career Concentration	3.0	
Electives	0	
Culminating Project	Yes	
High School and Beyond Plan	Yes	
Total	24	

Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan

The culminating project and high school and beyond plan became graduation requirements for the first time in 2008. The Board reviewed the respective rules and guidelines, heard presentations from three school districts, and studied perspectives and information provided by 145 (of 246) districts with high schools that responded to a Board request for feedback. Because each district has developed locally the criteria for satisfactory completion of these requirements, there is considerable variation in what students are expected to do, and when they are expected to begin work on the requirements. The Board will maintain both requirements, but may consider modifications if recommended by the Board's implementation advisors. The Board intends at a minimum to require that the high school and beyond plan will begin in middle school.

Implementation

Considerable support has been expressed for the basic premise of the CORE 24 graduation requirements policy framework: preparing all students for postsecondary education, the 21st century workplace, and citizenship. At the same time, public outreach has helped to identify significant implementation issues that will need to be addressed in order to move this graduation requirements policy framework forward. The Board plans to address these issues in the coming months with the assistance of an implementation task force comprised primarily but not exclusively of education practitioners and stakeholders.

Following is a list of the issues raised and the Board's response.

Issue	Response
Funding	The Board will make implementation of the CORE 24 Graduation Requirements Policy Framework contingent on funding, and will advocate for funding during the 2009 legislative session.
System Capacity	Phase in the requirements beginning with the class of 2013, and becoming fully implemented with the class of 2016
Flexibility	Establish an implementation task force consisting primarily of education practitioners to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend ways to build more flexibility into the requirements than what is currently provided through rule and statute, including but not limited to: ways to operationalize competency-based methods of meeting graduation requirements, ways to assist struggling students with credit retrieval and advancing their skills to grade level, and other strategies • Develop a workable phase-in plan • Provide regular feedback to the Board
Facilities	Continue (and expand) collection of data from districts about the specialized classroom facilities needs required to provide more science (including a second lab), arts, and CTE.
Teacher Supply	Work with the Washington Education Association, Professional Educator Standards Board, Higher Education

Issue	Response
	Coordinating Board, and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges to explore strategies for addressing teacher shortages
Capacity in small districts	Work with state leadership in administrative (WASA, WSSDA, and ASWP) and subject area (CTE, arts, science, world languages) capacities to consider strategies to address the increased credit requirements on small districts
Local control	Acknowledge Washington's strong tradition of local control by affirming the role of districts in determining local credits, culminating project, and high school and beyond plan guidelines, and develop modifications to the culminating project and high school and beyond plan in consultation with implementation advisors
Need for a comprehensive education and career guidance system	Advocate with the legislature for a funded, comprehensive education and career guidance system

EXPECTED ACTIONS (Underlining reflects changes made at the Board Meeting on July 24, 2008)

In order to move forward on the CORE 24 Graduation Requirements Policy Framework in time to shape a legislative strategy and provide input to the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance, the following actions are proposed for adoption by the Board:

1. Motion to establish a the CORE 24 Graduation Requirements Policy Framework (per the attached 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. Motion to maintain the culminating project and high school and beyond plan as graduation requirements, with modifications developed in consultation with the Board's implementation advisors. Begin the high school and beyond plan in middle school.
3. Motion to direct staff to establish an implementation task force to provide regular feedback and make recommendations to the Board by June 2009 to address implementation issues identified through public outreach and cited in the larger paper. These include but are not limited to:
 - a. An implementation schedule that prioritizes phase-in or 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 exploration courses as well as career concentration options
 - f. Scheduling approaches to 24 credits that can meet the required 150 instructional hours

4. Motion to 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, ~~advocate for funding for a six-period high school day,~~ a comprehensive education and career guidance system, and support for students who need additional help to meet the requirements. The Board will direct staff to prepare a funding requires for the 2009-2011 biennium to begin implementation of CORE 24.

Opening Doors with Core 24

What is Core 24? Core 24 is the new set of draft credit requirements for high school graduation being considered by the Washington State Board of Education. Core 24 will require students to develop a plan for their future and choose classes to help them achieve their goals. Core 24 requirements will provide students with a strong academic foundation, with flexibility that will prepare them for whatever path they choose—whether that’s the workforce, an apprenticeship in the trades, or a community or four-year college.

EQUIP EVERYONE Prepare ALL students for life after high school—in gainful employment, an apprenticeship or postsecondary education.

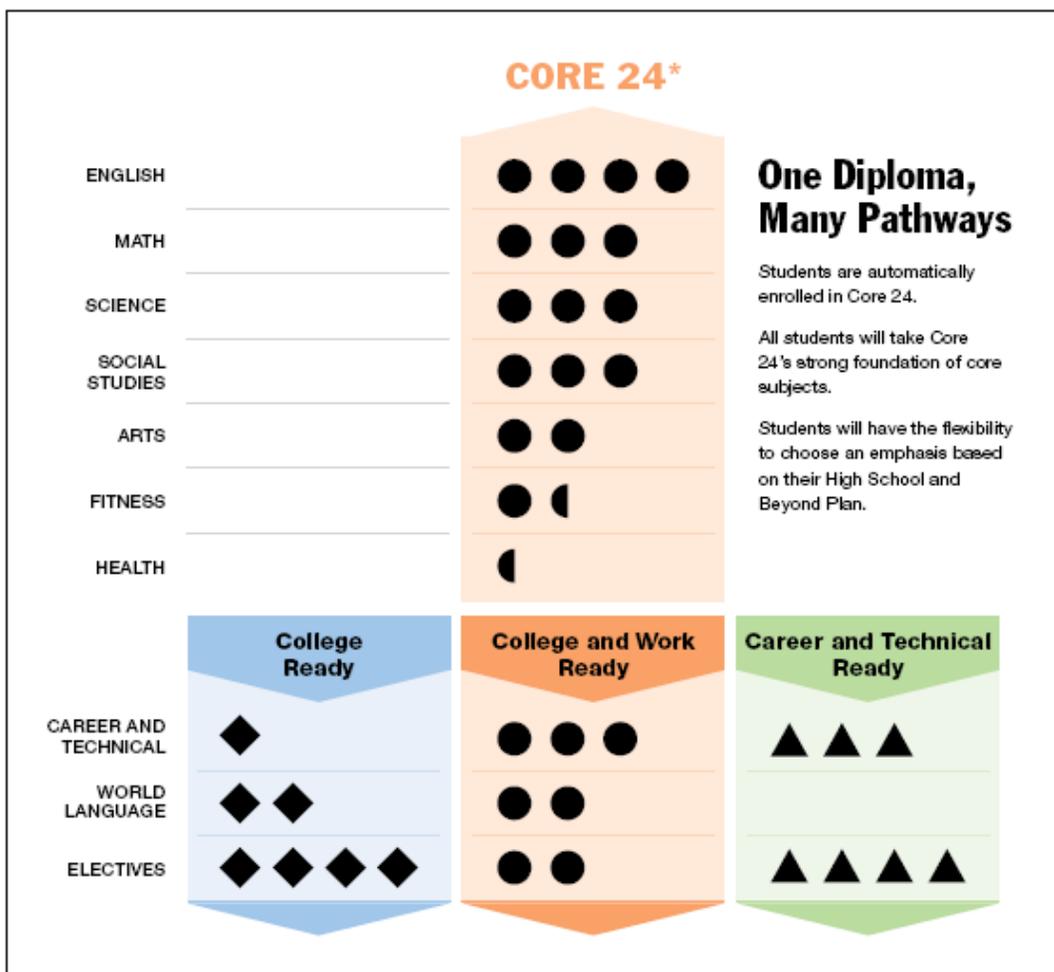
EXPECT MORE Align requirements to meet the increased expectations of the 21st century workforce.

PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY Allow student to customize their education, creating relevance to their interests.

GIVE FOCUS Encourage students to align course work to achieve their future career goals.

PLAN AHEAD Emphasize the High School and Beyond Plan to offer students personalized guidance to prepare them for work, postsecondary education, or both.

START EARLY Prepare students to enter high school and create opportunities to meet high school graduation requirements in middle school.



*** NOTES:**

1. Each symbol (◆, ●, ▲) represents one credit.
2. Where appropriate, CTE equivalent courses may be substituted.
3. One math credit must be taken in the senior year.
4. Some requirements (example: math, arts, world language) may begin to be satisfied in middle school.
5. One science lab credit must be an algebra-based lab.
6. Fitness credits can be waived and an equivalent experience substituted.

Outreach meetings SBE conducted March 2008 – July 11, 2008

Community meetings were held in Spokane, Yakima and Seattle in early June.

Board members and staff met individually with the following groups:

Alliance for Education
Association of Washington School Principals
Bilingual Education Advisory Committee
Campana Quetzal
Central Valley School District
City of Seattle Office for Education
College Success Foundation
Communities and Parents for Public Schools
Education First Consulting
High School Option Consortium meeting
Higher Education Coordinating Board
Hispanic Commission
League of Education Voters
Perkins Coie LLP
Private School Advisory Committee
Rotary: Sequim Noon Rotary, Sequim Sunrise Rotary, Port Townsend Rotary
Seattle School Board
The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Thurston County Chamber of Commerce
Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle
Washington Association for Career and Technical Education
Washington Association for Learning Alternatives
Washington Association of School Administrators
Washington Council for High School/College Relations
Washington State Bar Association subcommittee
Washington State Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Washington State PTA
Washington State School Directors Association
Washington Women's Employment and Education

Outreach meetings scheduled to be held July 14th-21st include:

One America (Formerly HateFreeZone)
Greater Spokane Incorporated
Stand for Children
Washington Association of Student Councils
Washington Workforce Association
Workforce Training Board