

GROUP: _____

Making CORE 24 Work For All Students

ITF Board Charge: Make recommendations about the policy flexibility needed to make CORE 24 work for all students, with particular attention to ways to assist struggling students with credit retrieval and advancing their skills to grade level.

Issues: While providing for the opportunity to earn 24 credits to graduate, some students will:

1. Fail courses.
2. Need schedules that include support classes—ESL, AVID, content-specific supplements, etc.
3. Be in private schools where 4 credits of religion are required.
4. Earn International Baccalaureate diplomas.
5. Want to earn more than 24 credits.
6. Not want to earn credits in some of the requirements.
7. Want to attend skills centers and comprehensive high schools.
8. Enter the system in their junior or senior year.
9. Enter the system unprepared for high school level work.
10. Enroll in alternative learning experiences.
11. Pursue Running Start/Tech Prep
12. Be on IEPs.
13. Other?

Flexibility is built into CORE 24 requirements through:

- Statutes that
 - create opportunities to earn credits through CTE course-equivalents and apply them to graduation.
 - create opportunities to earn credits in middle school.
 - enable districts to waive physical education graduation requirements.
- WACs that
 - enable districts, under limited circumstances, to waive WA State History graduation requirements.
 - define procedures for granting high school graduation credits for students with special educational needs
 - give students the option of electing a different third credit of math.
- CORE 24 career pathway that would waive world language, and the senior year quantitative requirement for students pursuing that pathway

Your task: Thinking “inside the box” and “outside the box,” what state-level policy flexibility is needed to make CORE 24 work for all students?

**Inside the Box: 6 Periods Per Day x 4 Years
@ 150 hours Per Credit
or Competency**

Year 1						
Year 2						
Year 3						
Year 4						

Outside the Box: Zero Hour Periods, Extended Days, Requirements Met in Middle School, Online Learning, Competency-based Learning, Block Schedules, “Two for One” Policies, etc



Possible "Out of the Box" State-Level Policies

1. The ITF has identified the possibility of creating a new "2 for 1" policy that would enable students to earn 1 credit and satisfy 2 requirements when taking a CTE course that has been designated by the district to be equivalent to a core academic course: One credit is recorded on the transcript, while two graduation requirements are "checked off" as having been met. This policy would not decrease the total number of credits required—the student must still earn 24 credits—but would increase flexibility by enabling a student to choose an elective credit. The ITF also talked about limiting students to one "two for one" opportunity.

Based on the feedback you have gathered to date, what are you thinking now about this policy?

Advantages	Disadvantages	New Thoughts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides greater flexibility for students to build other courses into their schedules • Provides greater flexibility for students in skills centers • Will encourage districts to establish course equivalencies, and the process of collaboration among teachers to establish equivalencies could contribute to professional learning communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Without clear state parameters, the policy could be interpreted inconsistently across districts and make it difficult for students to transfer credits across schools • Might require changes to standardized transcript 	

Under what circumstances would you apply the "2 for 1" policy to two academic courses?

2. The ITF has discussed the possibility of eliminating the time-based requirement for a credit as a way to create more flexibility within a 24-credit requirement. Based on the feedback you have gathered to date, what are you thinking now about this policy?

Advantages	Disadvantages	New Thoughts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent with the state's direction toward standards-based learning • Does not artificially connect learning to time • Creates more flexibility for districts to focus on student-centered learning that will enable students to progress at their own rates • Eliminates existing inconsistencies created by differences in schedules; evidence suggests that the time-based requirement varies across districts, depending on the type of schedule the schools are following, and is not being met by all districts • Eliminates inconsistencies in the ways districts define and count "instructional hours" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be viewed as less objective, measurable and easy to understand • Lacks the power of a time-based requirement to act as an equalizer—a form of standardization that reduces the likelihood that districts will cut corners • Creates no minimum, measurable threshold of expectation 	

Any decrease in the number of hours needed for a credit—much less the elimination of the time-based requirement completely—may be viewed unfavorably by some stakeholders who may see it as decreasing teacher-student contact time, or watering down the meaning of a credit. If that argument has merit, why? How would you counter it?

Why the argument has merit:

How we would counter it:

3. Under current statute and WAC, flexibility to waive credit is very limited and proscribed. Still, the SBE transcript study showed that despite those limitations, some 2008 students graduated without having met minimum state-mandated graduation requirements for which no waiver exists. Would you recommend that local administrators be authorized to waive credit? If so, under what circumstances would you allow those waivers to occur, and what parameters would you put around them? Take a position and describe the advantages/disadvantages of your perspective.

___ No, we would not recommend that state policy authorize local administrators to waive state-mandated graduation requirements.

___ Yes, we would recommend that state policy authorize local administrators to waive state-mandated graduation requirements, under these conditions:

Advantages	Disadvantages

4. Should students pursuing an International Baccalaureate diploma (“full IB” students) be required to meet state-mandated graduation requirements? (IB is a two-year (junior/senior) educational program designed to provide “an internationally accepted qualification for entry into higher education.” Students take 6 IB courses, pass six exams, and write an extended essay. In 2008, 339 Washington students graduated with an IB diploma.). Take a position and describe the advantages/disadvantages to your perspective.

___No, we would not recommend that state policy authorize local administrators to waive state-mandated graduation requirements for students pursuing an IB diploma.

___Yes, we would recommend that state policy authorize local administrators to waive state-mandated graduation requirements for students pursuing an IB diploma, under these conditions:

Advantages	Disadvantages

5. Write Your Own! What policy modifications would you make to assure that all students could meet CORE 24, thinking particularly about policies that would assist students with credit retrieval and advancing their skills to grade level.

Recommendation:

Advantages	Disadvantages