The Washington State Board of Education

Governance | Accountability | Achievement | Oversight | Career & College Readiness

Title:	**An Analysis of Current District Graduation Requirements**	
As Related To:	☐ Goal One: Effective and accountable P-13 governance. ☐ Goal Two: Comprehensive statewide K-12 accountability. ☐ Goal Three: Closing achievement gap.	☐ Goal Four: Strategic oversight of the K-12 system. ☒ Goal Five: Career and college readiness for all students. ☐ Other
Relevant To Board Roles:	☒ Policy Leadership ☒ System Oversight ☐ Advocacy	☐ Communication ☐ Convening and Facilitating
Policy Considerations / Key Questions:	An analysis of current district graduation requirements is presented to inform implementation of the 24-credit Career- and College-Ready Graduation Requirements.	
Possible Board Action:	☒ Review ☐ Adopt ☐ Approve ☐ Other	
Materials Included in Packet:	☒ Memo ☐ Graphs / Graphics ☐ Third-Party Materials ☒ PowerPoint	
Synopsis:	• The average number of total credits currently required by districts is 23.8 • Large districts (with enrollments over 10,000 students) require 21 to 23 credits, while small districts vary between 20 credits and 31 credits • In general, districts seem on track to offer Career- and College-Ready credits in English, social studies and math • In world language, science and arts: o One arts credit, and both world language credits are flexible credits in the Career- and College-Ready framework o Science may require the most significant system change since it is part of the 17 core credits ▪ 20% of districts already require 3 or more credits of science to graduate ▪ These districts are mostly small, but include some larger districts ▪ The graduation rate for districts that require 3 or more credits of science is higher on average than districts that require only 2 credits of science	

AN ANALYSIS OF CURRENT DISTRICT GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Policy Consideration

An analysis of current district graduation requirements is presented here to inform implementation of the 24-credit Career- and College-Ready Graduation Requirements. The Career- and College-Ready Graduation Requirements have been approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) but have not yet been implemented pending Legislative approval and funding.

Summary

Size Distribution of Districts in Washington State

When data, such as graduation requirements, is broken out by percent of districts relative to the total number of districts, it is important to remember there is a preponderance of small districts in Washington. Statewide graduation requirements may affect large districts and small districts differently.

- Most districts in Washington are small; 155 (62%) of 250 K-12 districts have 2,500 students enrolled or fewer. See Figure 1 below.
- Most students (61% statewide) attend school in medium to large districts with total enrollments of 2,500 to 20,000 students. See Figure 2 below.
- Seattle School District is by far the largest district, with over 49,000 students and nearly twice the total enrollment of students as the next largest district; Seattle students comprise five percent of students statewide.

Figure 1 --Size Distribution of Districts in Washington

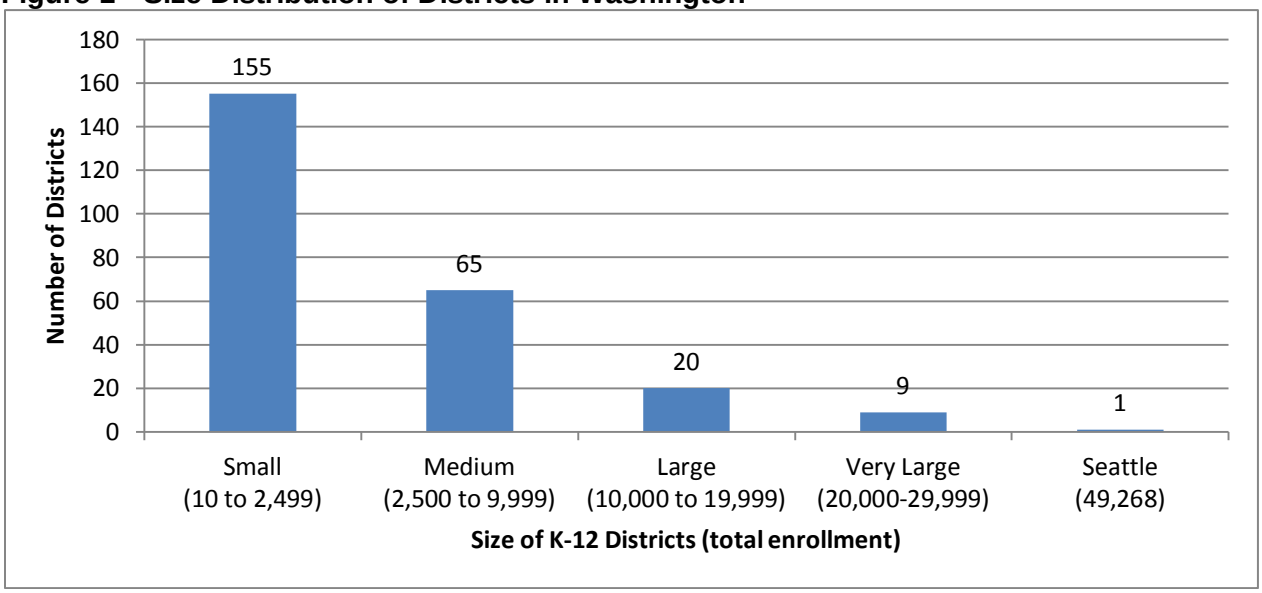
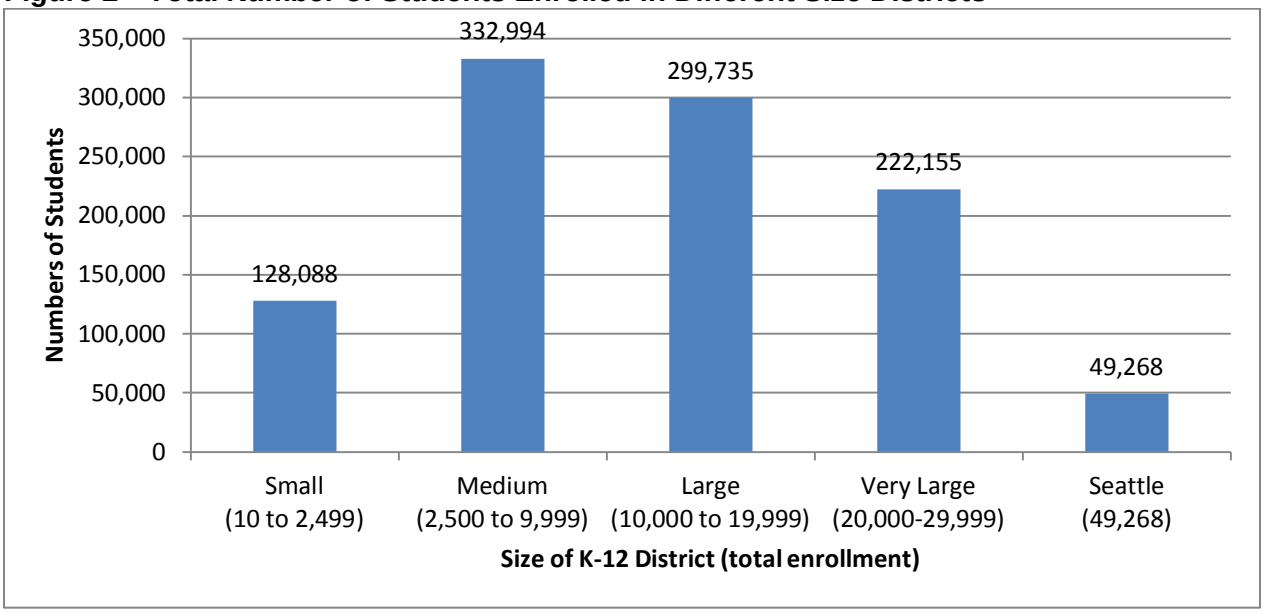


Figure 2—Total Number of Students Enrolled in Different Size Districts



Graduation Requirements

Total Credits
Supporting a meaningful high school experience for all students throughout their high school years is an important concern of the SBE. The 2008 SBE transcript study indicated that a substantial number (35%) of students were taking less than a full load of classes during their senior year. The 24-credit Career- and College-Ready Graduation Requirement framework of 17 core credits and 7 flexible credits, addressed this concern.

Each fall, districts send district graduation requirement survey information to the SBE when they submit their Basic Education compliance. This information indicates that for the Class of 2013:

- The average number of credits currently required by districts is 23.8
- 103, or 41% of districts, require 24 credits or more to graduate
- 224, or 89.6% of districts, require 22 credits or more to graduate
- Large to very large districts (with enrollments of over 10,000 students) require 21 to 23 credits, while small districts vary widely between 20 credits and 31 total credits required for graduation

Classes of 2013 to 2015
Three credits of mathematics were adopted as a statewide graduation requirement for the Class of 2013 (WAC 180-51-066). All districts have increased graduation requirements in mathematics to 3 credits (see Table 1).

Class of 2016 and Beyond
With the adoption of WAC 180-51-067, the SBE made modifications within the 20 credit framework and established 4 credits of English and 3 credits of social studies as statewide graduation requirements for the Class of 2016, an increase of 1 credit of English and .5 credits of social studies from previous statewide graduation requirements. These changes are part of the 24-credit Career- and College-Ready Graduation Requirements that were determined to

have no fiscal impact on districts. Additional changes that would fully implement the 24-credit framework await Legislative funding and approval.

Most districts (84%) have already implemented these changes in English and social studies for the Class of 2013, according to the 2012 Basic Education compliance survey. WAC 180-51-067 also allowed districts to request an automatic extension of 2 years to implementing these graduation requirements (extending the implementation from the Class of 2016 to the Class of 2018), and 21 districts (8%) of districts made the request. Eight percent of districts have neither requested an extension nor increased their graduation requirements. The SBE will check on the progress of these districts in the 2013 graduation requirement survey.

Table 1—English, Social Studies and Math

Subject	College- and Career-Ready Graduation Requirements, Class of 2016	Percent of Districts meeting or exceeding the state requirement for the Class of 2013	Percent of Districts requesting 2-year extensions
English	4	84 %	8 %
Social Studies	3	84 %	8 %
Math	3 (implemented for the Class of 2013)	100 %	(no extension was offered for the increase in the math graduation requirement, implemented for the Class of 2013)

Career- and College-Ready Graduation Requirements
Additional requirements that are part of the Career- and College-Ready Graduation Requirements include 2 credits of world language, 3 credits of science (including 2 laboratory credits), and 2 credits of arts. One of the arts credits and both the world language credits would be flexible credits, credits that could be substituted according to a student's High School and Beyond Plan. The 3 credits of science would be part of the 17 required credits that student could not substitute.

Table 2—World Language, Science and Arts

Subject	Requirements for Class of 2016	College- and Career-Ready Graduation Requirements	Percent of students who meet Career- and College-Ready Requirements, 2008 transcript study
World Language	0	2	69.5 %
Science	2 (including 1 lab credit)	3 (including 2 lab credits)	54.6 %
Arts	1	2	39.7 %

In 2008, the SBE commissioned a transcript study to examine what classes high school students were actually taking. Table 2 shows the percent of students from that study that were meeting or exceeding the Career- and College-Ready Graduation Requirements. Although few districts currently require world language, nearly 70% of students statewide take 2 credits or more in world language anyway. The impact on districts of establishing a new graduation requirement in world languages is mitigated by districts already providing this opportunity for many of their students. In the Career- and College-Ready framework, the impact of the world languages requirement would be further mitigated in that it is flexible credit that students may substitute if other classes suit their education and career plans, as expressed in their High School and Beyond Plan.

Science

Because the science requirement of the Career- and College-Ready Graduation Requirements is one of the core 17 credits that may not be substituted by students, implementing this requirement may have a significant impact on the system. Table 3, below, lists districts that require 3 or more science credits for graduation.

According to information submitted by districts in the graduation requirements survey:

- 46 districts (19% of districts) require 3 credits of science
- 3 districts (1% of all districts) require 4 credits of science
- 1,692 is the average size of districts that require 3 or 4 credits of science
- The largest district to require 3 credits of science is Kent School Districts, with a total enrollment 27,091 in 2011-2012, and the smallest district to require 3 credits is Skykomish, with an total enrollment of 46
- Nearly 83,000 are enrolled in districts that require 3 or more credits of science, which comprises 8% of students statewide

On average for 2011, districts that require 3 or more credits of science have a slightly higher graduation rate than districts that require only 2 credits of science:

- The 4 year graduation rate for districts that have 3 or 4 credits of science averages 82.8%
- The average of districts that require 2 credits of science is 80.9%

Action

None.

Table 3—Districts With 3 or More Credits of Science Required for Graduation

District	Total Enrollment, 2011-12	% Free/ Reduced lunch 2011-12	4-year Graduation Rate, Class of 2011
Almira School District	92	41.3	
Brewster School District	878	85.16	67.6
Cashmere School District	1,485	48.58	86.2
Castle Rock School District	1,368	52.26	77.7
Chewelah School District	871	64.73	75.7
Cle Elum-Roslyn School District	946	41.5	62.3
Coulee-Hartline School District	190	39.25	96.2
Davenport School District	566	54.58	84.6
East Valley School District (Spokane)	4,572	52.38	91.7
Ferndale School District	5,194	51.95	72
Freeman School District	938	21.46	93.2
Harrington School District	112	58.56	91.7
Highland School District	1,237	75.6	83.1
Hockinson School District	1,950	23.47	97.9
Inchelium School District	211	75.12	66.7
Kalama School District	1,004	38.66	95.8
Kent School District KM	27,091	51.87	60.8
Klickitat School District	102	100	75
La Center School District	1,577	30.14	90.6
Lopez School District	207	51.43	100
Lyle School District	314	99.66	68.8
Mary M Knight School District	181	52.84	83.3
Meridian School District	2,243	26.92	83.6
Mossyrock School District	571	48.72	92.6
Mount Baker School District	1,999	56.65	77
North Mason School District	2,170	47.7	80.1
Northport School District	248	60.91	68.4
Onalaska School District	867	56.65	81.1
Orcas Island School District	683	34.91	78
Pateros School District	291	74.74	92.6
Pe Ell School District	294	65.77	96.4
Quilcene School District	302	33.77	93.3
Quillayute Valley School District	3,220	25.14	72.6
Rainier School District	835	48.93	91.1
Raymond School District	930	47.29	64.3
Reardan-Edwall School District	638	39.72	89.1
Ridgefield School District	2,220	33.52	89.4
Rochester School District	2,173	52.37	79.7
Royal School District	1,582	99.74	78
San Juan Island School District	865	39.35	91.8
Skykomish School District	46	87.8	100
Thorp School District	130	50.76	100
Trout Lake School District	213	0	71.4
Valley School District	1,393	12.95	
Waitsburg School District	326	39.75	96.7
Warden School District	987	79.17	69.4
West Valley School District (Yakima)	4,867	41.87	81.7
Willapa Valley School District	317	50.63	78.3
Zillah School District	1,391	55.52	96.8