



2021 | Report Summary

Prepared by the Washington State Board of Education

Photo: students from Maritime HS (Highline Public Schools).



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Executive Summary

Our education system reflects our larger world where for too long, structural inequities have gone unaddressed, leading to generations of underserved students not receiving the high-quality education they deserve. Although there are students who do well in our current system, many of them are not thriving. The Mastery-based Learning Work Group members believe that Washington has an imperative to shift the focus of our education system from an industrial model that sorts students to one that intentionally supports every student in developing the range of dynamic skills we want to see in each graduate of our public K-12 system.

Washington State's Profile of a Graduate represents a shift in the focus of our system. We recognize that many educators are already helping students to cultivate the skills laid out in the Profile. The larger community, students, educators, and families all contribute to the effort to support our students growing and developing as human beings and learners. Our collective "why" calls for a transformation of our education system to close both the opportunity gap and the resulting achievement gap. The Work Group believes that the Profile of a Graduate should serve as the overarching vision for the entire K-12 education system moving forward—a vision that will help Washington State achieve the goals of basic education and that schools, families, and communities will embrace because they helped develop it.

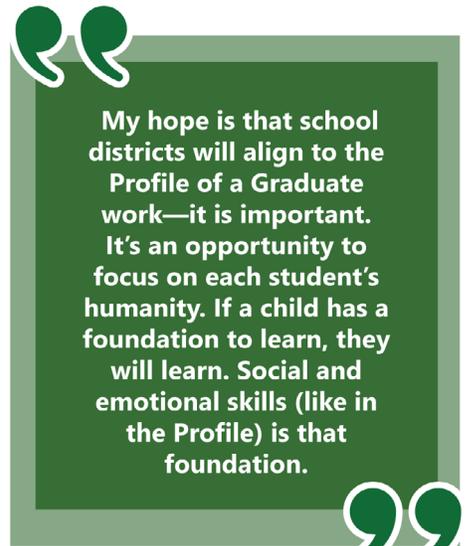
Washington is taking steps to increase capacity for a more personalized learning system. The Work Group has been reexamining what students should know and be able to do, and how students demonstrate their knowledge and skills. The Profile of a Graduate will be the bridge between the two routes to a diploma (credit-based and mastery-based). It would convey that every student is working toward meeting the same standards. The Profile will set the vision for our expectations of students, whether they attend a traditional program, or mastery-based school, or both during their educational journey.

When I left high school, I felt unprepared for the world--not because I didn't take calculus, but because I didn't know how to do taxes or how to apply math to my pacheck. In high school, underused knowledge was prioritized when practical knowledge should have been,

Former WA student

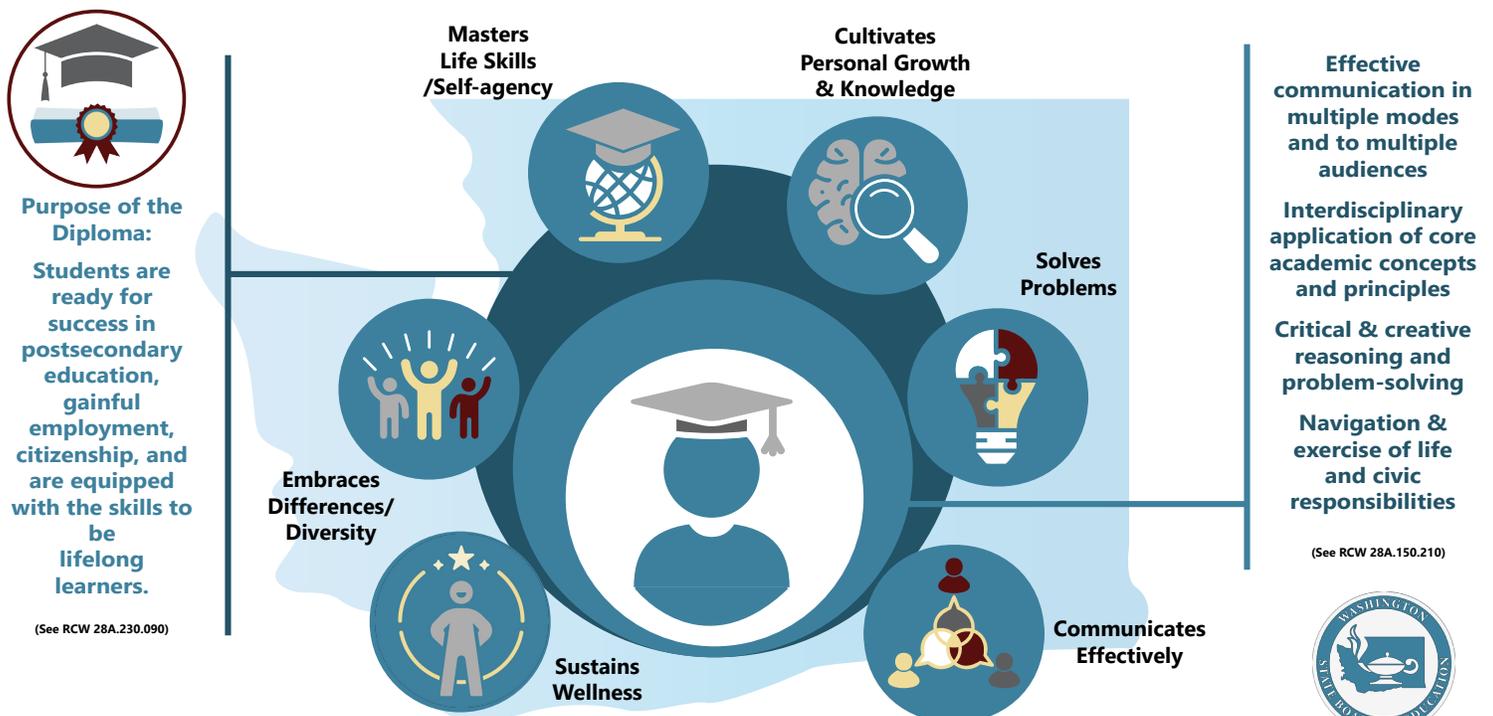
The Work Group is proposing a Profile of a Graduate that reflects a wide range of input from stakeholders and lessons learned from other states and communities. Our recommendations align to the charges (in bold) assigned to the Work Group in 2021 through SSB 5249:

- 1. Consult with students, families, and educators who have been underserved by the education system (page 12 in full report):** Feedback was solicited through a variety of methods to inform development of the Profile of a Graduate. The themes from the feedback were generally consistent across methods and stakeholder groups. For instance, what students shared about what they need regarding soft skills was very similar to what employers shared
- 2. Consult with representatives from postsecondary education and training programs, labor, and industry (page 23 in full report):** Stakeholders appreciated the goals of the Work Group to refocus the education system on helping students prepare for their post-secondary goals by developing their transferrable skills. They particularly emphasized that students need cultural competency skills so they can work effectively with people from all backgrounds.
- 3. Develop the Washington State Profile of a Graduate (page 24 in full report):** We do not believe implementation of the Profile should just be one more thing school districts are taking on in the midst of responding to the coronavirus pandemic. Rather, the Profile should serve as the North Star for a district, to help design educational experiences that support every student in attaining the skills they will need in their journey after high school, for success in postsecondary education, careers, citizenship, and to enable lifelong learning.



Parent from S. King County

Washington State | Profile of a Graduate



(See RCW 28A.150.210)



a. A group of K-12 educators and business and community representatives should be convened to develop sample tools and rubrics for the Profile to ease the burden on schools regarding implementation. These rubrics and other tools will help tangibly explain to educators, students, and families how Washington's Profile of a Graduate skills can be demonstrated by students.

b. The High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) will be invaluable as a tool for helping each student track their growth in the Profile of a Graduate characteristics and focus on what skills they need to develop for their personal goals post high school. To maximize the potential of the HSBP in supporting student learning and the Profile of a Graduate, the Work Group recommends additional work happen at the state level to make the HSBP more uniform and equitable for students.

c. The Work Group recommends the SBE review the Profile every ten years to ensure the skills still reflect the top needs of Washington's communities.



Highline Big Picture student at her internship site with an architect firm (Highline Public Schools)

Washington State | Profile of a Graduate



A Washington State graduate...

**Cultivates
Personal Growth
& Knowledge**



Shows confidence
Applies learning
Sets personally meaningful goals

**Solves
Problems**



Thinks critically
Demonstrates resilience
Embraces creativity

**Communicates
Effectively**



Works on a team
Collaborates
Navigates conflict

**Sustains
Wellness**



Cultivates physical and emotional well-being
Fosters empathy
Builds relationships

**Embraces
Differences/
Diversity**



Participates in community
Promotes global responsibility
Shows cultural competency

**Masters
Life Skills
/Self-agency**



Takes initiative
Understands financial and digital literacy
Accesses resources

4. Provide recommendations for supporting implementation of MBL (page 29 in full report):

a. The Work Group's [2020 report](#) explains that successful MBL implementation will require a variety of other policy changes and supports. We provide additional information and updated information where it is available in this report.

b. The Work Group believes the lessons learned through the MBL Collaborative grant project will be invaluable. While the SBE is seeking private funding to extend the effort, SBE will likely have continued requests for ongoing funding from the Legislature as we are able to demonstrate efficacy of the program. The Work Group believes this approach will more equitably serve students and has the potential for a high return on investment for the state.

c. The Work Group recommends that a standardized state format for a mastery transcript be developed. We want to balance the concerns regarding capacity of our higher education partners to evaluate mastery transcripts with the desire of MBL schools to move toward more equitable grading practices. We recommend a phase-in period for the adoption of the new mastery transcript, determined by SBE in consultation with higher education partners and other stakeholders.



Student and educator in Avanti's outdoor science classroom
(Olympia School District)

5. Submit the report on the Profile of a Graduate to the State Board of Education (page 40 in full report):

We believe SBE should consider a variety of issues in their work to align graduation requirements to the Profile, including development of a crosswalk between learning standards, credit requirements, and competencies based on the Profile. This will explain what skills we expect students to gain from each of the credit/subject area requirements.

The Work Group emphasizes that the implementation of the Profile must be done with an equity lens. Once implemented, the Profile should help educators and the system recognize and value what skills students bring to their education from their diverse cultures. This is our opportunity to radically transform our education system and change the foundation of our system by centering students, equity, inclusion, and access through Washington’s Profile of a Graduate.



Students from Maritime HS (Highline Public Schools) on Puget Sound excursion

Find the full report on the MBL Work Group web page at sbe.wa.gov/mbl.

Special thanks to Avanti High School (Olympia School District), Highline Big Picture High School (Highline Public Schools), Maritime High School (Highline Public Schools) for submitting photos representing mastery-based learning in action for this report.