

The Washington State Board of Education

Governance | Achievement | High School & College Preparation |
Math & Science | Effective Workforce

State Board of Education Spotlight

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Greetings!

The Washington State Board of Education (SBE) is proposing new career and college-ready high school graduation requirements.

Why?

Simply put - our current high school graduation requirements do not meet the expectations of careers, education, and citizenship.

Consider this:

- 45 states do a better job preparing students for college and careers.
- 42 states have better college participation rates from low-income families.
- 67 percent of Washington jobs will require some education beyond high school.
- 45 states require more English classes in high school.
- 39 states require more social studies classes in high school.
- 38 states require more science classes in high school.
- 54 of our graduates (from 2008) require remediation upon entering community or technical colleges.
- [Sources](#)

Clearly, what we are asking of our students is not enough.

And in our current economy, we must do all we can to ensure our graduates have every opportunity for success.

I hope you take the time to review our [graduation requirements overview webinar](#) and then provide feedback to SBE through our [online survey](#) (open through October 31, 2010).

SBE will review all suggestions and then finalize and adopt the new graduation requirements at the [November 9-10 meeting](#).

The Legislature has the opportunity to act on proposed SBE changes to the high school graduation requirements before SBE adopts its administrative rule. Changes that have a fiscal impact on school districts will have a fiscal analysis conducted by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Graduation requirements that have a fiscal impact change shall take effect only if formally authorized and funded by the Legislature. SBE is

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committed to no additional, unfunded mandates, and will develop its administrative rule based upon Legislative action in 2011.

In these tough economic times, there will be resistance to incurring any additional costs that are inherent in SBE's proposal. But the cost of inaction, as the numbers above demonstrate, is greater still. We cannot afford to let class after class graduate unprepared for the challenges that lie ahead in life, careers, and education.

The Board's proposal is designed to reverse that trend and get Washington students moving in the right direction.

Cheers!

Edie Harding

Proposed High School Graduation Requirements - Webinar

Our website now hosts a [video webinar](#) on SBE's proposed changes to the Washington State high school graduation requirements. Once you review the proposed changes, please complete the online [survey](#) (open through October 31, 2010). Your perspectives are important to us and will be taken into consideration prior to the final adoption of SBE's proposed high school graduation requirements at the [November 9-10, 2010, meeting](#).

You can find more information in our graduation requirements FAQ ([pdf](#)). If you still have a question, please [ask us!](#)

Background

SBE provisionally adopted the career and college-ready Washington State high school graduation requirements during the [September 14-15, 2010, Board meeting](#). The proposed graduation requirements result from three years of work by SBE members, the Core 24 Implementation Task Force (read the final Task Force report [here](#)), educational leaders, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders.

World Language Proficiency

In July 2010, SBE approved [a resolution](#) encouraging districts to develop and implement competency-based credit opportunities for students. The competency-based credit requires districts to have clear standards of what world-language knowledge and skills students must have to earn credit.

The competency-based credit provides greater flexibility for students, as well as honoring students' primary language. Districts encouraging world language competency-based credits create an environment where bilingualism is an advantage, allowing students who might not otherwise be on a path to college to get a head start.

To help districts with this endeavor, the [Washington State School Directors' Association](#) provides policy recommendations ([part one](#) / [part two](#)) for how districts can utilize competency-based credits for world language proficiency. In developing a world language competency-based credit system, districts must consider the following:

- Defining "world languages": What counts as a world language?
- Demonstrating competency: What skills should be assessed (reading, speaking, listening)? What is the form of the assessment?
- Determining credit and credit equivalencies: What level of performance merits credit?
- Offering assessment opportunities: Can a student try more than once? Where do the assessments take place?
- Paying for assessments: Who pays?
- Reporting results: What happens if a student meets standard?

More information on the world language proficiency credit is available on our [website](#).

Research - Charting the College Pathway

SBE provides research briefs to summarize education issues relevant to our [strategic plan](#). This month's research brief summarizes an [Institute of Education Sciences](#) (IES) report titled "[Helping Students Navigate the Path to College: What High Schools Can Do](#)."

The report provides suggestions for ways schools, districts, and policymakers can increase access to higher education for all students.

The report contends that college readiness begins with grade-level readiness. Students who are not performing at grade level will likely not be prepared for college-level work. Once caught up, students should be encouraged to take college-level coursework whenever possible. Students who do not start taking college-prep courses in the 9th grade are less likely to be academically prepared for college by the 12th grade. And at all secondary levels, students must also have adequate counseling and access to information on college admission requirements, costs, financial aid, housing, and more.

College may not be the pathway for every student, but it should remain a viable option for students.

To learn more about how schools can keep the college option open for students, we encourage you to read the research brief [here](#).

A Story of Success - Mercer Middle School

In the spring of 2010, [SBE](#) joined the [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#) in honoring [174 top-achieving schools](#) through the [Washington Achievement Awards](#).

This month, we are highlighting one such school: [Mercer Middle School](#) in the [Seattle School District](#). This spotlight of Mercer Middle School is the second in a series of SBE case studies focused on schools that are beating the odds.

Mercer Middle School, an ethnically diverse school with 75.4% free and reduced-price meals, was one of only 19 middle schools to win the [Overall Excellence Award](#) for 2009. They are working hard to close the academic achievement gap in science, math, reading, and writing.

Mercer Middle School's staff has aligned curriculum to state standards to ensure all students achieve at the highest levels. Mercer Middle School students are fortunate to have a principal who is a strong instructional leader and teachers who differentiate instruction and accelerate student growth.

Andhra Lutz, the Mercer Middle School Principal, has set a goal of creating "the first high poverty, high-performing middle school in Washington State."

One tenet of success at Mercer is a belief that every child can succeed, as long as the adults and the system can adapt to meet students' needs. The administration and staff at Mercer are well on their way to making that happen.

We encourage you to read more about Mercer Middle School on our [website](#).

Board Member Highlight - Kristina Mayer, Ed.D. - Port Townsend, Appointed

Kristina Mayer, Ed. D., is a specialist in the fields of philanthropy and education. She leads the [KLMayer Consulting Group](#), providing leadership and management strategies for nonprofit organizations and foundations. The firm is located in Port Townsend, Washington.

Dr. Mayer has degrees from Seattle University, Gonzaga University, and the Fielding Graduate Institute. Before launching her consulting career, she was a program officer for nearly a decade at both the Stuart Foundation and the Washington Mutual Foundation. Prior to that, she spent 20 years working in education as a school designer, teacher, and principal.

Dr. Mayer's professional accomplishments include developing the Jefferson County Community Foundation, spearheading the Washington Initiative for National Board Certification, and co-creating the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession. In addition, she has been an active member of many nonprofit organizations dedicated to improving education and supporting philanthropy. She holds emeritus memberships in Philanthropy Northwest, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and the Association of Washington School Principals. Dr. Mayer is a member of the National Network of Consultants to Grantmakers (NNCG).

Dr. Mayer is a seasoned world traveler. She often combines adventure travel, cultural learning, and the application of learning to professional practice. Her concern for the people she has met in developing countries led her to join several Giving Circles to increase economic opportunities in Nicaragua through the use of micro-lending programs and to improve safety at a floating hospital on Tonle Sap Lake in Cambodia. Close to home, she has helped to create a community endowment fund and leads an effort to build capacity in the nonprofit agencies in Jefferson County.

You can learn more about other Board members by visiting our [Board member roster](#).

Upcoming Board Meeting

[New Market Skills Center](#)
7299 New Market Street SW
Tumwater, WA 98501
360.570.4500

Meeting materials are available on our website prior to the meeting.

Email your thoughts and questions to SBE at sbe@k12.wa.us.