



Resolution to Approve Washington State Graduation Requirements: Career and College Ready

Adopted on November 10, 2010

WHEREAS, Our children are our state's future and our education system must prepare them now for the challenges of the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, All students deserve an excellent and equitable education; and

WHEREAS, We must join together to support students in our education system and to provide the resources and direction needed to help all students succeed in meeting their educational and career goals; and

WHEREAS, Washington's Basic Education Act provides direction by stating that school districts must provide instruction of sufficient quantity and give students the opportunity to complete graduation requirements that are intended to prepare them for postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship; and

WHEREAS, The State Board of Education provides direction through its rule-making authority for state graduation requirements, including subject-area credits, a High School and Beyond Plan, and a Culminating Project of all students; and

WHEREAS, The State Board of Education recognizes that the Legislature must approve and fund changes to graduation requirements that have state fiscal impact; and

WHEREAS, Despite a considerably changed world over the past 25 years, Washington students in the graduating class of 2011 are graduating under the same state credit requirements expected for the graduating class of 1985; and

WHEREAS, Washington State is in the bottom 20 percent of all states in participation of students ages 18-24 in education beyond high school, particularly low-income students, and many high school graduates of color are less likely to go directly to community/technical and four-year colleges; and

WHEREAS, Washington State graduation requirements for English, science, and social studies are significantly lower than the majority of other states; and

WHEREAS, The State Board of Education has listened to stakeholders and the recommendations of its Core 24 Implementation Task Force and revised its graduation credit requirements proposal in response to the feedback received, and

WHEREAS, The State Board of Education has determined over a three-year period of study that Washington's current state graduation requirements need to be strengthened so that students are prepared for the education and training needed to earn a credential beyond high school considered necessary for most living-wage jobs in the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, The State Board of Education places equal value on multiple pathways to career and college readiness, and calls for students, parents/guardians and local educators to work together on High School and Beyond Plans that will guide students' course selections through high school and evolve as students' goals develop and change.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT The State Board of Education is approving a new set of career and college-ready graduation requirements. All students will be enrolled in a common pathway that will keep all postsecondary options open and will align with the Higher Education Coordinating Board's minimum four-year public college admission requirements unless students substitute courses according to their High School and Beyond Plans:

English: 4 credits

Math: 3 credits

Science, 2 labs: 3 credits

Social Studies: 3 credits

Health: .5 credit

Occupational Education: 1 credit

Fitness: 1.5 credits*

Arts: 2 credits**

World Languages: 2 credits*

Career Concentration: 2 credits*

Electives: 2 credits*

*Subjects that are asterisked have flexibility, either because of state law (e.g., students may be excused from fitness) or because the State Board of Education is allowing students to make choices that will enable them to pursue courses more consistent with the educational and career goals expressed in their High School and Beyond Plans.

**Only 1 credit may be substituted in arts.

While students must attempt 24 credits, up to two of the 24 credits may be waived by local administrators if students need to retake courses to fulfill the state requirements; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT The State Board of Education will make changes to the high school and beyond plan and the Culminating Project to assure greater consistency of implementation across districts; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT It is the State Board of Education's intention, after the 2011 legislative session, to put those policy changes with no state fiscal impact, as determined by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, into effect for the graduating class of 2016. Within the current 20 credit framework, the following credit changes would be made:

- Increase English from 3 to 4 credits
- Increase Social Studies from 2.5 to 3 credits, including .5 credits of civics
- Designate .5 credit of health (while retaining 1.5 credits of fitness)
- Decrease elective credits by 1.5

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT The State Board of Education will enact additional, no-cost policies, as determined by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, to create more flexibility for districts to help students meet the graduation requirements. These policies would go into effect for the graduating class of 2016.

1. Remove the 150 hour definition of a credit and permit districts to establish policies that specify how they will know students have successfully completed the state's subject area content expectations sufficiently to earn a credit.
2. Establish a "two for one" policy to enable students to take a CTE-equivalent course and satisfy two requirements (one course = one credit = two requirements).
3. Make Washington State History and Government a non-credit requirement that must be successfully passed and noted on the student transcript that the requirement has been met.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all other changes to the requirements, including initiating the high school and beyond plan at the middle level, will be put into effect pending legislative approval and funding.