

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

HEARING TYPE: X INFORMATION/ACTION

DATE: MAY 11, 2007

SUBJECT: **MEANINGFUL HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA
COMMITTEE UPDATE**

SERVICE UNIT: State Board of Education
 Kathe Taylor, Policy Director

PRESENTER: Eric Liu, Chair, Meaningful High School Diploma Committee
 Kathe Taylor, Policy Director, State Board of Education

BACKGROUND:

Since the last Board meeting, the Meaningful High School Diploma Committee has met twice: March 14 (including its Advisory Committee) and April 19, 2007.

At the March 14 meeting with the Advisory Committee, the Committee explored what would make a diploma meaningful, providing time to hear perspectives from each of the 16 members. At the April 19 meeting, the Committee heard from four specialists who provided information about current practice and policy issues in the areas of career and technical education, workforce readiness, civics education, and differentiated diplomas. All handouts from the presenters at the April 19 meeting are in your FYI folder. Among the presenters:

Rod Duckworth, OSPI State Director, Career and Technical Education (CTE), discussed the current status of career and technical education in Washington. He highlighted the issue of course equivalency to recognize that knowledge and skills in fundamental academic content areas can be gained through some CTE courses as well (see RCW 28A.230.097). He acknowledged that CTE is disciplined about aligning CTE courses with industry standards, but the process of aligning/integrating academic and career skills is less systematic.

Wes Pruitt, Policy Analyst for the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, reviewed the legal and policy history of career and technical education, current status of skills centers, CTE enrollment statistics, and the Carl Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006. He also talked through legal changes in the Basic Education Act outlined in a paper entitled, "Meaningful High School Diploma and Work," and reviewed the results of employer surveys conducted by the Workforce Board and by the National Association of Manufacturers. He ended by raising a series of questions for the Committee to consider.

Caleb Perkins, OSPI Program Supervisor of Social Studies/International Education, focused on civics in his PowerPoint presentation, "What is the state of civic education in Washington?" He reviewed the current status of civics education, the Legislature's role in civics education, and the development of classroom-based assessments (CBAs) as the primary mode of assessment for the non-WASL disciplines: social studies, health and fitness, visual and performing arts. He distributed the CBA, "Constitutional Issues: Civics" as an example.

Kathe Taylor, SBE Policy Director, reviewed a policy briefing paper, “A National Snapshot of Differentiated Diplomas/Policies: 2007.” She also distributed a companion table that provided more details about each state’s approach. The briefing paper highlighted the pros and cons of a differentiated approach.

The Committee expressed tepid enthusiasm for differentiated diplomas, and essentially took the idea off the table in favor of focusing instead on determining what the core is for all students to be successful.

The Committee discussed and generally agreed with the language of the Board goal suggested by Chair Mary Jean Ryan at the March 2007 Board meeting. The Committee also discussed the merits of whether to endorse the Governor’s intention for the state to join the American Diploma Project Network.