



Washington State
Board of Education



Working to Raise Student Achievement Dramatically

January 9-10, 2008 Meeting Highlights

On January 9-10, the State Board of Education met at the New Market Vocational Skills Center in Tumwater to discuss several initiatives: defining the purpose of a diploma and giving guidance to staff on the third credit of math for high school graduation to draft a proposed rule. The Board listened to presentations on the End of Course Assessment study required by the Governor and the Career and Technical Education report requested by the legislature. The Board heard an update from its consultants who are doing the independent review of the science standards. State policy makers from Idaho and Ohio shared their experiences in adopting new high school graduation requirements with a focus on science. Students at the New Market Vocational Skills Center talked with Board members about their experiences in science and math courses. The Board recognized the State Teacher of the Year, Laura Jones.

Board Actions

Purpose of Meaningful High School Diploma

The Board approved the following language, which will serve as guidance to its review of the current high school graduation requirements.

The purpose of the diploma is to declare that a student is ready for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment, and citizenship, and is equipped with the skills to be a lifelong learner. The diploma represents a balance between the personalized education needs of each student and society's needs, and reflects at its core the state's basic education goals. The diploma is a compact among students, parents, local school districts, the state and whatever institution or employer the graduate moves on to—a compact that says the graduate has acquired a particular set of knowledge and skills. How the student demonstrates those skills may differ. Whether a student earns credit by participating in formal instruction or by demonstrating competency through established district policies is immaterial; they are equally acceptable.

The Board agreed to convene a work session on February 25, 2008 to discuss options for graduation requirements.

Direction for Math Credit Rule Adoption

After taking into consideration the consultant's research on third math credit options, including national studies on the topic, and public comment, the Board directed staff to draft rule language for review at the March State Board of Education meeting that requires all students to complete a third credit of math in an Algebra II course that aligns with the new math standards and meets the content standards to be approved by the Board. This course requirement can be completed through an approved career and technical education course of study that is comparable in course content but allows the student to earn more than one credit to complete. This will be in effect for the Class of 2013. This decision aligns with the Board's specified purpose of the high school diploma—to prepare all students for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment and citizenship.

Upon completion of a second credit of mathematics that meets the 9th and 10th grade level expectations, students may elect to pursue, or continue to pursue, an approved program of study that leads to a specific career goal. This election shall allow the student to replace the Algebra II requirement with a third math credit that furthers this approved program of study. The election shall require approval by a high school counselor or administrator, and shall include a counseling session with the student and family/guardian that at a minimum makes sure everyone understands the future opportunities that may be unavailable to the student by making this choice. It shall also encourage the student to take additional math courses during the remainder of their high school studies that assist them towards their career goals and maintain their math skills.

The Board will have a public hearing on the proposed rule for the third math credit and also will address implementation issues for the third credit at its March meeting. The Board anticipates adopting the rule for the third math credit at its May meeting.

Direction for Math WASL Effective Date

The Board declined to revise the date from 2013 to 2012 as the deadline to require that students in the class of 2012 be required to pass the math standard on the 10th grade WASL as a high school graduation requirement. The requirement will remain in effect for the class of 2013.

End of Course Assessment

The Board accepted the End of Course Assessment Study prepared by Education First Consulting for transmittal to Governor Christine Gregoire.

Career and Technical Education Study

The Board accepted the High School Graduation and Career and Technical Education Report prepared by Washington State University's Social and Economic Research Center for transmittal to the Washington State Legislature, as requested in RCW 28A.230.090.

Science

The Board received a preliminary report from the consultant, David Heil and Associates, Inc., who is conducting a comprehensive review of Washington's current K-10 science standards. The report provided a thorough background on science education standards and summarized an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the current science standards based on input from the WA Science Advisory Panel. It also previewed likely areas for recommended changes to the science standards.

Public Outreach

This fall, as part of its efforts to improve requirements for high school graduation to better prepare students for life after high school, the Board listened to citizens' views on key questions about essential skills students should learn in high school, the elements and purpose of the state minimum high school graduation requirements, and the content for a third credit of math, as required by the 2007 Legislature. The Board collected input online, through letters and emails, and at sessions conducted at the annual meetings of the Washington State School Directors Association and the Washington Association of Student Councils. The Board also held community meetings across the state to hear public opinion on the topic. One message the Board heard from many people was support for one diploma with a variety of pathways to obtain that diploma.

A total of 464 people attended the evening meetings held in Bremerton, Bethel School District/Tacoma, Yakima, Vancouver, Spokane, and Seattle. The meetings were well attended with school administrators, school board members, teachers, counselors, parents, educational associations, as well as students and members of the business community. The Board received comments from meeting participants orally, in writing, and through a dot exercise to identify essential skills. Community members continue to provide feedback through e-mails and letters.

System Performance Accountability

The Board will hold a work session on February 26th to examine a new district assistance improvement system, the accountability index, and a fall symposium.

For additional information and Board meeting materials go to: www.sbe.wa.gov or call the Board office at: 360-725-6025.