

# STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**HEARING TYPE:**              X   ACTION

**DATE:**                      May 14, 2008

**SUBJECT:**                    **DIRECTION FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION  
REQUIREMENTS**

**SERVICE UNIT:**            Ms. Edie Harding, Executive Director  
State Board of Education

**PRESENTER:**                Mr. Eric Liu, Board Lead, SBE  
Dr. Kathe Taylor, Policy Director, SBE

## **BACKGROUND:**

**CORE 24:** Several versions of a CORE 24 graduation credit framework were considered at the March 2008 Board meeting, and the Board asked for further review of a version introduced by Board member Jeff Vincent. At the April 22 work session, Board members discussed refinements to the proposal, including suggestions for how to graphically represent key concepts associated with the framework, including:

- CORE 24 as the set of requirements in which all students would be enrolled automatically unless they selected the technical/career or four-year college options.
- Differences between the CORE 24 “default” focus of study and the other two emphases.

**Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan:** Board members began formal discussion about the culminating project and high school and beyond plan graduation requirements at the April 22 work session. Representatives from three districts—Highline, Kent, and North Thurston—described their approaches to the requirements and provided feedback about the benefits and challenges to implementation. Responses and recommendations from 145 of the 246 districts with high schools were presented, and are included in this packet.

In order to clarify any changes the Board might want to consider with respect to these two requirements, discussion of these and other questions will be taken up at the meeting:

1. What changes, if any, are needed to the Culminating Project requirements/guidelines to assure that students in all districts have rich and meaningful opportunities to demonstrate their learning?
2. What changes, if any, are needed to the High School and Beyond Plan requirement/guidelines to assure that students in all districts have an opportunity to establish a working plan?

Middle School and High School Connections: Almost since the Board began discussions about the Meaningful High School Diploma, the importance of middle school preparation to successful attainment of graduation requirements has been a recurring theme. Whether—and how—formally to connect the two levels through graduation requirement policy will be addressed at the meeting through discussion of two questions:

1. What is the purpose for encouraging middle school students to complete high school graduation requirements in middle school?
2. Do middle school courses that satisfy graduation requirements have to be taught at high school level standards?

**EXPECTED ACTION:**

The Board will give direction for next steps with the Meaningful High School Diploma work and agree to conduct a work session (tentatively scheduled for June 5) to move the work forward.



## Meaningful High School Diploma

### BACKGROUND

In 2006, the Legislature<sup>1</sup> directed the Board to develop and propose a revised definition of the purpose and expectations for high school diplomas issued by public schools. The Board expanded this task to a review of all graduation requirements, including the credit requirements that had not changed since 1985. Building upon 2003 rule language that affirmed the Board's commitment to "high, meaningful, and fair requirements every student can meet,"<sup>2</sup> the Board established a Meaningful High School Diploma committee of Board members and an advisory committee of stakeholders to assist with the work, which began in early 2007.

An initial discussion of credit requirements came before the Board in July 2007. The draft became a catalyst for conversation about the principles that the Board would use to drive its reconsideration of graduation requirements. The Board extended its internal timetable to complete its work on proposed new graduation requirements to the summer of 2008, and gathered feedback on the guiding principles during public outreach in fall 2007. Those guiding principles included the concept of one diploma for all, and the consideration of essential skills; competency-based learning and equivalency credits; alignment with postsecondary education requirements; and an integrated package of requirements.

Three themes emerged from the public outreach, including support for: 1) one diploma for all; 2) flexibility within the curriculum for students to choose different pathways; and 3) funding for new requirements.

All of these factors informed the Board's thinking about the purpose of a diploma and directions for the meaningful high school diploma work.

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<sup>1</sup> E2SHB 3098 of the 2006 Legislative session

<sup>2</sup> WAC 180-51-003 -- see appendix A for entire rule

## **PURPOSE OF A DIPLOMA**

In January 2008, the Board approved a statement of purpose for a diploma, which will guide 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.*

## **TIMETABLE**

The Board established July 2008 as its target for action on proposed graduation requirements for two reasons. First, the Board needs to have sufficient time to prepare its recommended budget request for local district implementation of graduation requirements by September 2008. This budget request will be submitted to the Governor for the 2009 legislative session. Second, the Board would like to provide budget information to the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance, as well.

In order to meet the July target and allow time to gather critical feedback from stakeholders, the Board has been following since March the timetable outlined on the following page. The timetable has been revised since the last meeting to reflect the addition of public outreach sessions and another work session.

## **UPDATE: WORK SESSION APRIL 22, 2008**

The Board met for a work session with advisory committee members on April 22, 2008, and addressed the following topics: CORE 24, culminating project, and high school and beyond plan. The Board had intended to address essential skills, as well, but there was not sufficient time for that discussion, and it was postponed until a (tentatively scheduled pending Board approval) June 5 work session. Notes from the meeting are included in Appendix A.

CORE 24: Several versions of a CORE 24 graduation credit framework were considered at the March 2008 Board meeting, and the Board asked for further review of a version introduced by Board member Jeff Vincent. At the April 22 work session, Board members discussed refinements to the proposal, including suggestions for how to represent graphically, key concepts associated with the framework, including:

- CORE 24 as the set of requirements in which all students would be enrolled automatically unless they selected the technical/career or four-year college options.
- Differences between the CORE 24 “default” focus of study and the other two emphases.

**Proposed Timetable: March – July 2008 (Revised)**

Dates	Task	Board Action	Policy Questions
			<i>These policy questions pervade all discussions of graduation requirements. Staff will provide background on these issues in the coming months.</i>
March 26-27, 2008	Consider recommendations for credit frameworks	Approve one or more credit frameworks to vet with stakeholders	What package of credits will maximize opportunities for students, post high school?
April- June 2008	Feedback from key stakeholders through group meetings, web-based surveys, and public outreach		What implementation factors should the Board consider?
April 22, 2008	Work session on High School and Beyond Plan and Culminating Project; middle school connections; credit framework	No action	How does the Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan help students meet the purpose of a diploma? How do they help students personalize their educational experience?
May 15-16, 2008	Consideration of revised credit frameworks, High School and Beyond Plan and Culminating Project		What policy levers would help middle school students prepare for high school more intentionally?
June 5, 2008	Work session on essential skills and refinements to middle school connections, Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan, competency-based learning		How do we connect graduation requirements into an integrated, comprehensive package? How are essential skills reflected in an integrated package? What would encourage more competency-based learning?
June 2-4, 2008	Public Outreach in Spokane, Yakima, Seattle		
June, 2008	Meet with Tribal Leader Congress on Education representatives		How do we respond to the Tribal Leader Congress on Education resolution requesting the Board to add .5 credit of local tribal history as a graduation requirement?
July 23-24, 2008	Make any final revisions	Approve graduation requirements	

APCO has produced a flyer that conveys these concepts and the CORE 24 principles that underlie them. The first page of this flyer (the second page is still in process) is included in Appendix B, along with a series of draft scheduling scenarios created by staff. Discussion about the CORE 24 framework and underlying principles will continue at the meeting. Those principles include:

1. Equip Everyone. Commits the state to assist all students to prepare for a living-wage job or successful entry into postsecondary education.
2. Expect More. Recognizes that students need better preparation to meet the changing requirements of the labor market and the increasing wage premium paid for higher levels of educational attainment. Supports raising the overall level of educational attainment among Washington's younger citizens—one of the key goals of Washington Learns.
3. Create Intentional Pathways. Insists that students choose a pathway that will prepare them for work, postsecondary education, or both.
4. Provide Options. Provides the flexibility for students to choose a pathway that works for them, with electives to give students the freedom to explore new areas and to delve into areas of interest. Supports a variety of mechanisms for students to meet requirements by demonstrating competency, taking CTE-equivalent classes, earning credit online, or meeting requirements beginning in middle school.
5. Start Early. Recognizes the importance of preparation in middle school for high school and the value of helping students realize that they can begin to meet high school graduation requirements in middle school.
6. Plan Ahead. Elevates the significance of the High School and Beyond Plan by calling for schools to offer personalized guidance beginning in middle school and helps guide student course taking so students are positioned for success after high school.

Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan: Board members began formal discussion about the Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan graduation requirements at the April 22 work session. Representatives from three districts—Highline, Kent, and North Thurston—described their approaches to the requirements and provided feedback about the benefits and challenges to implementation. Responses and recommendations from 145 of the 246 districts with high schools were presented, and are included in Appendix C of this packet, along with the current guidelines.

In order to clarify any changes the Board might want to consider with respect to these two requirements, discussion of these and other questions will be taken up at the meeting:

1. What changes, if any, are needed to the Culminating Project requirements/guidelines to assure that students in all districts have rich and meaningful opportunities to demonstrate their learning?
  - a. Would it be useful to specify the inclusion of one or more required elements? (e.g., proposal, research paper, community service, portfolio, oral presentation, reflection paper, etc.)

- b. Would it be useful to specify that the Culminating Project must address skills beyond basic education goals 3 and 4?
  - c. Would it make a difference to change “should” language in the guidelines to “shall” language? (e.g., “School districts shall (vs. should) clearly identify Culminating Project student outcomes and develop and publish assessment criteria to support those outcomes”; “shall have a clearly identified culminating management system...;” shall include community involvement...)
  - d. What are the pros and cons of assigning credit to the culminating project?
2. What changes, if any, are needed to the High School and Beyond Plan requirement/guidelines to assure that students in all districts have an opportunity to establish a working plan?
- a. When should the High School and Beyond Plan process begin, and how often should the plan be revisited?
  - b. In what way (if any) should the High School and Beyond Plan be connected to the Culminating Project?
  - c. Current guidelines specify that “students should be encouraged” to include the following elements in their Plan: personal story, learning style, goals for high school, and goals for immediately after high school. Is this language sufficient?

Middle School and High School Connections: Since the Board began discussions about the Meaningful High School Diploma, the importance of middle school preparation to successful attainment of graduation requirements has been a recurring theme, raising the question: What policy levers does the Board have to connect high school graduation requirements with middle school preparation?

Two primary ideas have emerged:

- Courses in middle school that satisfy graduation requirements.
- High School and Beyond Plan.

**Courses in Middle School that Satisfy Graduation Requirements: Credit-Earning Courses.** Middle school credit has, for all practical purposes, really meant credit earned in 8<sup>th</sup> grade (occasionally, 7<sup>th</sup>), and it has applied almost solely to math and world language classes. This practice reflects three realities:

1. Most middle schools aren’t set up to teach high school level courses.
2. Not all middle school students are prepared to meet high school level standards.
3. There are limitations on credit earned in middle school when it comes to college admissions requirements.

Washington statute currently permits students to earn high school credit for middle school courses (defined as courses completed prior to ninth grade) if:

- (a) The course was taken with high school students, if the academic level of the course exceeds the requirements for seventh and eighth grade classes, and the student has successfully passed, by completing the same course requirements and examinations as the high school students enrolled in the class; or
- (b) The academic level of the course exceeds the requirements for seventh and eighth grade classes and the course would qualify for high school credit, because the course is similar or equivalent to a course offered at a high school in the district as determined by the school district board of directors.<sup>3</sup>

**HECB Minimum Entry Requirements.** The Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) will accept some math courses and world language courses taken in middle school if they were taught to high school standards. For example:

- The HECB will accept credit for a world language course taken in 8<sup>th</sup> grade as one of the credits satisfying its two-credit world language requirement *if* the second credit is earned in grades 9-12.
- The HECB will accept a high school-level algebra and/or geometry course completed prior to 9<sup>th</sup> grade *if* one credit of Algebra II (or Integrated Math III) is subsequently completed in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade or higher.
- The HECB will not accept credits earned prior to 9<sup>th</sup> grade in English, science, social studies, and the arts to satisfy minimum admissions requirements.

**Courses in Middle School that Satisfy Graduation Requirements: Non-credit Earning Courses (Completion Requirements).** The Board could also consider identifying non-credit graduation requirements to be completed in middle school. This practice would help students realize that middle school “counts” and would provide a way to emphasize more goal-directed education—the goal, in this case, being high school graduation. Two suggestions for “completion requirements” were made at the February 2008 work session.

- Washington State History. Require that Washington State History, which is usually taught in middle school, as early as 7<sup>th</sup> grade, be completed, but not for credit. This action would require the Board to amend the rule<sup>4</sup> that stipulates .5 credit of Washington State History.<sup>5</sup>
- Arts. Require a course in the arts for all middle school students. (If completed at middle school level standards, the course would better prepare students for the grade-level standards expected of them in high school.)

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<sup>3</sup> RCW 28A.230.090

<sup>4</sup> WAC 180-51-061

<sup>5</sup> Statute (RCW 28A.230.170) requires study of the Constitution of the state of Washington as a prerequisite to graduation from public and private high schools in the state. OSPI rule (WAC 392-410-120) stipulates that a one semester course in Washington State History must be taken in grades 7-12 combined (not at each grade level). Many districts offer Washington State History at the middle school level without offering it for a .5 credit. High schools then note that the requirement has been met (per Caleb Perkins, OSPI Social Studies/International Education Program Supervisor, in an e-mail April 14, 2008).

## **High School and Beyond Plan**

The High School and Beyond Plan could present another opportunity for connecting middle and high school. Some districts introduce the High School and Beyond Plan in 8<sup>th</sup> grade as a way of encouraging students and parents to begin thinking about the demands of high school, and for setting appropriate educational goals.

### **Policy Questions**

1. What is the purpose for encouraging middle school students to complete high school graduation requirements in middle school?
2. Do middle school courses that satisfy graduation requirements have to be taught at high school level standards?

**Meaningful High School Diploma Work Session  
Puget Sound ESD, Renton  
April 22, 2008**

MINUTES (Revised May 2, 2008)

**Board Members Attending:** Eric Liu (Board Lead), Amy Bragdon, Phyllis (Bunker) Frank, Linda Lamb, Mary Jean Ryan, Warren Smith

**Staff Attending:** Kathe Taylor, Loy McColm

**Advisors:** Sue Dixon (for Shep Siegel), Mark Mansell, Bob McMullen, Toni Pace, Scott Poirier, Wes Pruitt, Maureen Trantham

**Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan—Origins and Overview**

A background document was included in the packet to explain the Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan. It included feedback from 145 school districts that responded to a staff query about what districts are currently doing with the Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan—and what they would like the Board to do about the current requirements.

Warren shared information about the origins of the Culminating Project from a summary prepared by Larry Davis in 2006. He drew attention to the following points:

- Implementation of both the High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) and the Culminating Project (CP) was intended to allow as much local flexibility as possible.
- The CP was intended to be an authentic demonstration of competencies, show progress over time, and focused on a topic of particular interest to the student. It was also connected to Basic Education Goals 3 and 4.
- The HSBP was about the skill of setting and meeting goals to achieve a diploma and to move beyond high school. In addition to outlining the steps needed to achieve a diploma, students were expected to identify at least one goal they expected to pursue the year following graduation, and to identify the steps needed to meet that goal.

Representatives from three school districts joined the meeting to give an overview of the process currently being used within their district for the Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan.

## **School District Approaches to Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan**

### Highline School District

Ms. Marianna Goheen, Director, Office of College and Career

Ms. Barbara Wilson, College and Career Specialist

Highline defines the purpose of the CP as providing “students an opportunity to test themselves—to see for themselves *as well as to demonstrate and communicate* to others that they can apply their knowledge and skills in important and practical situations to solve problems and achieve goals.”

The CP is defined as “an independently conceived and managed piece of work, most often done outside the school, which shows the student’s ability to: 1) design his/her own learning experiences; 2) use knowledge and skills to solve problems, and 3) independently manage a complex, multi-stage project.”

The components of the CP include:

1. Project
  - a. Proposal.
  - b. Product, performance, exhibit.
  - c. Documentation of what the student did.
2. Community-based connection.
3. Presentation to review panel comprised of community members.

Students do not earn credit for the CP; the district does not believe the credit adds value to the transcript, and colleges do not expect it. Student-led conferences are an important piece of the whole project. Some schools work on written components of the project in language arts classes; others do not. Some work is done in advisories. Students are pretty much on their own to do their projects. Discussion about high school expectations begins in the middle schools.

In the Q and A that ensued, the following topics were raised:

- Accountability—how does the district ensure quality control? (Answer: district-wide rubrics and visits by district staff).
- Worth of the project—is it a valuable tool to build the skills of project-based learning? (Answer: project-based learning adds relevance; the CP enables the schools to encourage more project-based learning. However, teachers need professional development—can’t assume teachers know how to do it. Bottom line: It takes a lot of work).
- Worth of the project—what do students learn? (Answer: interviews of seniors showed the #1 learning was “Don’t procrastinate.” One challenge is to convince some teachers that students can do it.)
- Recommended Board action—what would Highline like the Board to do about the requirements? (Answer: Leave them alone—Highline followed the guidelines,

- and has spent a lot of time developing the project. However, guidance from the state that brings together information about working with volunteers, student safety, and other considerations would be helpful because districts don't always have the time or resources to research that.)
- High School and Beyond Plan? (Answer: At Evergreen High School, the plans were successfully implemented in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade, but each year after that, they became less important. By senior year, students were just copying down the courses they had taken. It's a great project for 9<sup>th</sup> graders, but loses importance. Guidelines on what the plan should look like would be helpful).

### North Thurston School District

Ms. Karen Eitreim, Director of Diversity, Policy, Languages and Arts

Ms. Kelly Boyer, CTE Teacher, Graduation Project Teacher and Coordinator, Timberline High School

Ms. Pat Slosson, English Teacher and House Facilitator, River Ridge High School; Graduation Project Teacher and Coordinator

Ms. Leslie Prather, Chinook Middle School Counselor

North Thurston directs students “to stretch your knowledge and abilities beyond your present level” by choosing a topic that they are personally interested in learning more about and in applying that learning in a practical setting.

The components of the Culminating Project include:

- Proposal.
- Review of Literature (minimum 13-page, research-based document).
- Product (documented 20 hours on an activity related to the topic).
- Oral presentation to community members.
- Journal (reflection on process.)

Students earn .5 credit in a semester-long course that guides students through the components of the CP.

Each high school puts a different “twist” on the basic framework. For instance, the alternative high school rolls the CP into a CTE course called Career Choices, and focuses the project much more on a career pathway. By contrast, Timberline asks students to submit a proposal, complete a project, and write two papers. One paper answers the essential question about their project. The second is a persuasive paper that addresses a controversial aspect of their project. Two staff members in the building score the papers.

In the Q & A, the following issues were addressed:

- Value of the requirement? (Answer: Kids feel a real sense of accomplishment—it's real work, and real accomplishment; community members are actively involved, particularly parents of younger students and retirees.)

- Implementation issues? (Answer: figuring out how to involve Running Start students; developing a district-wide and school-wide culture of involvement; huge impact on staffing.)
- Pros and cons of .5 credit? (Answer: There are different configurations. For example, a school might partner the senior project and a one-semester Advanced Placement (AP) government class. Students get .5 credit for the project and .5 AP credit—much of the CP work is done outside the classroom. There is also a combined computer applications and Culminating Project. One challenge is to figure out ways to broaden the opportunities to blend it into a CTE class. But the CP requirements need to be clearly defined or the credit issue gets blurred. Since students are required to do the .5 credit, they may not get to take other electives.)
- Community involvement in presentations? What advice would you give us to help all of our school districts develop that community piece? (Answer: We had to grow it, and our Board expected it. Maybe that's the answer—there's an expectation that community involvement is included. As we talk about revision, our superintendent made clear that that piece was not up for negotiation. We recruit parents (particularly of our younger students), and plug into service organizations and retirees. We now have some presentations during the afternoon for those who don't want to drive at night. We've talked about going to some of the retirement communities and doing the presentations on site.)
- High School and Beyond Plan? (Answer: It occurs through Advisory. They are beginning to see ways the HSBP and CP could overlap.)
- Recommended Board action? (Answer: Continue the requirement, with guidelines that allow local flexibility. As more schools engage in Navigation 101, they expect to see more of a meshing with the Culminating Project and the High School and Beyond Plan.)

### Kent School District

Ms. Merri Rieger, Executive Director, Learning and School Improvement, 9-12

Ms. Molly King, Assistant Principal, Kentridge High School

This is the first year students have been required to do a Culminating Project in the Kent School District; however, seniors have been working on their CPs since they entered ninth grade. Kent has designed the CP to be completed over four years in high school. The CP includes both academic and career components, and is worked on during Advisory. Students do not earn credit for the CP.

The components of the CP include:

- Best works that reflect critical and/or creative thinking.
- Job shadow/interview.
- Research paper (four-six pages; graded by junior year English teacher.)
- Oral presentation before a panel of three, with one teacher as the head judge.
- Community experience (five hours.)
- Thirteenth year plan.

Documents are assembled in an e-Folio, an electronic portfolio that students have access to year-round, even for several years after their graduation from high school.

In the Q & A, the following issues were addressed:

- Challenges? (Answer: Our folks don't know how to provide academic personalization—yet. It's taking some time. It's also a workload issue, so we're dealing with this at the bargaining table. Any new additions you make take resources at the local level. I love the idea of taking every kid to a college campus. But if you mandate that—it becomes a different issue, and I don't know that our campuses are ready for us all to show up.)
- More guidance for the HSBP? (Answer: Not sure. Kids change their plans over the four years.)
- High School and Beyond template designed by Scott Poirier when he was at OSPI that is now maintained by an ESD—would be nice to hear more about that.
- Recommended Board action? (Answer: The District recommends not adding anything more to the Culminating Project for a few more years – they would like time to listen to their students and community and work with the current plan for a while. They also do not recommend attaching credit to the requirement.)
- Finding ways to showcase exemplary practices, perhaps at January OSPI conference.
- Challenge for the Board is to use the levers of the Board's authority effectively to encourage more districts to build exemplary CP and HSBP programs, while at the same time not limiting the flexibility that have enabled some districts to thrive and excel.

### **One Diploma, Many Pathways: Opening Doors with Core 24**

(A draft graphic was distributed to illustrate the different pathways and core principles of Core 24.)

Core 24 is a new draft credit framework that the State Board of Education is considering. The framework requires students to choose one of three defined pathways—a coherent personal plan of study that prepares them for the next step after high school. The Core 24 principles include:

1. Equip everyone
2. Expect more
3. Create intentional pathways
4. Provide options
5. Start early
6. Plan ahead

Eric reviewed the draft CORE 24 framework and asked for discussion about whether the College and Work Ready requirements would be the default option that all students would be enrolled in unless they chose the College Ready or Work Ready requirements.

Rationale for making the “College and Work Ready” requirements the default option:

- Guidance and navigation is sometimes lacking, and students need a “safe harbor”—a set of requirements that is guaranteed to put them on a pathway that will keep all options open.

Discussion touched on:

- Importance of communicating that all three options are of equal value; although by placing students automatically in the college and work ready “box,” it makes it first among equals.
- Importance of assuring that students aren’t tracked.
- Importance of supporting students’ educational and career interests.
- Rigor of the college pathway—minimum requirements are insufficient to prepare students for more selective colleges (difference between state policy that “raises the floor” and district policy that augments the requirements.)
- Challenges of implementation and scheduling.
- Importance of middle school preparation so students arrive at high school prepared for the level of work expected; building more connections with middle school.
- Need for a comprehensive guidance system that helps students set educational and career goals.
- Clarity of terminology—“dual credit” usually means high school/college credits earned simultaneously; “cross-crediting or equivalency” usually means CTE courses that have established equivalency with academic courses and are transcribed as academic courses.
- Clarity of presentation—the differences among the three options boil down to differences in CTE, world language, and elective credit.
- Consideration of flexibility in requirements for students pursuing an IB diploma
- CTE vs. Occupational Education—Occupational Education allows greater flexibility because it doesn’t require that teachers be CTE certified; perhaps use both terms for the college-ready path.
- Implications for private schools.
- Culminating Project credit tied to CTE—good idea or not?
- Trade-off of prescribed and elective credit (some elective programs like AVID might be less accessible to students in a 24-credit framework.)

The meeting adjourned before a discussion of essential skills could begin. That discussion was postponed until a later date.

# Opening Doors with Core 24

What is Core 24? Core 24 is the new set of draft credit requirements for high school graduation being considered by the Washington State Board of Education. Core 24 will require students to develop a plan for their future and choose classes to help them achieve their goals. Core 24 requirements will provide students with a strong academic foundation, with flexibility that will prepare them for whatever path they choose—whether that’s the workforce, an apprenticeship in the trades, or a community or four-year college.

**EQUIP EVERYONE** Prepare ALL students for life after high school—in gainful employment, an apprenticeship or postsecondary education.

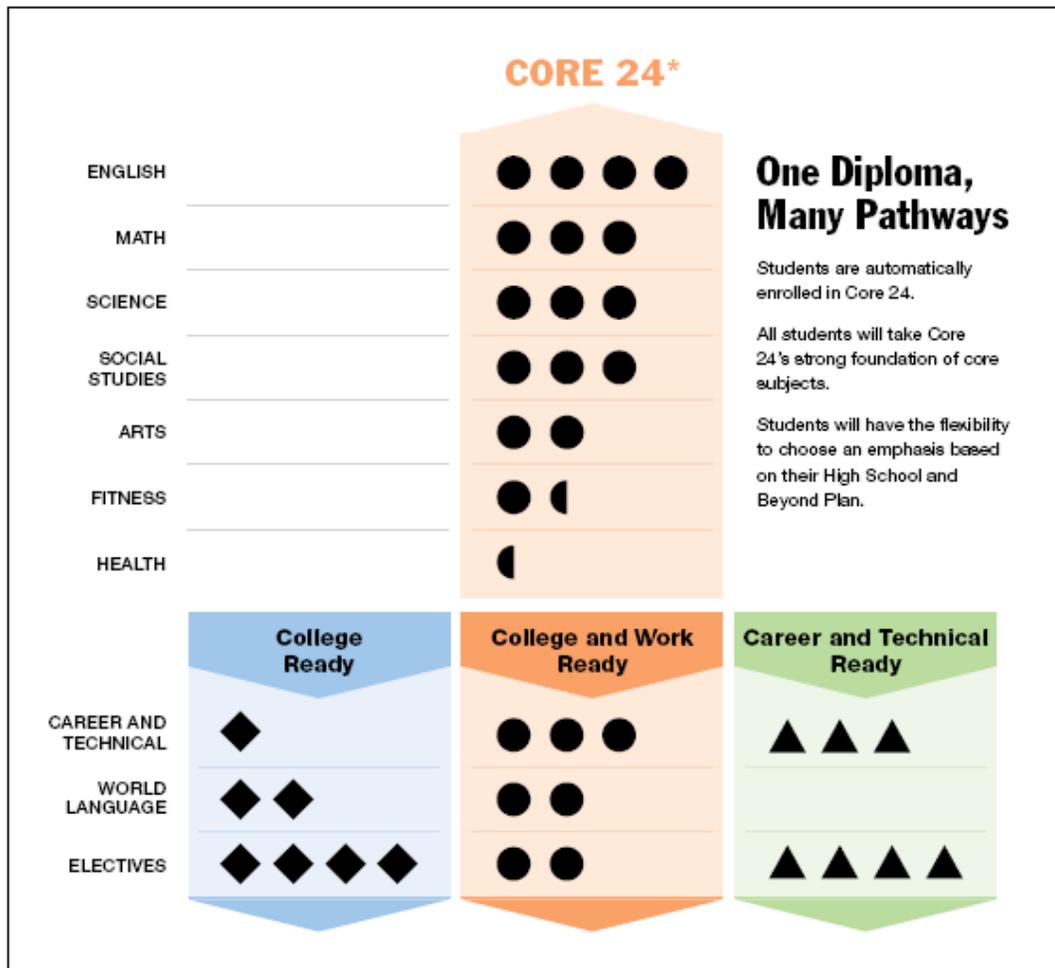
**EXPECT MORE** Align requirements to meet the increased expectations of the 21st century workforce.

**PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY** Allow student to customize their education, creating relevance to their interests.

**GIVE FOCUS** Encourage students to align course work to achieve their future career goals.

**PLAN AHEAD** Emphasize the High School and Beyond Plan to offer students personalized guidance to prepare them for work, postsecondary education, or both.

**START EARLY** Prepare students to enter high school and create opportunities to meet high school graduation requirements in middle school.



**\* NOTES:**

1. Each symbol (●, ◐, ▲) represents one credit.
2. Where appropriate, CTE equivalent courses may be substituted.
3. One math credit must be taken in the senior year.
4. Some requirements (example: math, arts, world language) may begin to be satisfied in middle school.
5. One science lab credit must be an algebra-based lab.
6. Fitness credits can be waived and an equivalent experience substituted.

**Core 24: College and Work Ready [DRAFT]**  
**Student Pursuing the Environmental Exploration Advanced Placement Program at a Skills Center**

This student can earn up to 8 college credits in high school in this tech/prep program.

College and Work Ready Subject Area Requirements	Credits Required	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
English	4	English I	English II	English III	English IV
Math (1 in senior year)	3	Integrated Math I	Integrated Math II	Integrated Math III	Discrete Math
Science (2 lab)	3	Biology (lab)	Chemistry (lab)	Environmental Science (CTE equivalent)	
Social Studies	3	World History		US History	Sociology
Arts	2		Ceramics/Pottery		
Fitness	1.5	Fitness (.5)	Fitness (1)		
Health	.5	Health (.5)			
CTE	3			Skills Center Environmental Exploration AP Program (2)	Skills Center Environmental Exploration AP Program (3)
World Language	2	Spanish I	Spanish II		
Electives	2	See notes			
Total	24	6	6	6	6

**Notes:**

- Assumes one arts requirement and Washington State History requirement completed in middle school.
- Assumes one Environmental Exploration course taken at skills center is a course equivalency for the third science credit, and is recorded on the transcript as a science course instead of a CTE course.
- Because the student satisfied the arts requirement in middle school, she actually had three electives and used them to take: one more credit of math and two more credits of CTE.

## Core 24: Four-Year College Emphasis

This student plans to apply to the University of Washington and major in pre-med.

Four-Year College Subject Requirements	Credits Required	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
English	4	English I	English II	English III	English IV
Math (1 in senior year)	3	Geometry	Algebra II	Pre-Calculus	Calculus
Science (2 lab)	3	Biology (lab)	Chemistry (lab)	Advanced Chemistry	Physics (lab)
Social Studies	3	World History		two courses: US History and Political Science (2)	Contemporary World Problems
Arts	2				Dance
Fitness	1.5	Fitness (.5)	Fitness (1)		
Health	.5	Health (.5)			
CTE/ Occupational Education	1		Computer Applications Technology		
World Language	2	Japanese I	Japanese II	Japanese III	Japanese IV
Electives	4	See notes			
Total	24	6	6	6	6

### Notes:

- Assumes one arts requirement and Washington State History requirement completed in middle school.
- Assumes student took Algebra I in 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Because the student satisfied the arts requirement in middle school, he actually had five electives, and used them to take: two more credits in world language, one more credit in mathematics, one more credit in social studies, and one more credit in science.

**Core 24: Technical/Career Emphasis  
Student Pursuing a Business and Marketing CTE Pathway**

Technical/ Career Subject Requirements	Credits Required	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
English	4	English I	English II	English III	English IV
Math (1 in senior year)	3	Algebra I	Geometry	Algebra II	Statistics
Science (2 lab)	3	Earth Science	Biology (lab)	Chemistry (lab)	
Social Studies	3	World History		US History	Contemporary World Problems (1) <u>and</u> Economics (1)
Arts	2		Photography	Advanced Photography	
Fitness	1.5	Fitness (.5)	Fitness (1)		
Health	.5	Health (.5)			
CTE	3	Computer Applications (.5) <u>and</u> Digital Communications Tools (.5)		Beginning Marketing (1)	Advanced Marketing (1)
World Language	0		Spanish I		Spanish II
Electives	4	See notes			
Total	24	6	6	6	6

**Notes:**

- Assumes Washington State History requirement completed in middle school
- The student is using four electives to take one more credit of social studies and math; two credits of world language

**Core 24: Technical/Career Emphasis  
Student Pursuing Health Services Pathway**

Technical/ Career Subject Requirements	Credits Required	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
English	4	English I	English II	English III	English IV
Math (1 in senior year)	3	Algebra I	Geometry	Algebra II	Pre-Calculus
Science (2 lab)	3	Physical Science (lab)	Biology (lab)	Chemistry (lab)	Anatomy and Physiology (CTE course equivalency)
Social Studies	3	World History	Sociology	US History	
Arts	2	Band	Band	Band	
Fitness	1.5	Fitness (.5)	Fitness (1)		
Health	.5	Health (.5)			
CTE	3			Introduction to Profes- sional and Medical Careers (1)	Professional and Medical Careers (3)
World Language	0				
Electives	4				
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>

**Notes:**

- Assumes Washington State History requirement completed in middle school
- The student is using four electives to take one more credit of arts, two more credits in CTEs, and one more credit in math.
- Assumes that one Health Care Professions CTE credit is equivalent to a science credit.

**Core 24: Technical/Career Emphasis**  
**Student Pursuing the Pre-Veterinary Technician Program**  
**at a Skills Center (Struggling Student)**

This student can earn up to ten college credits while in high school in this tech/prep program and plans to enter a two-year Veterinary Technician Program at her local community and technical college.

Technical/ Career Subject Requirements	Credits Required	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
English	4	English I	English II	English III	English IV
Math (1 in senior year)	3	Algebra I (fail)	Algebra I	Geometry	Algebra Inquiry
Science (2 lab)	3	Physical Science	Biology (lab)		Physiology and Anatomy (CTE equivalent) (lab)
Social Studies	3	World History		US History	Contemporary World Problems
Arts	2	Choir	Choir		
Fitness	1.5		Fitness (.5)	Fitness (1)	
Health	.5		Health (.5)		
CTE	3		Independent Living/Consumer Life Skills (1)		Skills Center Pre-Veterinary Technician Program (2)
World Language	0			American Sign Language	
Electives	4	Algebra I support class	See notes	Segmented Math (failed WASL)	See notes
Total	24	6	6	6	6

**Notes:**

- Assumes Washington State History requirement completed in middle school.
- The student is using four electives to take one credit of world language, and three credits of math (two remedial).
- Assumes a CTE equivalent course satisfies the third science credit.

**Core 24: Technical/Career Emphasis  
Student Pursuing a Construction Trades Program  
at a Skills Center**

This student is enrolled in a pre-apprenticeship program that is intended to prepare students for entry into a construction trades apprenticeship.

Technical/ Career Subject Requirements	Credits Required	9 <sup>th</sup> Grade	10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade
English	4	English I	English II	English III	English IV
Math (1 in senior year)	3	Applied Math-- Algebra I	Geometry		Math in Construction
Science (2 lab)	3	Physical Science	Biology (lab)	Chemistry in Context	
Social Studies	3	World History		US History	Contemporary World Problems
Arts	2		Guitar	Jewelry making	
Fitness	1.5	Fitness (.5)	Fitness (1)		
Health	.5	Health (.5)			
CTE	3	Computer-aided Drafting (CAD) I	CAD II	Architectural Design (1); Digitools (.5) and Financial Literacy (.5)	Skills Center Construction Trades Pre-Apprenticeship (3)
World Language	0				
Electives	4	See notes			
Total	24	6	6	6	6

**Notes:**

- Assumes Washington State History requirement completed in middle school.
- The student is using four electives to take more CTE courses.
- The student is electing to take the third credit in a math course that is applied to the construction trades.



Washington State  
Board of Education



*Working to Raise Student Achievement Dramatically*

What is the Core 24? The Core 24 is the new draft credit framework that the State Board of Education is considering. The framework requires students to choose a defined pathway. In order to receive a diploma, every student will develop and follow a coherent personal plan of study that prepares them for the next step after high school—whether that's a trade, an apprenticeship program, or college. Core 24 creates concrete options: under this plan, every graduate should be prepared for work, postsecondary education, or both.

Why is the State Board of Education putting forth this new proposal? Since 1985, when the credit requirements were last reviewed and revised, our society and economy have changed dramatically. Current credit requirements simply don't prepare students adequately for success. Our state can no longer afford to have students drift through high school without a plan, or to drop out of high school without motivation. Core 24 is designed to increase the rigor of high school learning while also increasing its relevance.

## Core 24 Principles

1. Equip Everyone. Commits the State to assist all students to prepare for a living-wage job or successful entry into postsecondary education.
2. Expect More. Recognizes that students need better preparation to meet the changing requirements of the labor market and the increasing wage premium paid for higher levels of educational attainment. Supports raising the overall level of educational attainment among Washington's younger citizens—one of the key goals of Washington Learns.
3. Create Intentional Pathways. Insists that students choose a pathway that will prepare them for work, postsecondary education, or both.
4. Provide Options. Provides the flexibility for students to choose a pathway that works for them, with electives to give students the freedom to explore new areas and to delve into areas of interest. Supports a variety of mechanisms for students to meet requirements by demonstrating competency, taking CTE-equivalent classes, earning credit online, or meeting requirements beginning in middle school.
5. Start Early. Recognizes the importance of preparation in middle school for high school and the value of helping students realize that they can begin to meet high school graduation requirements in middle school.
6. Plan Ahead. Elevates the significance of the High School and Beyond Plan by calling for schools to offer personalized guidance beginning in middle school and helps guide student course taking so students are positioned for success after high school.

## Appendix C

### Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan

#### BACKGROUND

The State Board of Education established the Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan as graduation requirements for all students, beginning with the class of 2008.

#### CULMINATING PROJECT

Direction for the culminating project is provided in several places. First, the Board's graduation requirement WAC 180-51-061 states:

- (i) Each student shall complete a culminating project for graduation. The project shall consist of the student demonstrating both their learning competencies and preparations related to learning goals three and four. Each district shall define the process to implement this graduation requirement, including assessment criteria, in written district policy.

Second, the Basic Education Act<sup>6</sup> goals three and four also inform the project. Goals 3 and 4 read:

GOAL 3: Think analytically, logically, and creatively, and to integrate different experiences and knowledge to form reasoned judgments and solve problems.

GOAL 4: Understand the importance of work and finance and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future career and educational opportunities.

Finally, guidelines are posted on the State Board of Education Web site. These guidelines state:

Each student shall complete a Culminating Project. There is no state-level prohibition against doing joint projects of two or more students.

School districts should clearly identify Culminating Project student outcomes and develop and publish assessment criteria to support those outcomes.

Each district should have a clearly identified Culminating Management system, which supports student success through staff development and parent/community involvement.

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<sup>6</sup> RCW 28A.150.210

Project planning, supporting, and providing feedback should include community involvement. As part of the Culminating Project, each student will demonstrate essential skills through reading, writing, speaking, production, and/or performance (Essential Academic Learning Requirements). Each student will have the flexibility to construct his/her own Culminating Project.

School districts shall ensure the safety of each student by complying with legal and risk management guidelines.

## **HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND PLAN**

Direction for the High School and Beyond Plan is established in the Board's graduation requirement WAC 180-51-061, which states:

Each student shall have an education plan for their high school experience, including what they expect to do the year following graduation.

In addition, RCW 28A.230.090 stipulates:

(c) Any decision on whether a student has met the State Board of Education's high school graduation requirements for a High School and Beyond Plan shall remain at the local level.

Guidelines regarding the High School and Beyond Plan are posted on the State Board of Education Web site.

The High School and Beyond Plan gets all students thinking about their future and how to get the most out of high school, so that they're ready to pursue their adult lives, no matter what direction they plan to take.

Ideally, students write their plan in 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade and then continue to revise it throughout high school to accommodate changing interests or goals. Students should be encouraged to include the following elements in their plan:

- Their personal story – what experiences, interests and goals are shaping who they are now and who they want to become. Their learning style. Their goals for high school – What will their four years of high school look like, including classes, extracurricular activities, sports, a job, etc.? Their goals for immediately after high school – Do their goals for high school get them ready for what they want to do after graduation? A student's plan should include the classes needed in preparation for a two- to four-year college, vocational or technical school, certificate program or the workforce.

Each school district determines the guidelines for the High School and Beyond Plan. Please contact your local school district to obtain a copy of the guidelines that have been established for your district.

## **POLICY QUESTIONS**

- What is the relationship between the High School and Beyond Plan and the Culminating Project?
- How can the High School and Beyond Plan and Culminating Project be made more meaningful, and used to make the high school experience more intentional?
- When should the High School and Beyond Planning process begin?
- What key elements of a Culminating Project meet the intent of the Board's requirement?
- What key elements of a High School and Beyond Plan meet the intent of the Board's requirement?
- What are the pros and cons of assigning credit to the requirements?

## **CURRENT DISTRICT PRACTICE**

In response to an e-mail query, 145 (59%) of the 246 districts, with high schools, provided information to the State Board of Education about the approaches they have taken to the culminating project and high school and beyond plan graduation requirements. This summary encapsulates the range of approaches the districts are taking.

### **Components of the Culminating Project**

The most common components of the Culminating Project, listed in order of frequency were:

- Presentation (99)
- Portfolio (84)
- Project/Product (58)
- Research Paper (51)
- Reflection Paper (46)
- Community Service (44)
- Job Shadow (18)

In addition, many districts required project proposals or letters of intent, and a very few required students to complete a college application (2), participate in a senior exit interview (3), or attend a college/career fair (1).

It may appear odd to have a separate category for "project/product" for a requirement called the "Culminating Project." In some cases, the *project* was a portfolio/presentation, portfolio/presentation/reflection paper, or community service/reflection paper. In other cases, the district clearly stipulated that a tangible product or planned project was required in addition to other components. In one case, the culminating project consisted of attending a college/career fair and completing a college application essay.

In those districts where students completed a portfolio, the High School and Beyond Plan was usually part of the portfolio.

As expected with a requirement that can be locally determined, considerable variation in approaches exists across districts.

## HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND PLAN

In response to the e-mail query, districts tended to elaborate more on the Culminating Project and only tangentially on the High School and Beyond Plan. That said, the information provided indicated considerable variation across districts. To capture the two extremes: In some districts, the High School and Beyond Plan was a brief, check-off type activity taking place in the senior year. In other districts, it was a process that began in 8<sup>th</sup> grade, revisited annually, and integrated into a portfolio that was part of the Culminating Project.

Following is a synopsis of district perspectives that will provide a glimpse into the issues posed by the Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan.

### DISTRICTS' RESPONSES: CULMINATING PROJECT

In response to a question posed by SBE staff in an e-mail<sup>7</sup> to the superintendent of every district with a high school, the following responses were received. The question was, "From your perspective on the ground level, what, if anything, would you want the Board to do about these requirements (e.g., leave as is, provide more specific guidance, attach credit to them, etc.)"

Responses are categorized in the following ways:

- Leave as is (with responses organized according to the reasons people suggested to leave as is: working well, have already invested years of development, too much change going on at this time, local control allows flexibility.)
- Attach credit.
- Don't attach credit.
- Eliminate the requirements.
- Fund the requirements.

In addition, concerns, benefits, and general recommendations that surfaced in the comments are categorized and presented. Comments from some districts appear in more than one category as they provided lengthy responses that addressed more than one issue.

### NARRATIVE DISTRICT RESPONSES

1. **Leave as is** (54 of the 145 responses—37%--recommended leaving as is)
  - a. **Requirements are working well**

"I've reviewed the state's Culminating Project language, and don't see any reason to change it. I'm glad that a project is now required, and as far as I'm concerned, the fewer restrictions the better. I just hope that more people will realize how meaningful and educational these projects can be." Pamela Snow, Senior Project Coordinator, Adna School District

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<sup>7</sup> Original e-mail sent in January, 2008; follow-up e-mail to non-respondents sent in March, 2008. A total of 145 (59%) of the 246 districts with high schools responded.

"We are pleased. Leave as is." Greg Godwin, Superintendent, Asotin-Anatone School District

"We are fine with leaving it as it is because we would not adjust what we are doing with or without the requirement." Vicky Murray, Assistant Superintendent, Student Services and Alternative Programs. Bellevue School District

"I think they are working fine the way we have it. We are adjusting it each year to make it work best for our students. At this time I am satisfied with the results." Tori Tinker, Personnel Office, Cashmere School District

"Leave as is and work to get fewer restrictions on PASS monies so funds can be used to assist students in this arena." Pete Lewis, Superintendent, Clarkston School District

"This school year we have begun Navigation 101 and students are working on their high school plan. We also have the seniors write a two-page essay explaining their five year and beyond plan that they put in their Culminating Project portfolio. My superintendent may have a different view than I, but I feel what we are doing is working well. We make minor changes each year as needed, but we have felt good about what our students are achieving." Julie A. Dashiell, Family and Consumer Science Education Instructor, Columbia School District (Stevens County)

"I think the requirements need to be left alone. They have been in place for years, with plenty of time for schools to ramp up for the requirements." Garth Steedman, Principal, Eatonville HS, Eatonville School District

"I'm not sure what further help is needed other than support to continue. Proactive planning and instruction on post high school training/careers is a very important function of our schools." Matt Charlton, Superintendent, Manson School District

"I would not want to have our requirement changed by further directions. I think we are on the right track for what the SBE wanted when they initiated the graduation requirement." Linda Metzger, CTE Supervisor, Tumwater School District

"The requirements are useful and relevant, and they benefit all students in the long run. While they require a great deal of work, we are navigating just fine. I don't think I'd change anything, at least not for another couple of years when we see how this all settles out." Gene Sementi, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction, West Valley School District

"I like the project requirement the way it is currently structured. Our kids get a great deal out of the project and we get a great deal of positive input from the community on the project." John Stemkoski, Principal, Winlock HS, Winlock School District

"Having the CP requirement in place from the state has absolutely been helpful to us. As we get pushback as to its value from certain constituencies, it has been useful to fall

back on the state requirement." Chip Kimball, Superintendent, Lake Washington School District

**b. Leave as is: Have already invested years in development**

"We have worked for many years on our Culminating Project process and are feeling very good about the work that our students are doing. Although it was difficult to get it started, we are excited about the structure we now have and would NOT want more/different guidance from the State Board. We currently offer credit for the course, which is an elective and only taken by a portion of our seniors. We do not offer credit for the project." Susan Zoller, Deputy Superintendent, Bellingham School District

"Mike (superintendent) feels that we have worked with the project for a long time and that we would like to leave as is. Thru the last five years we have fine tuned it and feel we have a good thing going for our students. He does not feel we should attach credit or change any of the guidelines." Mary Weishaar, Senior Project Coordinator, Camas High School, Camas School District

"In Deer Park, we have had senior projects for over a decade, before it was a state requirement. We added the High School and Beyond Plan to the mix with last year's seniors as part of a four-year advisory program (begun with a Navigation 101 grant). It is difficult to determine cost. The grant paid for most of our expenses in putting the "Stags Lead" program together and we are using existing staff to monitor the program and senior presentations. We have added a credit to the four-year program already. I think this is an area where the State Board should leave it as is." Mick Miller, Superintendent, Deer Park School District

"Leave it as it is with local school districts developing their own project requirements to meet the WAC." Steve Chestnut, Superintendent, Moses Lake School District

**c. Leave as is: Too much change already**

"Leave things alone. As a high school principal, we already have a hard enough time trying to figure out what is required these days for a diploma, now with the new legislation on maybe stalling reading. YIKES. Let's keep things consistent. Most schools around the state have known since 1993/94 that we were supposed to have a Culminating Project in place, so most have had something for some time now." Beth Vanderveen, Principal, Burlington Edison School District

"Do not change the requirements of these programs so we have time to further develop and stabilize our implementation plan." Terry Parker, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, Enumclaw School District

"At this time, leave it alone. It takes considerable time for anything to become established. To offer changes at this time may be counterproductive." Dan Martell, Principal, Ephrata HS, Ephrata School District

"Speaking for myself, these requirements were not something I was in favor of to begin with. I believe they have limited value to the educational process. I don't believe the system or the students are better for them. Please don't make changes. With all of the changes constantly coming out of SBE, OSPI, and the Legislature, it is making everybody crazy." Joel Thaut, Superintendent, Granite Falls School District

"Please leave as is--leave the decision for this up to the local district. Please do not add any more requirements that would have our school and staff modify any programs, add elements to the Culminating Project or add any additional paperwork or tracking of data--we cannot keep up adjustments to all the new legislation that already comes out of the Legislature each session. In our case, our Culminating Project class earns graduation credit as an elective credit. The Culminating Project our students do is specifically related to their future career goals. In a previous district I was in, the Culminating Project could be on any topic i.e., fly fishing, snow skiing and such things not necessarily related to post secondary education or a career of interest. At the very least in my view, the Culminating Project is best related to future learning or work." Gary Wargo, Superintendent, LaCrosse School District

"At this point, we are working hard to implement what we have carefully planned over the past several years, I would not ask for or recommend any changes at this point. I believe we would lose credibility with students, parents, community and staff if we were to change the requirements after just getting them all in place this year." Larry Francois, Superintendent, Lakewood School District

"At this point I would be concerned with significant changes to what is currently required. What we are doing now is working pretty well, the students and staff understand it and I get nervous whenever any government agencies begin tampering with requirements as it usually means everyone needs to do more with less." Scott Grabenhorst, Superintendent, Toutle Lake School District

"From my perspective, we have worked very hard as a faculty developing a program that works for our students, our community, and our teachers. I would not want the Board to change anything regarding this year's requirements--certainly whether or not it is required for graduation--as was done with the math WASL. If the Board chooses to change things out, I would like the changes to begin with the class of 2010, as we have not held students to any project requirements yet." Joan Zook, Superintendent, Shelton School District

"Leave it as it is with local school districts developing their own project requirements to meet the WAC." Steve Chestnut, Superintendent, Moses Lake School District

#### **d. Leave as is: Local control allows flexibility**

"Leave it as it is with local school districts developing their own project requirements to meet the WAC." Steve Chestnut, Superintendent, Moses Lake School District

"Completion of the plan is part of three different courses students complete in the senior year, along with a portfolio they maintain via the career center. Thus, while certainly this has impacted teacher and career center counselors (as well as grade level counselors) time, the only true cost we might tie to this is that we did, a year ago, move from three counselors at Cheney High School to four--to assure we could have a designated counselor for each class because of changing/shifting graduation requirements for each class. We are candidly okay with this part of the graduation requirements...and the flexibility that has allowed for us to implement in a way that works for us." Mike Dunn, Superintendent, Cheney School District

"We think the two requirements are very valuable for our students and the Culminating Project is a great public relations tool for our community to see that students today are not all lost souls without morals, ethics, or skills but very good kids with a sense of direction and abilities. It is already a graduation requirement so allow local districts to govern how they are accomplished within the school. Local control allows districts to determine what it will look like for their district and what will work well for their students and community." Michael Morgan, Superintendent, Colfax School District

"Leave the requirements as they are. This gives local control for the Culminating Project and local control to the initial creation of the 13th year and beyond plan and the updating or revising of the plan. As the superintendent, I appreciate standards and goals. However, a one-size-fits-all program does not work. There are many school districts doing innovative and creative things to get their students to the next level. What I wish is that the State Board would establish goals and then provide support for local districts when they are struggling and need ideas or help from with other resources. At Dayton, we are increasing our graduation rate and increasing the number of students going beyond high school for education. If the State Board becomes too regulatory that may stifle many of the things that work with our district." Rich Stewart, Superintendent, Dayton School District

"It is working very well for us. I wouldn't want to see forced changes from above. I think it should remain a local decision to award credit or not. For example, we had not awarded credit previous to this year. We made the decision this year to tie it into a partial credit for Connections, as the projects our kids did were definitely worthy of some credit." Mark Hummel, Principal, East Valley High School, East Valley School District (Yakima)

"Students can complete their projects within courses or outside of courses through an alternative learning experience. Now that we have implemented a process for both the High School and Beyond Plan and the Culminating Project, it would be very difficult if the requirements were to change much. This would only cause confusion and more discontent if the changes were perceived as "more" or restrictive. We have the flexibility to attach credit if developed and aligned with such requirements. Leaving the development of specific requirements at the local level is helpful to meeting the needs of the students we serve and the goals of our district. I would be interested in knowing what is currently NOT working that would initiate a need to change these requirements."  
Debbie McClary, Kennewick School District

"Leave it to local control. Many districts and communities have developed projects that work for them. To step in and mandate certain specifications, etc. I think would be a bad deal." Doug Johnson, Superintendent, Odessa School District

"We do not want the SBE to do anything further about these two requirements, at least none of the things that you are suggesting. We like the openness of the current requirements that allows us to continue to create the High School and Beyond Plan in the 8th grade and gives the seniors, and us, a wide range of opportunities to create their culminating project." Barbara Kline, Principal, Orcas Island Middle and High School

"I like the requirement as it is. I also like the fact that we were able to develop our own project and not be told exactly what it will look like. I would say, "leave it as it is." At Toledo High School, we don't want more direction from the state. We feel as if we have developed a pretty good product that fits our kids and community." Shawn Corrigan, Principal, Toledo High School, Toledo School District

"I appreciate the ability to design our project with required state components and working as a district to improve, "tweak," and discuss our project. Since this is our first year, I do not want the state to do anything different other than provide some funding designated for this line item." Janet McCutcheon, Assistant Principal, Columbia High School, White Salmon School District

"Leave as is for local district-level decision-making." Lauri Landerholm, Assistant Principal, La Center High School, La Center School District

"Let the districts continue to implement the guidelines as presented." Mike Perry, Principal, Davenport School District

"Please maintain the requirement. There is value in the process and products the students produce as part of their CP." Mike Johnson, Director of Teaching and Learning, South Whidbey School District

"My take, then, is for the SBE to leave it as it is, but if they see these specific requirements headed in the "wrong" direction, to give some further, general directions to get back on track as to what the SBE intended these programs to be." Rick De Graw, Counselor, Taholah School District

**2. Attach Credit** (15 of the 145 responses—10%--recommended attaching credit.)

"Attach credit to advisors and senior project--show on transcript." Dan Newell, Principal, Blaine HS, Blaine School District

"Currently, we have students complete these plans as part of their regularly scheduled classes (currently the career research report is done in Jr/Sr English classes). Additional time is set aside (approximately 10-20 hours) during the school year for teachers/counselors to assist students with their plans and projects. We should look (as a state) at attaching credit to the projects and a stipend for teachers that are responsible for assisting students in completion of their plan and project...this is an additional work load and responsibility...much like what is happening with the Collection of Evidence process." Kandy Ritter, Director of Teaching & Learning, Cape Flattery School District

"I would probably attach at least .5 credit to it because of the amount of work that goes in. Other than that I like the local control of how a culminating project looks." Rob Clark, Superintendent, Cascade School District

"Attach credit." Rich DuBois, Superintendent, Lake Quinault School District

"Attach credit and funding." Marti Harruff, Superintendent, Montesano School District

"From our perspective, the requirements could be left as is, or add a credit requirement. We already have a credit requirement at Quincy High School." Tracy Higgins, Advisory Coordinator, Quincy School District

"I would support giving credit for the completion of the Culminating Project. I don't think it would be appropriate for the 13 year plans. These expectations have finally become institutionalized. Students are being successful with the CP. A request from the Board to the Legislature for funding support for districts would be helpful." Mary Alice Henschel, Superintendent, Renton School District

"We would like to see the CP work tied to graduation requirements so that students receive credit for the required careers classes. Our biggest concern is still the awareness level that this is a state graduation requirement." Pam Ansingh, Executive Director for Teaching and Learning, Selah School District

"I think having each of the requirements bear credit would be beneficial for the Community School in knowing what students who come as fifth year seniors need to complete and also because kids seem to get the idea of "credits" as required." Patra Boots, Principal, Community School, Sequim School District

"This is the first year we require a Culminating Project with many guidelines and are giving a two-day a week class to help seniors complete their senior project. It is like pulling teeth. I do think a credit for this would be a good idea. I believe that students need to be accountable and this is a good process for our students, even if many of them will not go on to college (we have 25 students in our High School.) For the

Culminating Project, we used Bellingham's form which we got off the web. It is detailed and we modified some portions that did not apply. Our students live in the mountains and our community is 200 people. They do not have many opportunities for community involvement as, say, Edmonds. I believe it is more difficult for us; however, they are succeeding and completing their projects in order to graduate. We have put the senior project class with the speech class." Kathy McCowan, Skykomish School District

"I hope the SBE continues to give districts the flexibility to develop their own guidelines for the Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan. However, I believe it would be helpful to attach a credit to the project and plan." Dan Whitford, Director of Instructional Services, South Kitsap School District

"Our preference would be to: 1) allow students credit for their projects and have them evaluated for a letter grade, 2) receive an allocation to support the additional staff involvement required to advise students about their projects, monitor, and track their work, and 3) allocate funding to pay staff volunteers to be trained and be advisors to specific groups of students in order to ensure a quality project." Ethelda Burke, Interim Superintendent, Tukwila School District

"Fund it and give credit for it." Tim Ames, Superintendent, Wellpinit School District

"Many students struggle with beginning and completing the projects independently. Most need support throughout the entire process. A credit course may assist most students. More specific requirements might also level the playing field between schools." Pete Diklich, Principal, Yelm High School

**3. Don't Attach Credit** (11 of the 145 responses—8%--recommended not attaching credit.)

"I wouldn't attach credit in our case as we have a class established for kids to work on a majority of the aspects of the Culminating Project. As long as the state is flexible, I think we are doing a good job. I like the open nature of the Culminating Project." Justin Laine, Counselor, Naselle School District

"We can attach credit to them if we made the Culminating Project an elective course so we don't need the State Board to attach credit to this requirement. We don't want to take away from our electives. We don't need this to be a credit-bearing requirement. We do need financial support because no school can do it without having at least a part-time Culminating Project coordinator. We have a .4-8 FTE Culminating Project coordinators, depending on the size of our comprehensive high schools." Carolyn O'Keefe, Director of Secondary Education, Northshore School District

"Adequately fund basic education, or at least the mandates that the Board adopts. Currently, the discussion of math increases in requirements will most likely not come with funding, although it would be a significant strain on us because we are rural, we would need more math instructors, and that would be at the expense of electives. The

State Board can have guidelines, but should not have influence on local graduation "credit" requirements." John Belcher, Principal, Omak Middle and High School

"We would like to see NO changes at this point. The current arrangement allows for district flexibility to tailor projects and plans to individual building schedules and systems. We currently are not in favor of attaching credit due to this affecting graduation requirements." Kathy Ehman, Assistant Superintendent, Sedro-Woolley School District

"Attaching credit is not appropriate in our current system, since the plan is part of a graduation requirement as well as the current guidance delivery model." Tom Lockyer, Superintendent, White River School District

"If you add the Culminating Project as a credit then it involves union issues which we faced when we were using advisories to implement the Culminating Project and High School and Beyond Plan. Teachers would then need to be paid for the time, grading and interaction with students when credit is involved. Teachers would also require training, which was a complaint the teachers had about advisories and that also requires money for training time." Cindy Wardlow, Culminating Project Coordinator and CTE Coordinator, Kelso School District

"At this time, we do not recommend that the State Board of Education attach a credit to the Culminating Project requirement or that they lower the current requirements. We do recommend that the State Board work to provide funding for this graduation requirement." Merri Rieger, Kent School District

"I would not recommend attaching credit to these requirements. These are designed to be proficiency-based, and work well as such. When you attach credit to them there is a whole host of problems that will be created including seat time requirements, labor contract issues, tracking issues, etc." Chip Kimball, Superintendent, Lake Washington School District

"We would not recommend the attachment of credit to the requirement for the senior project or fifth year and beyond plan. In Moses Lake we have come up with a very manageable program to meet the requirement." Steve Chestnut, Superintendent, Moses Lake School District

"As for credit--I know that some districts do assign credit for CP; however, since it is a state requirement, we felt that it should be a part of the English and CWP curriculum (i.e., you must do adequately on the Senior Culminating Project or you would not pass those two required classes) and this seems to work well." Kimm Minkler, Counselor, Kiona-Benton High School, Kiona Benton School District

"This is one of the most relevant, meaningful, inspirational requirements associated with graduation. I have numerous copies of students' reflection papers, and they are phenomenal. Please do not make such a project "credit bearing;" we need the flexibility to do that locally. Some students need to take a class (for credit) to have the support.

Others are fully independent and have full academic schedules." Whitney Meissner, Principal, Chimacum High School

**4. Eliminate the Requirements** (three of the 145 responses—2%--recommended eliminating the requirements.)

"Drop the requirements and put them back at the district level because they are unfunded mandates and have no true validity and are not required for any future employment or admittance into trade schools or any college and or university." Clay Henry, Principal, Goldendale High School, Goldendale School District

"Some of the project can be eliminated because it is an additional burden for students and staff. The five-year plan, job shadowing, career explorations, and college and technical school visitations would be far more effective than a Culminating Project." David Thomas, Superintendent, Lind School District

"To be honest, we are doing the minimum to comply with state law. Our High School program is rigorous and demanding. We see the project as an unnecessary add-on to an already full academic schedule. We have been doing a student five-year plan for at least ten years that I know of. We recommend that the CP be dropped as a state graduation requirement. We have a rigorous curriculum; we require 25 hours of community service annually; seniors prepare a scholarship notebook; we require substantially more English, math, science, history, and civics, than the state requirements. Our recommendation would be to drop everything but the WASL reading, writing and math assessments for graduation (plus the credit requirements, of course). Those skills are the building blocks for all academic disciplines." Susan Hanson, Principal, Vashon Island High School, Vashon Island School District

**5. Fund the Requirements** (15 of the 145 responses—10%--recommended funding the requirements.)

"Fund a longer school day; fund six periods; actually, we could use seven periods); fund clerical and counseling support; fund supplies needed to complete projects." Ann Varkados, Asst. Superintendent Curriculum and Instruction, Pierce School District

"Fund CP or eliminate it." Judith Murdock, Executive Director of Education, Mukilteo School District

"If the state wants to mandate additional graduation requirements, it should find a way to pay for the time, energy, and financial costs associated with the changes. Put in the context of school reform and the mandates of NCLB and state standards, the amount of work and pressure to simply manage and organize all of this is very taxing on school employees. Remember that these are people with huge hearts for kids. I would hate for the additional burdens to diminish the great work we are already doing with our students." Mark St. Clair, Principal, Lakeside High School, Nine Mile Falls School District

"We have already attached a competency-based credit to this requirement as a local diploma requirement. This target needs to remain constant for a few more years until we get this done. A moving target will not be helpful. Some funding would be helpful." Ted Jansen, Principal, North Mason HS, North Mason School District

"These unfunded mandates are starting to divert a lot of energy in our school toward activities that are not helping us increase student learning but instead check boxes for completion. I know this is not the intent of the activities but it is the result. Schools are struggling to meet all the legislated requirements and meet the needs of our students. Our students have higher personal and academic needs on an annual basis. However, we find ourselves following data and procedure more than working with students to meet academic standards." Dwight Lundstrom, Principal, Oak Harbor High School, Oak Harbor School District

"Assist in funding." Carrie Lutz, Port Angeles School District

"We offer two classes at the 9th and 11th grade to work on the CP portfolio and CP. We already attach credit to them, I think they need to fund teacher salary to provide class time for students to work on the CPs and portfolios; grants should be available for community and schools to work together to create and offer opportunities for students to do internships, service projects and other projects that benefit students exploring career interests." Gordy Waite, Director of Guidance and Counseling, Friday Harbor High School, San Juan Island School District

"I would like the Board to provide funding for extra counseling help to deal with all the new graduation requirements." Loanna Torey, Sequim School District

"The SBE could recommend or require the legislature to provide additional funding to support the additional requirement. Any new requirements should also be followed by adequate funding. In our school district, we have been forced to divert other funding to support this program requirement." Mike Johnson, Director of Teaching and Learning, South Whidbey School District

"If the Board is interested in this as a continued graduation requirement, it would be appropriate for the Board to work with the legislature to direct resources to support a successful implementation of this mandate (as well as any others like it). While Navigation 101 as a grant resource is helpful to begin the implementation, it is only enough to begin the first steps of a successful implementation." Michael Olson, Stanwood Camano School District

"The only change we would recommend is for the state to fund these mandates. We have liked being able to develop the program for our students with their unique needs and would not recommend any specific changes." Kim Grady-Andrews, Counselor, Warden School District

"The only thing I would add is that this is a great program and should continue. One must realize that it is an unfunded mandate that we have had to come up with creative ways to fund. Unfortunately, this always comes with a financial impact to other programs that we need to take money away from." John Schieche, Superintendent, East Valley School District (Yakima)

"I think that they are important requirements for our graduates. As I have said, we have had them in place for a number of years and would continue even if it was not a state requirement. The challenge we face is the cost of maintaining the level of quality." Brian Howe, Principal, Stevenson High School, Stevenson-Carson School District

"We would like the SBE to fund each career counselor to assist districts with completion of the graduation requirements. The mobility of our students (out of state students enrolling at our high schools) creates an increased workload for our academic counselors." Shirley Kenmochi, Executive Director, Secondary Teaching and Learning, Central Kitsap School District

"If we are going to keep the Culminating Project as a requirement, there must be some funding attached to it or it will be cut along with everything else or streamlined so much that it will not benefit students. Our project is a good one but requires a tremendous amount of administrative and teacher time, which is very expensive." Kevin McKay, Superintendent, Zillah School District

## **CONCERNS ABOUT CULMINATING PROJECT**

### **1. Broad Guidelines Allow Flexibility but Create Inconsistency of Rigor Across Districts.**

"The requirements are broad enough that it gives each district some flex, but also keeps a common standard from occurring. Overall, we would want the requirement to remain, possibly with more definition as to acceptable standards." Rainer Houser, Superintendent, Ocean Beach School District

"Provide a better framework for what the state would like to see in regard to the High School and Beyond Plans as well as the Culminating Project. The Culminating Project has never really identified the parts and pieces that a school should include to show what a student knows. (Do you want a math element to it? How about reading?) A great number of districts use portfolios to show a student's best work, but does this really do what we are asking for? Stating that we have to do a project and then leaving all the details up to the schools raises the stress level for everyone involved, and then it is never measured. We are checking off a box...Are we doing the culminating project? Yes/No." Karl Ostheller, Principal, Oakesdale School District

"I feel that the CP is a great way to hold students accountable for their learning. The only concern I have is the variation of requirements as to the project and presentation." Sally Nelson, CP Coordinator, Thorp School District

"The state may play a role in assisting in the identification of a set of Culminating Project standards for all high schools. As we have a very mobile population, this is critical."  
Mike Stromme, Chief of Secondary Education, Vancouver School District

"My suggestion is to be sure there is a project component. Some local schools just make them do a paper and then do a presentation on it. Perhaps specific guidelines would be helpful to make it uniform. I know a student who transferred to another school and she said ours is much harder than that school. I know it is a great experience for our kids, but is it fair that others get by on much less?" Roseann Groom, Waitsburg HS, Waitsburg School District

"Help with quality control so that there is more consistency to avoid having students move from one high school to another to finish this." Rebecca Miner, Assistant Superintendent, Washougal School District

"We realize that some districts do not require nearly the depth that we do but we are proud of our accomplishments even though it takes us more time. We don't want to diminish what we have started. So leave it as is with some minor monitoring of districts to assure that the state guideline is being followed." Michael Morgan, Superintendent, Colfax School District

"Schools have had too much added to their plate and it is difficult to find time to teach with all the added bureaucracy. What do I mean by that? It is that we should have had more guidance in the "Culminating Project" as it is not close to consistency across the state. Some districts have very difficult project requirements and others have very easy requirements. I think we fall in the middle of the spectrum. Students transferring from different districts run into conflicts with the next district as the requirements are so variable. If you add guidelines now, then all the work the districts have done to get in compliance with the state requirements will be wasted." Cindy Wardlow, Culminating Project Coordinator and CTE Coordinator, Kelso School District

"Either local control as it was originally intended, and followed for many years in the past so that districts can truly individualize programs as they see fit, or, if consistency is what is truly desired, a more consistent statewide plan that is not as open for interpretation district to district." Kyle Miller, Principal, Columbia High School, Columbia School District (Walla Walla)

"Please do not create any more changes in the graduation requirements. If you must do so, please allow time for us to adjust and create the excellent communication and system structures so that our students, their families, and staff can prepare for these changes. Also, provide a consistent message about the requirements to the media and through your office." Kimberly Mueller, Coordinator of Graduation Requirements, Tacoma School District

"It would be nice if the requirements were more laid out and state wide. It is tough in smaller districts when you have two or three individuals trying to get all graduation requirements done for each student." Brian Parisotto, Asst. Principal, Freeman High School, Freeman School District

"Some districts are using the High School and Beyond Plan to meet the requirement of the Culminating Project, yet students do not do an independent study project (research paper, physical project, and public presentation). Some districts equate the presentation of their portfolio with an in-depth project where a student researches, completes, and then presents on a topic of interest. The SBE should more clearly define this standard. We have committed staffing to provide a class as required credit toward graduation. We clearly are meeting the law in terms of EALR Goal 3 and 4. Our visits to other districts show a dramatic difference in the requirement at the local levels." John Polm, Jenkins High School Principal, Chewelah School District

"It would be nice to have more guidance from the state so the new requirements are implemented consistently. We are all over the map!" John Harrison, Principal, Mercer Island High School, Mercer Island School District

## **2. The Culminating Project Assumes a Skill Level Some Students Don't Have.**

"I believe the culminating project requirement is flawed. Ellensburg School District rewrote our project requirements based on the recommendations made by a self-study team. I very much like the new direction we have taken. Conceptually, the project design is sound and the work can be meaningful but, in my opinion, the premise of the Culminating Project is flawed. In theory, the Culminating Project should show applied application of mastery of academic goals. We (the state) measure the mastery of those goals, in large part, through a demonstration of mastery on the WASL. If the Culminating Project is to be truly meaningful a student must have basic skills to complete the project. That is not the case. Students who lack basic skills are allowed (forced) to proceed towards the completion of a senior project--this is happening not only in Ellensburg but in other districts as well. This effort distracts students from working on the basics and instead engages them in a watered-down activity to meet graduation requirements." John Glenewinkel, Superintendent, Ellensburg School District

"We believe the CP should be a local graduation requirement, not a state requirement. Right now our energies are on getting our seniors to standard in reading and writing, making sure they are successful in math if they didn't meet the math standard, and helping them to meet the credit requirements...no easy task and then we layer on the CP for the same students who are already at risk of not graduating. It's too much and in many cases it is not very meaningful. The SBE should make the Culminating Project a local option, not a state requirement." Nancy Stowell, Superintendent, Spokane School District

### **3. The Culminating Project Adds to Workload.**

"Hoquiam has incorporated this requirement into its senior level Global Issues class. Students complete a project within the class and they must document community service hours as a requirement. Each senior also participates in a formal interview process with local citizens. Each student must present a formal cover letter and resume' during the interview. Since we have used this in the class and added the requirement to the teacher, it has created greater responsibility and paper work to his load. It is also another thing that the counselor must consider when determining who will or will not graduate. Hoquiam High School has also begun a Navigation 101 program this year as well. The High School and Beyond Plan is part of this curriculum." Mike Parker, Superintendent, Hoquiam School District

"I support these standards but it will take many staff members' time to make sure the quality and rigor is there for each student." Jim Busey, Superintendent, Lake Chelan School District

"We attach a credit for completion of the project. We use our computer class to introduce students to this four-year project. I then visit 10, 11, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade English classes to assist the students in keeping their projects on track. We offer an elective class senior year, in which students can also get additional assistance. I am in the computer lab one afternoon a month so students can get help. I know the students are the ones that are supposed to be responsible for this project; however, I see the adults in our school doing a lot of the work in order to make sure students graduate." Julie Riegel, Counselor, Newport High School, Newport School District

"We are discussing how to redesign the Grad Project. We all want to retain the elements that have been extremely valuable to students (research, writing a long paper, presenting to a panel of community adults, managing and completing a large and complex project) while reducing elements that are problematic (not all students need 90 days, the FTE required is difficult to provide with increasing demands for WASL/COE classes, etc.) We may look at changing the .5 credit requirement in 2009-10, but would like to know the new State Board graduation requirements first." Karen Eltreim, Director Diversity, Languages, Arts, North Thurston School District

"We are also concerned about the plans and how to manage them electronically so that we are not buried in paper and are able to sort and monitor student progress." Susan Zoller, Deputy Superintendent, Bellingham School District

"When we take class time to address the Culminating Project, we are taking instruction time away from something else." Tom Anderson, Superintendent, Crescent School District

#### **4. The Purpose is Unclear.**

"I judged the Hearst Senatorial Scholarships in November for AWSP. Twelve top seniors from across the state compete for two \$5,000 scholarships and a week in Washington, DC. When one interview question asked their understanding of the graduation requirements for the Class of 2008, the Culminating Project was clearly the most confusing element. Some even stated they knew they had to complete something but didn't know what or when or how. I was quite disturbed by this response because these were seniors and it was November. I share that just to encourage increased clarity for students in whatever revision is made." Karen Eitreim, Director, Diversity, Languages, Arts, North Thurston School District

"Since we engaged in the senior project/paper in 1995, our program has been reviewed annually and revised to meet the needs of our students. The past school year was no exception. We reviewed the program needs and are continuing to wrestle with the following program concerns: 1) Lost instructional time due to the time spent working with students on the state High School and Beyond Plan; 2) adequate resources to support the senior project/paper and the High School and Beyond Plan; 3) layering of the additional High School and Beyond Plan state standard on top of the existing program we operated. A significant component of our review last year was the time we spent with high school seniors in a focus group review of the senior project/paper and High School and Beyond Plan. We provided students a voice and they shared with us their frustrations. The students who participated shared their frustration with the lack of connection between the requirement and their future work. Of course, we are obligated to help students build this bridge to the work by developing a Culminating Project that is more focused on post high school readiness for work, school and life. The student learning must be more authentic and aligned with student interests. We could not argue with a Culminating Project. As previously stated, we have a model that we can build from and improve...making it more relevant to the lives of students. However, it may not be a research paper." Mike Stromme, Chief of Secondary Education, Vancouver School District

#### **5. The Logistics of Getting Full-time Running Start Students to Complete the Culminating Project is Challenging.**

"It would be nice if the colleges needed to take more responsibility for making sure that the Running Start students get their requirements completed successfully. It is hard for the teachers to try and keep on top of the kids when they aren't on campus. Our local community college doesn't seem to know anything about the CP requirements, and so that makes it "our problem" instead of them working in partnership with us on it. I know from talking to other administrative colleagues at the high school level that this is not a problem unique to our school." Carrie Ehrhardt, Principal, Port Townsend High School

"Determine whether community colleges will handle Running Start students' projects or whether students have to work with a high school on that issue; help with quality control so that there is more consistency to help avoid having students move from one high

school to another to finish this; consider a pass/fail credit for the 5-year plan if districts have a rigorous enough program" Rebecca Miner, Assistant Superintendent, Washougal School District

"We are very concerned about the students who are full-time Running Start and still have to complete this project." Susan Zoller, Deputy Superintendent, Bellingham School District

## **BENEFITS**

"Everything is done in a single class...we do have an advisory and are beginning to blend it into our advisory using Navigation 101. It gets the students to think about their plan throughout high school and then reflect on their education. It also makes them think about what they are going to do with their lives." Don Beazizo, Principal, Concrete High School

"I believe the project is a time for all students to show what the application of their learning is. Some students struggle but with the guidance of an adult mentor they do complete the project." Marianna Goheen, Highline School District

"This is the fourth school that I have had a major role in starting and implementing the CP requirement. I have found that the project and presentation can be a very profound and meaningful experience. I have had a number of students tell me it was one of the best things they ever did in high school." John Lombardi, Principal, Monroe High School, Monroe School District

"We are proud of our district's implementation of the senior project and have had this requirement in place prior to the state requirements. We believe that the senior project is a powerful way for our students to demonstrate our six district outcomes and to synthesize their learning around a topic of their choosing. We will continue with the senior project even if it were no longer a state requirement." Nancy Skerritt, Asst. Superintendent/Director, Teaching and Learning, Tahoma School District

"We have been requiring these classes for a long time (since 1993). We will continue to offer them no matter what the state does, because we believe they have great value and they are both so much a part of the culture in our building." Doug Dearden, Superintendent, Trout Lake School District

"Because we have all of our teachers and counselors involved via an Advisory Program designed to assist student with CP graduation requirements, all teachers need to know the requirements needed to graduate as well as those that will prepare students for college and the world of work; thus pushing students to think beyond the current year of school. Students are required to reflect on what is a "best work," which helps them to self-evaluate and defend what is quality work. Our community service requirement gets students out in our community which provides advantages to the community and an opportunity for the community to see how great our students are." Merri Rieger, Kent School District

"I see no problems with the requirements and believe they have enriched the education of our students. The senior project more than the High School and Beyond Plan. The portfolio that the students begin in 7th grade is valuable and the students use it each year to lead the student-led conference with their parents but I am not sure it has the meaning that the senior project does in the eyes of the students and their parents."

Suellen White, Superintendent, Easton School District

"In the last few years, we have had good response from parents and community members who come in and listen to the oral presentations. I can't really think of any negatives or big changes that staff or other adults are asking for. Some even act as "mentors" to the students year after year and enjoy seeing the young people as they explore their topic/project." Kimm Minkler, Counselor, Kiona-Benton High School, Kiona-Benton School District

### **GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

"You should look at the 2007 schools of distinction research and see what elements have been implemented successfully, then go to the legislature to fund some grants to help schools get the requirements fully implemented. The requirements are easy to meet. School districts just need to get them going." Kim Spacek, Superintendent, Pomeroy School District

"Question from one of our principals: Could the completion of these projects substitute for passing a portion of the WASL?" Sue Porter, Director of Teaching and Learning, Shoreline School District

"I would also suggest that we use the Culminating Project as an option for those students who don't or can't pass the WASL. Scrap OSPI's COE model and let local school districts decide if the student's Culminating Project is worthy of them being able to graduate from high school." Kevin McKay, Superintendent, Zillah School District

"We have three comprehensive and one alternative high school within our district. Our alternative school has required a Culminating Project for the past eight years. I would want us to be very thoughtful and careful about what we do, particularly as an unfunded mandate. At this time, we are exploring the possibility of tweaking our model to more closely reflect the work being done by the HECB in identifying attributes that are deemed as college ready necessities, as well as the work required for the National Work Readiness credential." Mike Gallagher, Executive Director of High Schools, Issaquah School District

### **Recommendations about Navigation 101**

"Also, promote the concept of Navigation 101. It gives predesigned lesson templates with an overall program that is similar to what we developed on our own. People shouldn't have to reinvent this program and it is too good to not provide it to all students in our state. We received a grant this year to perfect our high school program and start the comprehensive career counseling in the 6-8th grade. This year we will do the

planning and next year implementation." Michael Morgan, Superintendent, Colfax School District

"I would like to see both remain as graduation requirements as they contribute to significant parts of the educational experience. Personally, I would like to see the Board require Navigation 101 as the vehicle for the High School and Beyond Plan. This ensures that all students receive an equitable experience. The data behind this program to support its effectiveness is significant. Unfortunately, it can be a challenge in some schools and districts to implement something this comprehensive without it being a requirement." Dawn Fairchild, Principal, Ferndale HS, Whatcom School District

"We would like to see the state continue funding Navigation 101 grants--or fund coordinators directly as an additional administrator or counselor-type position specific to tracking graduation requirements. We are afraid that with the added duties involved with student learning plans, WASL preparation and organization, and the coordination involved with advisories and Culminating Projects, building budgets will have a difficult time supporting the need without increasing class-size." Carl Bruner, Superintendent, Mount Vernon School District

"My desire would be to require it be attached to a portfolio of work through a program such as Navigation 101 so it makes sense to everyone and is consistent across districts. It's quite difficult to have a senior transfer who has been working on a totally different sort of project." Kristine Hatfield, Counselor, Sultan High school, Sultan School District

### **High School and Beyond Plan**

"A little more specific guidance on the High School and Beyond Plan might be nice. We have kids fill out a single page plan each year at registration with their parent. They identify post high school interests, present classes, possible careers, and they set a goal. We also write a reflection paper each year that requires them to reflect on their past and present personal and educational experiences as they relate to the future. I assume that this would meet the state's guidelines." Justin Laine, Counselor, Naselle School District

"For the High School and Beyond Plan...I don't know, maybe a general form for all districts to use (but I am speaking from a small school perspective...don't know how it would impact the larger districts.)" Karl Ostheller, Principal, Oakesdale School District

"Leave High School and Beyond Plan as is." Judith Murdock, Executive Director of Education, Mukilteo School District

"We need to look at how to better implement our High School and Beyond Plan. They seem tedious and time consuming and are not related to credit or any specific course work." Jodi Thew, Prescott School District

"Many middle schools perceive the High School and Beyond Plan as a graduation requirement "not their responsibility." Planning for high school and beyond, as an

exploratory process, is appropriate for the middle level. The plan should have a two-step requirement--the high school plan at the end of grade 8 and the "beyond plan" required at either end of junior or senior year; however, training and implementation supported resources must be directed from the state to middle-level schools. The bottom line is that as a continued requirement, these additional plans should be more coordinated to provide a more common experience for students across the state with additional state resources to support the implementation." Michael Olson, Stanwood Camano School District

"Layering the High School and Beyond Plan on top of the Culminating Project is redundant. It needs to be one or the other. One state graduation Culminating Project that has deep personal meaning and relevance to each student." Mike Stromme, Chief of Secondary Education, Vancouver School District

"Consider a pass/fail credit for the five-year plan if districts have a rigorous enough program." Rebecca Miner, Assistant Superintendent, Washougal School District

"As for the High School and Beyond Plan, it is the first year we have required it; although, our seniors last year completed one in their Advisory class. We did not monitor completion last year as it was not a graduation requirement. This plan takes about 15 minutes to fill out. The real work is the opportunities we provide for students to learn about future options. This would be the sophomore career fair, time on the Washington Occupation Information System (WOIS) which provides career research information, our Beyond High School Fair and opportunities to meet with guest speakers and reps from businesses." Cindy Wardlow, Culminating Project Coordinator and CTE Coordinator, Kelso School District

"The CP is great as is; however, we would like to see more guidance for the High School and Beyond Plan in terms of what is the expected end product." Russell Hill, Principal, River View HS, Finley School District

"I would like more specific guidance as to the state requirements for the Culminating Project and specifically the High School and Beyond Plan. My administrator would love a High School and Beyond Plan checklist so everyone had a completion map to follow. We feel this is the missing piece for total compliance to state requirements, because without it, we may inadvertently miss a piece of the plan. We begin working with our students in the 8th grade. They explore careers, do interest assessments, and begin to think about their future. I believe the earlier you start with students, the more likely they are to have a high school plan, so I schedule a college fair at the middle school for the day before I do the community and high school college fair." Cathy Krohn, Career Pathways Coordinator, Lake Roosevelt High School, Grand Coulee Dam School District

"I'd like to see the plans begin earlier and be career research-based. This will allow the course of study in high school to change if necessary based on career choices. This can obviously occur currently with the Board of Education action. As is, the program seems to be working well." Bill Motsenbocker, Superintendent, Liberty School District

“The High School and Beyond Plan gets all students thinking about their future and how to get the most out of high school, so that they're ready to pursue their adult lives, no matter what direction they plan to take. Ideally, students write their plan in 8th or 9th grade and then continue to revise it throughout high school to accommodate changing interests or goals. Students should be encouraged to include the following elements in their plan: their personal story, learning style, goals for high school, and goals for immediately after high school.” Kandy Ritter, Director of Teaching & Learning, Cape Flattery School District

With thanks to the 145 school districts that responded to staff queries:

**School Districts Less than 500 Students (25)**

Cape Flattery  
Columbia (Stevens County)  
Crescent  
Easton  
Entiat  
Inchelium  
Kahlotus  
Lacrosse  
Lake Quinault  
Lind  
Naselle-Grays River Valley  
Oakesdale  
Odessa  
Palouse  
Pomeroy  
Prescott  
Selkirk  
Skykomish  
St. John  
Taholah  
Tekoa  
Thorp  
Trout Lake  
Waitsburg  
Wellpinit

**School Districts with 500-999 Students (21)**

Adna  
Asotin-Anatone  
Brewster  
Colfax  
Columbia (Walla Walla)  
Concrete  
Davenport  
Dayton  
Finley  
Freeman  
Grand Coulee

Liberty  
Manson  
Ocosta  
Orcas Island  
Raymond  
San Juan Island  
Stevenson-Carson  
Toledo  
Winlock

**School Districts with 1000-2,499 Students (35)**

Blaine  
Cascade  
Cashmere  
Chewelah  
Chimacum  
Colville  
Deer Park  
Eatonville  
Ephrata  
Goldendale  
Granite Falls  
Highland  
Hoquiam  
Kalama  
Kiona Benton  
La Center  
Lake Chelan  
Lakewood  
Medical Lake  
Montesano  
Newport  
Nine Mile Falls  
Ocean Beach  
Omak  
Orting  
Port Townsend  
Quillayute Valley  
Quincy  
Royal

South Whidbey  
Sultan  
Vashon Island  
White Salmon  
Woodland  
Zillah

**School Districts with 2,500-4,999 Students (24)**

Arlington  
Bremerton  
Burlington-Edison  
Centralia  
Cheney  
Clarkston  
East Valley  
Eastmont  
Ellensburg  
Enumclaw  
Mercer Island  
North Mason  
Port Angeles  
Sedro-Wooley  
Selah  
Sequim  
Shelton  
Toppenish  
Tukwila  
Wapato  
Washougal  
West Valley  
White River  
Yelm

**School Districts with 5,000-9,999 Students (16)**

Camas  
Ferndale  
Kelso  
Monroe  
Moses Lake  
Mount Vernon

Oak Harbor  
Olympia  
Peninsula  
Shoreline  
Stanwood-Camano  
Sunnyside  
Tahoma  
Tumwater  
University Place  
Wenatchee

**School Districts with  
10,000-14,999 Students (10)**

Auburn  
Bellingham  
Central Kitsap  
Clover Park  
Kennewick  
Marysville  
North Thurston  
Renton  
South Kitsap  
Yakima

**School Districts with  
15,000+ Students (14)**

Bellevue  
Bethel  
Edmonds  
Evergreen  
Highline  
Issaquah  
Kent  
Lake Washington  
Mukilteo  
Northshore  
Puyallup  
Spokane  
Tacoma  
Vancouver