

## **MEANINGFUL HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA/CORE 24 IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE**

### **SUMMARY OF POLICY ISSUE /STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION (SBE) STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL**

One of the Board's three goals is to improve student preparation for post-secondary education and the 21st century world of work and citizenship. Revision of graduation requirements needed for a meaningful high school diploma is a primary strategy to accomplish this goal.

### **BACKGROUND**

Since 2006, the Board has been considering the components of a meaningful high school diploma, including revising the purpose of a diploma (January 2008) and approving a proposed framework of CORE 24 graduation requirements (July 2008). The Board approved a charter in November 2008 to establish the CORE 24 Implementation Task Force (ITF). The charter asks the ITF to advise the Board on strategies to implement the proposed requirements. The ITF met for the first time in March 2009. At the same time, the Board is continuing to address the unfinished policy issues related to the meaningful high school diploma.

**CORE 24 Implementation Task Force.** The ITF is scheduled to meet six times in 2009: March 2, April 13, May 18, August 7, September 28, and November 2. At the first meeting, the ITF reviewed the Task Force charter. Staff provided a baseline of knowledge about the origins of CORE 24 and current state requirements, while Duane Baker of The BERC Group, Inc. gave an overview of current course-taking patterns, using data from the transcript study of 2008 high school graduates.<sup>1</sup> Task Force members discussed what they would need to know in order to analyze the issues the Board asked them to address<sup>2</sup> and suggested strategies for obtaining the information. Staff will use this information to create a work plan for the coming meetings.

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<sup>1</sup> Baker, D. B., Gratama, C. A., Peterson, K.M., and Bachtler, S.D. December 2008. Washington State Board of Education Transcript Study.

<sup>2</sup> In the July 2008 motion language approving CORE 24, the Board specifically asked the ITF to address: a phase-in implementation schedule that addressed issues such as teacher supply, facility, infrastructure, etc.; ways to operationalize competency-based methods of meeting new graduation requirements; ways to assist students with credit retrieval and advancing their skills to grade level; ways to provide appropriate career preparation courses and career concentration courses, and scheduling approaches to 24 credits that can meet the required 150 instructional hours.

**Meaningful High School Diploma (MHSD).** The MHSD meeting scheduled for February 19 was cancelled because so few people from the advisory group and Board were able to attend. The next scheduled meetings are March 24 and May 5, 2009. Staff will create a “straw proposal” for the intersection of essential skills and the culminating project to consider at one of the upcoming meetings.

At the January 2009 Board meeting, a question arose about whether the Board intended the CORE 24 proposed graduation requirements to mirror exactly the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) minimum four-year public college admissions requirements. The HECB has very specific subject-area requirements. For example:

### **English – four credits**

- Must include **three credits** of college-preparatory composition or literature.
- **One credit** may be satisfied by courses in drama as literature, public speaking, debate, journalistic writing, business English, or English as a Second Language (ESL).
- Remedial or applied courses are not acceptable (e.g., acting, basic English skills, developmental reading, library, newspaper staff, remedial English, review English, vocabulary, yearbook/annual).
- English courses are considered equivalent to ESL unless taken in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, or the United States.
- Course work completed prior to grade 9 does not apply toward this minimum college admission requirement.

The Board has already indicated that students intent on pursuing an apprenticeship, certificate program, or two-year degree program that is not subject to the HECB requirements will have some flexibility in their CORE 24 requirements (e.g., they can opt not to take world language or not to earn credit in a math-based quantitative course in their senior year). However, the Board has not clearly specified that only students who are pursuing a four-year college pathway will be required to earn credit in courses that satisfy the HECB admissions requirements.

The Board should be aware that HECB requirements may be inconsistent with CORE 24 intent. For instance, in the area of fine arts, the HECB requirement allows students to take one credit in fine, visual, or performing arts or an additional year in any of the academic areas that comprise the HECB requirements. If the Board were to specify that students pursuing a four-year college pathway would be required to earn credit in courses that satisfy the HECB admissions requirements, one credit of the CORE 24 arts requirement could technically be satisfied by another subject area, unless the Board indicated otherwise.

## **POLICY CONSIDERATION**

The Board will be asked to clarify its intent for the CORE 24 proposed graduation requirement framework by specifying the connection between CORE 24 graduation requirements and HECB minimum admissions requirements.

## **EXPECTED ACTION**

Direct the Meaningful High School Diploma committee to bring a recommendation back to the next Board meeting.

