

**GRADUATION  
PATHWAY  
OPTIONS**  
*Interim Report*

*Prepared by*



The Washington State  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION**

*January 2020*

# CONTENTS

<b>Overview of the Report.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Background .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Graduation Pathway Availability .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Feedback Received To Date .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Next Steps .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Appendix A – Strobel Consulting Work Plan Highlights .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Appendix B – Notes from Community Forum .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Appendix C – Notes from WSSDA Conference Breakout Session.....</b>	<b>15</b>

## **INTERIM REPORT ON GRADUATION PATHWAYS**

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### **OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT**

Through [Engrossed Second Substitute House Bill 1599](#) (E2SHB 1599) the Legislature tasked the State Board of Education (SBE) with providing an analysis of the equity and adequacy of the new graduation pathway options through stakeholder outreach and engagement. The first required report is due on August 1, 2020 and the final report is due on December 10, 2022. In addition, SBE plans to provide this initial report in January 2020 as well as an interim report in December 2021.

Since the passage of E2SHB 1599 and throughout the course of SBE’s rulemaking process this year regarding WAC 180-51 (Graduation Requirements), SBE has solicited and received feedback on the graduation pathway options. In the interest of providing timely and actionable information to the Legislature, SBE submits this initial report to summarize:

- What is known so far regarding graduation pathway option availability.
- Feedback and input from various interested parties concerning pathways and pathway implementation issues.

This report does not present recommendations. The Board does not yet have a position on potential changes to graduation pathway options, or on comments or feedback received.

Recommendations, required under E2SHB 1599 for the final report in 2022, will be based on outreach, research and analysis the Board had started, as well as on data that the Superintendent of Public Instruction will be reporting to the Legislature. SBE has contracted with Strobel Consulting for conducting and analyzing survey and focus group information on graduation pathways. Highlights of Strobel Consulting's work plan are included as Appendix A in this report.

In initial feedback from a variety of sources, described in the body of this report, educators and other stakeholders have expressed some of the following issues and concerns about graduation pathway options:

- Challenges in offering CTE sequences, especially for smaller districts, such as obtaining and maintaining CTE certificated teachers.
- Differing standards between the different pathways, particularly between Dual Credit programs, but also between all the pathways.
- Concerns for student equity, and particularly how pathways will work for students with Individualized Education Programs, and how different pathways may disproportionately affect students of color.
- A concern for how the graduation pathway options will work with the credit graduation requirements, and the capacity of schools to provide adequate guidance and counseling to students.
- An interest in additional pathways that might include:
  - Collections of Evidence.
  - Work or apprenticeship.
  - An arts pathway, or other non-English and math subject areas.

## **BACKGROUND**

The 2019 legislation ([E2SHB 1599](#)) eliminated the Certificate of Academic Achievement, meaning that state high school assessments will no longer be used as exit exams required for high school graduation. E2SHB 1599 replaced exit exams with graduation pathway options. Graduation pathway options include the state assessments and most previous assessment alternatives, as well as two new graduation pathways: a military pathway (ASVAB, the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) and a Career and Technical Education (CTE) pathway. The Board was directed by E2SHB 1599 to write rules to implement graduation pathways and set the scores needed to meet the pathway requirement for some of the pathways involving assessments. As described below, the Board did not change scores for assessments already included in the previous alternatives but did establish a score for the new ASVAB pathway.

Because of these changes, including the introduction of graduation pathways, the role of SBE in the assessment system is shifting. The Board will continue to provide consultation to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) concerning the state assessment system,

including identifying the scores needed to meet standard on state assessments. In addition, the Board will also work with OSPI to support assessments associated with graduation pathways.

### Table 1: Graduation pathway options

(More information on Pathways, including the scores needed to meet the pathway options involving assessments may be found on SBE’s [Graduation Pathway Options webpage](#).)

Pathway	Course-based	Assessment Score Identified by SBE	Assessment Score in Statute
Dual Credit Courses	✓	n/a	n/a
AP/IB/Cambridge Courses	✓	n/a	n/a
Transition Course	✓	n/a	n/a
CTE Sequence*	✓	n/a	n/a
State Assessment	n/a	✓	n/a
SAT/ACT	n/a	✓	n/a
ASVAB*	n/a	✓	n/a
AP/IB/Cambridge Tests	n/a	n/a	✓

\*CTE (Career and Technical Education) and ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) are “stand-alone” pathways. In the other pathways, students must meet the standard in both English language arts and math; combinations of pathways may be used.

Table 1 lists the graduation pathway options, and shows which are course-based and which are associated with assessments. The SBE is responsible for setting the scores for English language arts and math on three of the pathways, SAT/ACT college admissions tests, ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery), and the state assessment (Smarter Balanced). With the implementation of E2SHB 1599, the Board decided to maintain the scores previously used as meeting the graduation standard on the state assessments and on assessment alternatives (SAT and ACT). For the use of the ASVAB as a graduation pathway option the Board noted that the language in statute is “meet standard”. The Board interpreted this language to mean the lowest score in the AFQT (Armed Forces Qualification Test, a portion of the ASVAB) necessary for enlistment in a branch of the military. Since the military may change scores at any time, the Board committed to identifying the score needed and posting it by the beginning of every school year, as well as checking the score and updating it if needed in the spring. Students may meet the score posted at the time they take the test, or any score posted until they turn 21.

### **DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO THE GRADUATION PATHWAY OPTIONS**

E2SHB 1599 assigned both OSPI and SBE roles in collecting and reporting about graduation pathways. Table 2 summarizes the data collection and reporting requirements of each of the agencies.

**Table 2: Data collection and reporting related to pathways**

	<b>SBE</b>	<b>OSPI</b>
<b>Data Collection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SBE will survey interested parties regarding:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Additional graduation pathways</li> <li>○ Modifications to existing pathways</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Using the data collected by OSPI, the SBE will survey a sample of school districts unable to provide all the graduation pathways to identify the barriers to implementation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect data from each school district on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Graduation pathways available to students</li> <li>○ The number of students using each pathway for graduation purposes</li> </ul> </li> <li>• To the extent possible the data should be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender and receipt of free or reduced-price lunch</li> </ul>
<b>Reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A summary of the information from the initial survey must be reported to the education committees of the Legislature by August 1, 2020</li> <li>• Using the information from both surveys the SBE will report to the education committees of the Legislature by December 10, 2022 on:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A review of the existing graduation pathways</li> <li>○ Recommendations on whether changes to the existing pathways should be made and what those changes should be</li> <li>○ Barriers school districts have to offering all of the graduation pathways and recommendations to eliminate or reduce those barriers for school districts.</li> <li>○ Whether all students have equitable access to all the graduation pathways, and if not, recommendations for reducing the barriers to student access</li> <li>○ Whether there should be additional graduation pathways, and if so, recommendations for additional pathways</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information from the data collection will be reported annually to the education committees of the Legislature beginning January 10, 2021</li> </ul>

**GRADUATION PATHWAY AVAILABILITY**

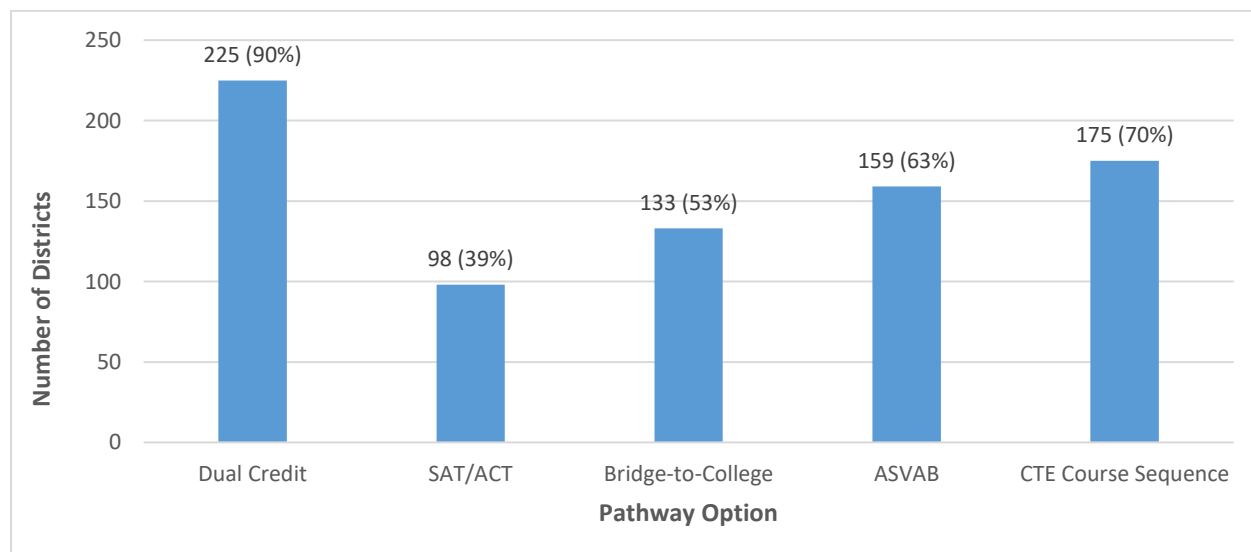
Initial information about pathway availability has been obtained by SBE through the Basic Education Compliance process. These data result from a survey of districts as part of the certification that districts are offering a program of Basic Education ([RCW 28A.150.220](#)). Since it

is part of the compliance process, 100 percent of districts respond to the survey. Figures 1, 2, and 3 show preliminary pathway data from the 2019 Basic Education compliance survey. While there are 295 districts in the state, 251 districts award high school diplomas. Percentages in the figures are based on districts that award high school diplomas.

Most districts filled out this information in September and October 2019, before pathway rules were adopted. Furthermore, the survey itself was designed in spring of 2019, before SBE had developed draft pathway rules. As a result, the survey questions do not capture details of pathway implementation. For example, a CTE pathway had not yet been defined in rules, so the district answers concerning the CTE pathway most likely represent CTE programs, rather than CTE sequences. It is probable that not all CTE programs meet all the criteria of a sequence, such as having two credits of courses. Furthermore, the survey did not distinguish between dual credit programs, or between meeting the pathway option through a dual credit course or by passing a dual credit assessment. Therefore, these results should be considered preliminary and may not fully illustrate pathways that are available. Districts were asked, in a check box format, which of the following pathway options were available to students in their districts: 1) Dual Credit, 2) free-to-student school-day administration of SAT/ACT (college admission tests), 3) Bridge-to-College courses, 4) school-day administration of ASVAB, and 5) CTE Course Sequences (RCW 28A.700.030). Tables 3 and 4 summarize the results of that survey question. Districts were not asked about offering the state assessment as a graduation pathway option. Since all districts are required to administer the state assessment ([RCW 28A.655.070](#)), it is assumed that all districts are able offer the state assessment as a graduation pathway option.

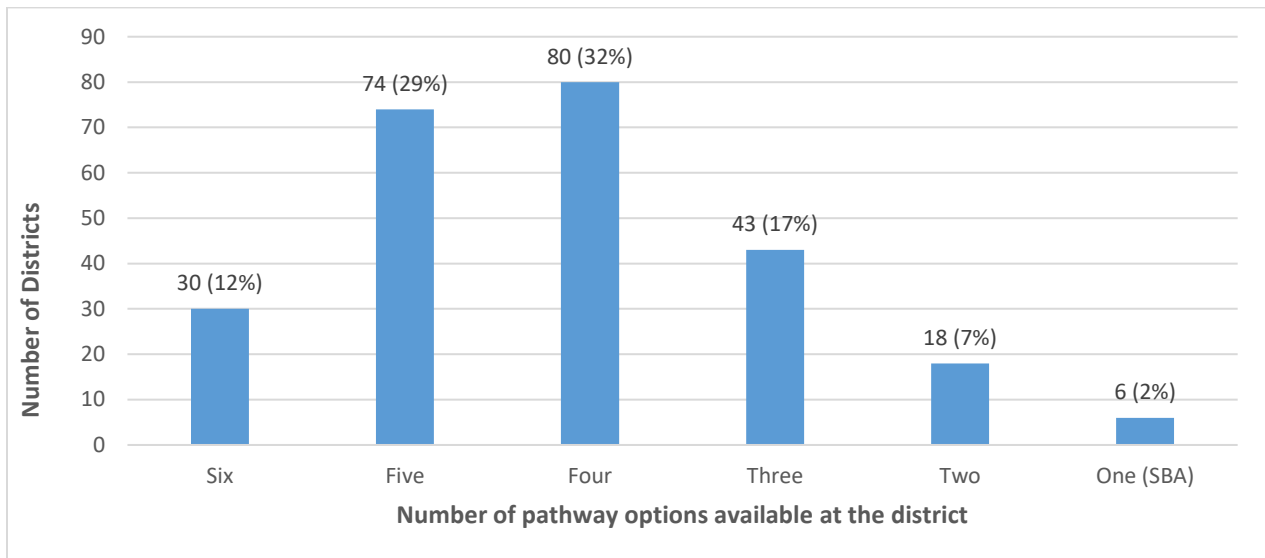
### Figure 1: Number of districts that have particular pathways

Preliminary pathway data from the 2019 Basic Education compliance survey on graduation requirements for the Class of 2020. Only five pathways are shown in this chart because 1) dual credit is not broken out by program or whether it is course-based or assessment-based, 2) the “combination” pathway is not included as a separate pathway option, and 3) the state assessment is not shown, since all districts should offer this option ([RCW 28A.655.070](#)). Percentages are based on 251 districts that offer high school diplomas.



## Figure 2: Number of districts and number of pathway options available

Preliminary pathway data from the 2019 Basic Education compliance survey on graduation requirements for the Class of 2020. Only six pathways are shown with this data because 1) dual credit is not broken out by program or whether it is course-based or assessment-based and 2) the “combination” pathway is not included as a separate pathway option. The state assessment is included as a pathway option. Percentages are based on 251 districts that offer high school diplomas.



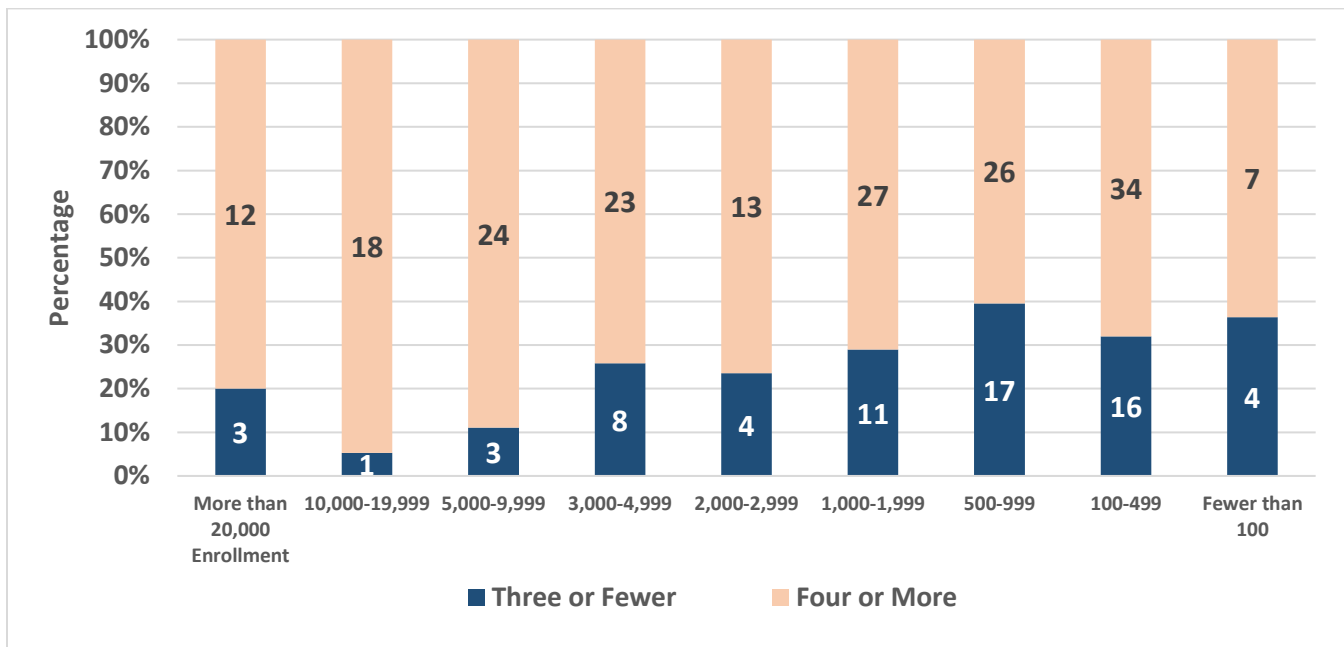
These results suggest that that:

- The most commonly available pathway options (after the state assessment) are dual credit pathway options.
- A few districts (six) offer only the state assessment as a pathway option.
- About a quarter of districts offer three or fewer pathway options.
- About 12% of districts offer all of the pathway options.
- Most districts (61%) offer four or five pathway options.
- The least common pathway options are SAT/ACT (administered at no charge to students during the school day) and Bridge to College courses.

Figure 3 illustrates the number of pathways available (three or fewer or four or more) relative to the enrollment of the district.

## Figure 3: Number of pathways offered and district enrollment

Preliminary pathway data from the 2019 Basic Education compliance survey on graduation requirements for the Class of 2020. Only six pathways were considered in this representation because 1) dual credit is not broken out by program or whether it is course-based or assessment-based and 2) the “combination” pathway is not included as a separate pathway option. The state assessment is included as a pathway option. Percentages are based on 251 districts that offer high school diplomas.



## FEEDBACK RECEIVED TO DATE

The SBE has received feedback regarding what additional graduation pathways should be added to the existing pathway options as well as whether any modifications should be made to any of the existing pathways. So far, this feedback has been received through:

- Public input received during SBE rulemaking on Chapter 180-51 WAC,
- SBE community forums,
- Discussion with stakeholders in a variety of setting including:
  - A breakout session at the Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) annual conference.
  - A session at the Washington Student Achievement Council's Pave the Way Conference.
  - A joint informational webinar with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
  - Various other stakeholder meetings during and following the rulemaking process.

### **PUBLIC INPUT RECEIVED DURING SBE RULEMAKING**

A description of how SBE solicited public comment and a [summary of issues](#) raised from comments and input during the rulemaking process is available on the SBE [rulemaking web page](#).

The most numerous comments received on the rules for graduation pathway options were about the CTE course sequence pathway. A common theme was the importance of flexibility and student-directed pathways, and permitting a sequence to include more than one CTE program area. Conversely, a common concern expressed was that to best prepare students for postsecondary careers, the sequence should be in the same program area.



The pathway that drew the next most numerous comments was the ASVAB pathway. Many comments supported the Board's rules that use the lowest score needed to serve in a branch of the military as the basis for meeting standard for the pathway. Some stakeholders were concerned that this score was too low and is not a reasonable standard for preparing students for a meaningful postsecondary career, and that this would have a disproportionately negative impact on students of color.

Many members of the public who commented on rules were not familiar with the limited authority of SBE in writing rules. Some of the concerns, comments and suggestions were not within the authority of the Board for rulemaking, but may inform the Board's work in evaluating graduation pathway options and in developing recommendations to the Legislature. Such comments included:

- Remove the testing requirement;
- Increase availability and/or variety of pathway options;
- Add multiple types of diplomas rather than having one type of diploma;
- Generally, HB 1599 pathways shouldn't be communicated as a "delink;"
- Bringing back the Collections of Evidence as a pathway;
- Fund more counselors to implement High School and Beyond Plan and graduation pathways;
- Use the SAT assessment statewide instead of the Smarter Balanced Assessment;
- Allow students to meet pathway requirement from work, sports, or volunteering;
- Require life skills for each pathway option;
- Expand running start to more grade levels;
- Various concerns about the relationship of graduation requirements and creating opportunity or outcome gaps for certain groups of students such as athletes, gender, race/ethnicity, et cetera;
- Focus on student-driven decision-making and flexibility for students (was actionable in some ways detailed above in the summary of specific policy issues but was described in general non-actionable terms frequently);
- Timeline for International Baccalaureate assessments are a problem as a graduation pathway; and,
- Offer Smarter Balanced Assessment fall retakes, it will be the primary pathway.

### **COMMUNITY FORUMS**

The State Board of Education held two community forums during 2019 to begin to solicit feedback on additional pathways and modifications to existing pathways. Thirty-three community members attended in Yakima in September, and twenty-four community members attended the forum in Bremerton in November. Participants at SBE community forums tend to be local school district teachers and district staff, as well as representatives from state and community organizations and associations. Participants discussed SBE proposed rules (adopted at the November 2019 meeting), also graduation requirements in general.

A common theme expressed at both forums was how graduation pathway options would interact with credit graduation requirements (subject area course requirements). A waiver to delay implementing the 24-credit graduation requirement for two years, from the Class of 2019 to the Class of 2021, was available to districts. About half of districts received this waiver, so many districts are implementing new credit graduation requirements at the same time that they are implementing the graduation pathway requirements.

Notes taken by Strobel Consulting staff from one of the discussion tables at the community forum held on November 5, 2019, in Bremerton is included as Appendix A in this report.

### **CONFERENCE SESSIONS AND OTHER VENUES**

SBE has received comments, questions and concern from educators and other stakeholder through several conferences and other events. For example, SBE members and staff conducted a breakout session at the Washington School Directors' Association (WSSDA) annual conference on November 22, 2019. Approximately 90 educators from around the state attended the session. Approximately half were school directors, and most of the rest were district-level educators. SBE staff presented an overview of pathways, followed by questions and answers, with general discussion and comments. Guiding questions included:

- In your district, are there barriers to implementing the pathways? What are they? What might help reduce the barriers?
- Do you have concerns about the pathways and equity? If so, how could pathways better address the needs of a wider range of students?
- Do you have suggestions for modifications of the pathways? Do you have suggestions for additional pathways?

Some of the concerns and suggestions that arose at the WSSDA conference were typical of feedback received:

- How will students with Individualized Education Programs who previously met the assessment requirement with an "off-grade-level" assessment graduate using a pathway?
- Small districts will have challenges offering CTE pathways and Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate pathways.
- Would it be possible to include non-CTE courses in a CTE sequence?
- Need for a pathway that includes apprenticeship opportunities.
- Districts need more access to post-graduation outcome data to evaluate what is working.
- Concerns about meeting federal testing participation requirements when state ELA and Math assessment is no longer a graduation requirement.

Notes taken by Strobel Consulting staff from the session are included as Appendix B of this report.

## **NEXT STEPS**

SBE has contracted with Strobel Consulting to provide survey research services and identify key findings and potential strategies that could inform SBE's reports to the legislature regarding graduation pathways.

The research plan is designed to answer the following overarching research questions, based on E2SHB 1599 Section 202:

- What changes, if any, should be made to the existing eight pathways?
- What are the perceived barriers to offering all of the graduation pathways at both the school and district level?
- How can districts eliminate or reduce barriers to offering all of the graduation pathways?
- Do all students have equitable access to all of the graduation pathways and, if not, what are potential strategies for reducing barriers to equitable access?
- Should additional graduation pathways be included and if so, what pathways should be added and what is the associated rationale for doing so?

Strobel Consulting's work plan highlights are included as Appendix A in this report.

## APPENDIX A – STROBEL CONSULTING WORK PLAN HIGHLIGHTS

Strobel Consulting's work plan will address the following key evaluation questions:

1. What changes, if any, should be made to the existing eight pathways?
2. What are the perceived barriers to offering all of the graduation pathways at both the school and district level?
3. How can districts eliminate or reduce barriers to offering all of the graduation pathways?
4. Do all students have equitable access to all of the graduation pathways and, if not, what are potential strategies for reducing barriers to equitable access?
5. Should additional graduation pathways be included and if so, what pathways should be added and what is the associated rationale for doing so?

To answer these questions, Strobel Consulting will collect data using multiple methods and instruments directly aligned with project objectives. These include:

- Pre-focus group survey (yrs. 1 & 2)
- Focus group protocol (yrs. 1 & 2)
- Stakeholder survey (yr. 1)
- First school district follow-up survey (yr. 2)
- Second school district follow-up survey (yr. 3)
- Follow-up interview protocol (yrs. 1, 2 & 3)

Results from the pre-focus group survey in years 1 and 2 will inform the development of the stakeholder and school district surveys. Follow-up interviews and focus groups will capture additional insight and clarify survey results with first-hand accounts of the utility of various graduation pathways, enabling firm recommendations to be made based on the above evaluation questions.

This project will rely on both qualitative and quantitative research methods to address the aforementioned research questions. Qualitative data, such as those obtained across the various focus groups, interviews, and open-ended survey responses, will be analyzed using thematic coding techniques. Quantitative data resulting from close-ended survey questions (e.g., Likert-scale style items) will be summarized using descriptive statistics (including frequencies and percentages). Subgroup analyses will be useful to determine if there are significant differences between individuals with varying demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity), and will be tested with inferential techniques such as independent means or chi-square testing. When necessary, statistical power analyses will be used to inform the sample size required to detect significant differences, particularly when administering the stakeholder survey.

In coordination with the State Board of Education, nine key stakeholder groups have been identified as essential for informing various aspects of the work:

1. School district personnel
2. Parents
3. Students
4. Representatives from the state board for community and technical colleges

5. Four-year higher education institutions
6. Apprenticeship and training councils
7. Associations representing business
8. Members of the educational opportunity gap oversight and accountability committee
9. Associations representing educators, school board members, school administrators, superintendents, and parents.

This list includes students, parents, and school district personnel, plus the additional stakeholders specifically required by E2SHB 1599. To the extent possible, stakeholders from schools and districts around the state will be recruited in an effort to enhance the generalizability of the findings from this study.

Reports will be produced annually for the SBE by May 1 of each project year and will be guided by evaluation quality standards. Notably, these reports will include the data collection instruments developed and implemented, a description of the respondent samples for all instruments, clearly articulated data using visualizations, findings organized by the evaluation questions listed herein, and potential strategies, and emergent themes summarized to provide meaningful feedback for use by SBE.

Table A-1 summarizes Strobel Consulting project activities and associated tasks.

**Table A-1: Survey research activities and associated tasks**

Key Activity	Associated Tasks
<b>1. Review &amp; Planning</b>	1) Planning meetings with SBE project team and key stakeholders. 2) Review any pertinent information provided by SBE as part of the initial planning meeting. 3) Review community forum protocols, attend forums and provide feedback. 4) Revise workplan. 5) Set sampling parameters.
<b>2. Instrument Development</b>	6) Develop instrumentation and protocols based on revised and approved workplan. 7) Incorporate preliminary data from pre-focus group surveys to inform focus groups. 8) Incorporate preliminary data from focus groups to inform stakeholder and district surveys. 9) Incorporate previous year's data to inform current year's instruments and protocols.
<b>3. Recruitment</b>	10) Work with SBE to identify target populations and determine roles and appropriate strategies for assembling contact information. 11) Develop recruiting materials including focus group registration forms (both digital and paper). 12) Deploy and monitor recruiting campaigns.
<b>4. Data Collection</b>	13) Compile and review extant data that has already been collected (including any historical data so that trends can be examined). 14) Conduct focus groups and follow up interviews. 15) Monitor survey completion and provide SBE access to real time updates.
<b>5. Analysis</b>	16) Conduct preliminary analyses of quantitative and qualitative data collected to inform outstanding survey and/or protocol development during the course of each project year. 17) Conduct full analyses of quantitative and qualitative data collected.
<b>6. Reporting &amp; Dissemination</b>	18) Prepare final report. 19) Prepare project brief. 20) Prepare PowerPoint. 21) Present findings and report contents.

## **APPENDIX B-NOTES FROM COMMUNITY FORUM**

*November 5, 2019*

Approximately 40 people were in attendance at the community forum. In addition to SBE staff the group consisted of SBE board members, educators and other community members. SBE kicked off the forum by providing a brief overview of the high school graduation pathways and outlined the goals of the community forum. An SBE board member facilitated the remainder of the discussion for the evening. This included roundtable discussions (with at least one SBE board member and SBE staff at each table), followed by whole group sharing. The last thirty minutes of the forum were left open for general discussion of any issue attendees wished to explore. No notes were taken on the general discussion during the final thirty minutes of the forum.

The small group break out session was started with an exercise where everyone was asked to close their eyes and think of a student in great detail and to keep this student, their needs and factors affecting their life in mind as the discussion unfolded. Some of the examples at my table included students that were homeless, worked full time jobs, bounced from school to school, didn't have support at home, knew the type of job they wanted, but were not interested in attending college and needed a hands on experience, and academically stressed students that were at their breaking point with school workload.

The following feedback includes the specific discussion that occurred at my table, as well as themes shared out in the group discussion.

- Current pathways
  - Bridge to College has such a challenging math piece that it doesn't work as a pathway, because if a student can pass the math required by Bridge to College it is unlikely they need an alternative pathway, because they should be able to pass the state assessment.
- Additional pathway suggestions
  - Passing the GED
  - Portfolio or body of evidence
  - Apprenticeship or work-study to address students who are already working full time jobs and finding success in the job sector
  - Pathways that focus on art or music
  - A "life skills" pathway the focuses more on applied skills (somewhat similar to the apprenticeship or work-study suggestion)
- Other
  - Bremerton is very diverse and might be a good location for a focus group.
  - What do we want a high school diploma to mean? That is, what do we want students to have when they walk away from high school or what do we want them to be able to do? There wasn't a solid answer to these questions, but it was a great

talking point that is certainly relevant to the types of pathways that could be considered.

- In present time, “school” must be so much more than a place to learn basic academics or prepare for a career. For many students it’s the only place that is safe, a place they can get food, learn basic skills, or have access to services and adults that help them survive in general.
- Equity
  - There are issues in terms of access to components of each the pathways (i.e. it’s not that the pathways themselves are inequitable, it’s that parts of each pathway make them inequitable for different populations).
  - There are tracking issues for minority populations in general and this means they get lost in the system and don’t have access to opportunities, including the pathways.
  - CTE equity depends on the size of the district
  - Does “equity” in terms of student access to the pathways mean that there’s at least one pathway that is accessible to each student, or does it mean that all pathways are accessible to every student?
- Access/Barriers
  - There is a general lack of industry access in small areas and this negatively impacts access to the pathways.
  - Math is a gatekeeper or barrier to accessing many of the pathways either because students lack math skills needed for some of the pathways, or they have not passed required math classes and therefore don’t have time in their schedule to include the courses needed to complete a pathway.
  - Pathways are more difficult for smaller districts to implement.
  - The 24 credits required to graduate is a barrier to the point where it dictates whether or not students can even utilize the pathways (i.e. students are already so behind credit wise when they hit 9<sup>th</sup> grade) or that they can graduate regardless.
- Barriers to graduation in general
  - Students are completing their course work, but not passing the test.

## **APPENDIX C– NOTES FROM WASHINGTON STATE SCHOOL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE BREAKOUT SESSION**

### **“Pathways to Graduation: State Policy, District Experiences, and Recommendations for Change.”**

***November 22, 2019***

The community forum was hosted as part of the Washington State School Directors Associations (WSSDA) conference during a breakout session titled, “Pathways to Graduation: State Policy, District Experiences, and Recommendations for Change”. Approximately 90 educators from around the state were in attendance. The SBE’s presentation provided an overview of the high school graduation pathways. There was also an emphasis placed on the equal importance of each pathway. During the presentation there were opportunities for attendees to ask pathway specific questions as each pathway was covered, with a full open Q&A session during the last 15 minutes of the session.

Participants in the community forum shared the following feedback on current pathways, student equity, access and barriers, additional pathway suggestions, access to post graduation data and outcomes, and barriers to graduation in general, during the session:

#### ➤ **Current pathways**

- Different standards for dual credit and the AP/IB exams don’t make sense and should be addressed
- The shifting “minimum” score, set by AFQT, needed to successfully complete the ASVAB pathway is concern.
- It was noted as an area of concern that there are no science requirements, or acknowledgments of why there aren’t science requirements, for the graduation pathways.
- It was suggested that non-certified courses be considered for part of the CTE pathways requirements.
- Pathways need to include more science and social studies related options and/or requirements.

#### ➤ **Student Equity**

- The need to address the Special Education demographic in terms of the pathways and a desire for feedback on how this should be done.
- Attendees voiced concern about helping underserved and marginalized populations graduate in general, but also within the context of utilizing the pathway options.
- Concern was expressed with state assessments and the level of scores required for off grade level students. Specifically, how do the graduation pathway requirements address off level students?

#### ➤ **Access/Barriers**

- Size in general
  - Access for districts of different sizes, specifically urban versus rural, is not equitable.



- Access to the types of advisory boards and industry needed to successfully implement some of the pathways is very limited in rural communities and therefore creates a barrier to offering every pathway.
- Size & AP/IB pathway
  - Many smaller, rural districts can't offer AP/IB.
- Size & CTE pathway
  - Small districts aren't always able to get CTE certified teachers to teach CTE courses and because this is a requirement of the CTE pathways it makes it challenging for small or rural districts to offer this.
  - It was suggested that changes be made to the CTE pathways requirements so that noncertified CTE teachers can be used to teach pathways related CTE courses in smaller districts.
  - Getting a certified CTE teacher to teach just one class (i.e. the class needed to satisfy the CTE pathway requirement) is a barrier to offering this pathway.
  - Smaller districts need more goal oriented and industry requirement focused flexibility around the CTE pathway.
  - Even within larger districts smaller, choice high schools exist and are much like the rural schools in terms of their access to all pathways.
  - Large districts with smaller choice high schools want to make sure they are not overlooked when it comes to addressing barriers to offering all pathways, since their smaller choice high schools experience similar challenges as those faced by small, rural districts.
- Dual Credit
  - Dual credit pathways are difficult to offer, because community colleges don't always cooperate with secondary schools.
  - If it were possible to make dual enrollment opportunities more cost effective for post-secondary institutions it would increase the likelihood of schools being able to offer this pathway.
  - Because the colleges aren't incentivized to offer dual credit enrollment it creates a barrier to implementing this pathway.
  - It was suggested that college courses be included in the classes offered at the high school.
  - It was noted that there are economic dis-incentives for community colleges to offer dual enrollment.
  - It was suggested there had been success with some districts offering grades 9-14 community college courses on their high school campus and this might be a better way to approach the dual enrollment pathway.

➤ **Additional pathway suggestions**

- There is a need for a pathway offering apprenticeship opportunities.
- It was suggested that science requirements should be added.
- Soft skills pathways and/or a social/emotional mental health related pathway should be considered.
- It was requested that customized pathways be an option so schools have more flexibility in creating pathways that work for their students.

- It was suggested that mastery based transcripts be used as a way to allow more flexibility within the graduation pathways.
  - One attendee shared that their graduation rates went up with the AVID program and suggested this might be something to consider for an additional pathway.
- **Access to post graduation data & outcomes**
- There's a need to define what desired graduation outcomes are in terms of post graduation success for students and use real data to inform this.
  - There's an urgent need to create pathways that take into account and look at outcomes.
  - More information is needed on student outcomes and tracking post graduation in order to better inform how successful current pathway options are and to help address additional pathways that might be needed.
  - Attendees wanted to know if post graduation data was currently available and if not, would there be better access to post graduation data for students graduating under the new pathways?
- **Barriers to graduation in general**
- Is 24 credits the right number to require for graduation?
  - The 24-credit graduation requirement continues to be cited as a general barrier to students utilizing the pathways and to graduating in general.
  - General concerns were expressed regarding graduation rates.
  - It was suggested that core credit be given for "HS and Beyond" type courses to help students meet the 24-credit graduation requirements so that they had the option to take the elective courses needed to satisfy some of the graduation pathways options.
- **Other**
- It was suggested that diplomas would become a more valuable asset if they included badges identifying areas of knowledge or success.
  - The whole child needs to be better addressed in the pathways and what are ways this can happen?