



WASHINGTON STATE
HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

FLEXIBLE. MEANINGFUL. ACHIEVABLE.

IMPROVING THE DIPLOMA SO IT WORKS FOR ALL STUDENTS

All students deserve a meaningful education that helps them achieve their academic and life goals. Whether deciding to pursue a career as a doctor or a machinist, serve in the military or enter the technology sector, Washington State students have numerous career choices post-high school.

Washington state's high school diploma provides students with the skills and knowledge needed to pursue their dreams and demonstrate that no matter what path they pursue after high school, they are ready for work, continued education, and other opportunities.

FLEXIBLE CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

Every student, school, and district is unique. Each district has innovative ideas about how best to support students on their way to earning a diploma. These include opportunities for students to earn credit through: options to earn more than six credits a year, outside of the classroom learning experiences, credit for middle school courses taught at the high school level, and different waiver options for individual students.

Students have a choice in how they meet their core subject requirements and have seven elective credits (three must be linked to the student's High School and Beyond Plan). The diploma framework includes the following credit options so students have the opportunity to customize education to their interests and what they want to do after graduation.

- ▶ 2-credit waiver for individual student circumstances
- ▶ High school credit offered in middle school
- ▶ Career and technical education course equivalencies and two-for-one courses
- ▶ Locally determined waiver for the activity portion of the P.E. requirement
- ▶ Competency-based credit
- ▶ Work-based learning
- ▶ Learning experiences outside of the traditional classroom
- ▶ Flexibility for students in an Individual Education Program

SUPPORTING DISTRICTS IN SERVING ALL STUDENTS

Through the State Board of Education's statewide outreach, the Board also heard challenges some districts are having implementing the requirements. The Board values this feedback and has taken the following actions to support districts in implementing the graduation requirements.





BUDGET REQUESTS TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION

To develop solutions to the challenges the Board heard in its outreach, the following budget requests have been made to support districts:

- Support development of a competency-based diploma and diploma pathways that may align with recommendations of Career Connect Washington and expand pathways to apprenticeships.
- Explore and encourage credit earned through work and extra-curricular activities.
- Consider competency credit for passing state assessments and credit for lower level courses in a sequence by demonstration of success in higher level courses.
- Development of state frameworks for competency credit in multiple subject areas.



LEGISLATION REQUESTS TO EMPOWER DISTRICTS AND STUDENTS

Every student's journey to high school graduation is different. Recognizing that each student has a personal journey to graduation in mind, the Board has requested the following adjustments to the diploma requirements:

- Clarify the use of the 2-credit waiver for students whose personal circumstances warrant it, so more students can stay on-track to earning a diploma.
- Create guidance and more definition on Personalized Pathways, helping districts to provide students access to a variety of pathways.
- Enable students to more easily earn high school credit for any class taken in middle school that was taught to high school learning standards, allowing more students to start high school having already earned high school credit.
- Reinstate the "expedited appeal" option, providing a path to a diploma for students who have met all graduation requirements except an assessment requirement.
- Engage partners to develop a framework for a competency-based diploma pathway.

ADDITIONAL BOARD INITIATIVES

The Board recently approved a new 2019-23 Strategic Plan, which has the following initiatives regarding graduation requirements, as well as priorities that support other aspects of Washington's education system:

- Collaborate to develop a robust, credit-bearing High School and Beyond Plan that includes teaching and learning of financial education standards.
- Study math pathways aligned to specific postsecondary and career pathways, including apprenticeships.
- Communication campaign around the importance of the state science standards: how they help students apply critical thinking skills and understand their role in the world.

