



# THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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*An education system where students are engaged in personalized education pathways that prepare them for civic engagement, careers, postsecondary education, and lifelong learning*

## COMPETENCY-BASED EDUCATION

Prepared for the January 2019 Board Meeting

Information item.

As related to:

**Goal One:** All students feel safe at school, and have the supports necessary to thrive.

**Goal Two:** All students are able to engage in their schools and their broader communities, and feel invested in their learning pathways, which lead to their post-secondary aspirations.

**Goal Three:** School and district structures and systems adapt to meet the evolving needs of the student population and community, as a whole. Students are prepared to adapt as needed and fully participate in the world beyond the classroom.

**Goal Four:** Students successfully transition into, through, and out of the P-12 system.

**Goal Five:** Students graduate from Washington State high schools ready for civic engagement, careers, postsecondary education, and lifelong learning.

**Goal Six:** Equitable funding across the state to ensure that all students have the funding and opportunities they need, regardless of their geographical location or other needs.

**Other**

Materials included in packet:

- Presentation by Board staff

Synopsis and Policy Considerations:

Competency-based education is part of the Board's legislative platform and is supported in the Board's strategic plan. Staff plan to create a Competency-Based Education Report that will include a summary of the current status of competency-based education in the state and provide a basis for the Board moving forward with its platform and plan.

At the January Board meeting, staff will present a summary of the planned report.



# Competency-Based Education In Washington

Washington State Board of Education  
January 2019

## Content

- Purpose of this presentation
- Definition of Competency-Based Education
- Laws Governing Competency-Based Education in Washington
- Current Practice in Washington
  - WSSDA Model Policy
  - Basic Education Compliance Survey Results
  - Schools with Credit-based Graduation Requirement Waivers
  - Washington Student Achievement Council's Work on Prior Learning
- Competency-Based Education in Other States
- Next Steps



## Purpose of this Report

This report provides information as a basis for moving forward with the Board's 2019-2023 Strategic Plan and 2019 legislative platform

- An initiative to “Engage partners to develop a framework for a competency-based diploma pathway and additional options for competency-based credit.”
- Support for “Expanding use of personalized learning strategies and project-based and career-connected learning opportunities, including credit for competencies acquired in the workplace, through volunteer work, or other extracurricular activities.”



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## Importance of Competency-based Education

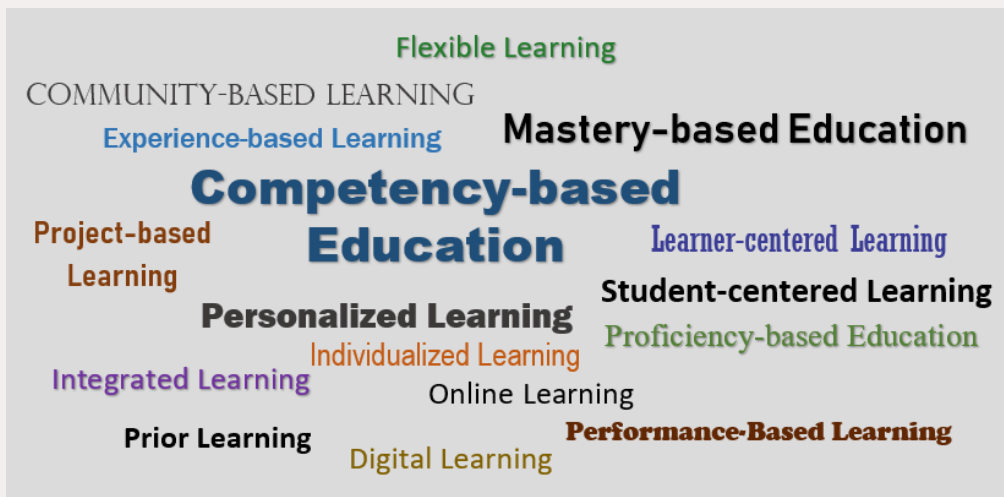
- The State Board has long had an interest in competency-based education to advocate for and promote **individualized learning** for Washington students.
- Competency-based education expands opportunities for students to earn credit, which aligns with **Career- and College-Ready Graduation Requirements as well as for career-connected learning.**



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## Potential for Confusing Communication



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## A Definition of Competency-Based Education

- Students advance upon demonstration of mastery.
- Competencies include explicit, measurable, transferable learning objectives that empower students.
- Assessment is meaningful and a positive learning experience for students.
- Students receive rapid, differentiated support based on their individual learning needs.
- Learning outcomes emphasize competencies that include the application and creation of knowledge.
- The process of reaching learning outcomes encourages students to develop skills and dispositions important for success in college, careers and citizenship.

From [Achieve's Competency-Based Pathways](#) Working Group, which met in 2012-2013 and was comprised of representatives from 11 states, including Washington, and 11 state and national organizations.

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## Laws Governing Competency-Based Education in Washington

- State Board of Education rules **definition of high school credit** (WAC 180-51-050)
  - “Satisfactory demonstration by a student of proficiency/competency, as defined by written district policy, of the state's essential academic learning requirements (learning standards).”
- **Alternative Learning** (RCW 28A.232, WAC 392-121-182)
- **Work-based Learning** (WAC 392-410-315)
- **Equivalency Course of Study** (WAC 392-410-310)
  - “Credit for learning experiences conducted away from school or by persons not employed by the school district”

Competency-Based Crediting  
Handbook 1.0:  
An Implementation Guide for School Districts  
July 2016

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## Competency-based Education in Washington

- WSSDA Model Policy
- Basic Education Compliance Survey Results
- Districts with a Waiver of Credit Graduation Requirements
- Higher Education



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## WSSDA Model Policy



Policy No. 2409  
Instruction

### Credit For Competency/Proficiency

(This policy is designed for competency/proficiency credit in world languages, however, a district can expand the policy to multiple subjects.)

#### World Languages

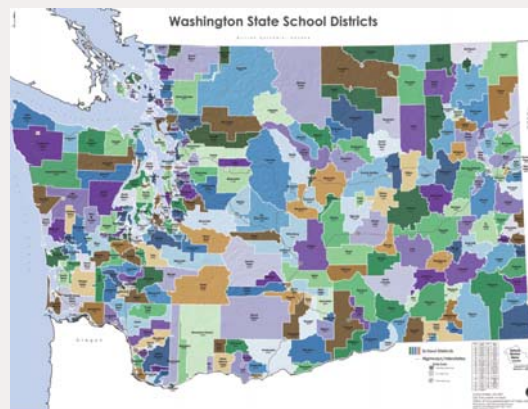
The board recognizes the value of preparing students to be global citizens with the skills to communicate in English and other world languages. In our state's diverse communities, it is not unusual for students to have various opportunities to develop language skills, for example, by using the language at home, attending language programs offered in the community, learning online or living abroad. The district encourages students and their families to take advantage of any language learning opportunities available to them.

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## Basic Education Compliance Survey Results

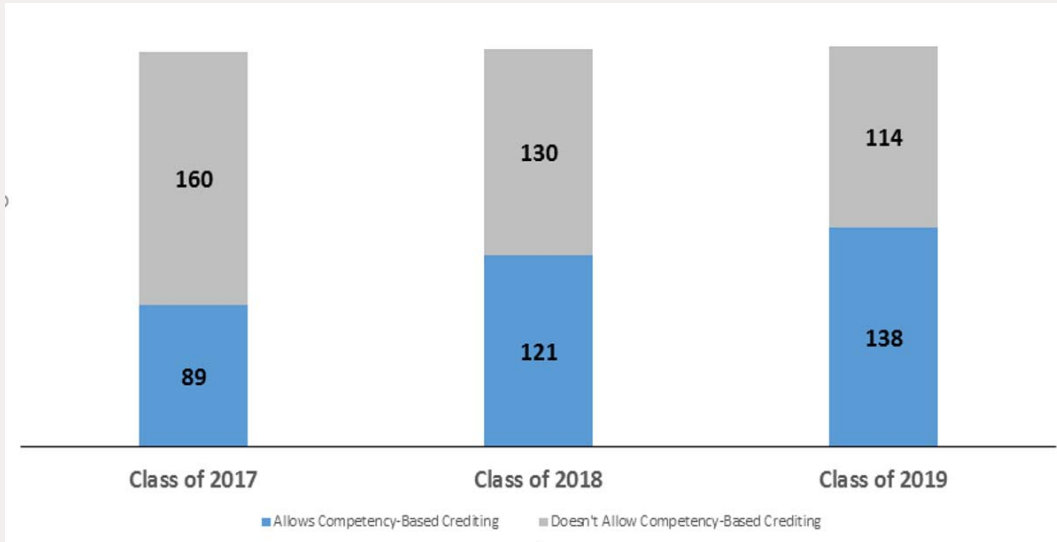


- The survey asked if the district offered competency-based credit (yes or no) and if yes, in what subjects (short answer response).
- Survey results show the number of districts offering competency-based credit is increasing; also, the number of subjects is expanding.
- Responses indicate great variability in how competency-based credit is being offered.

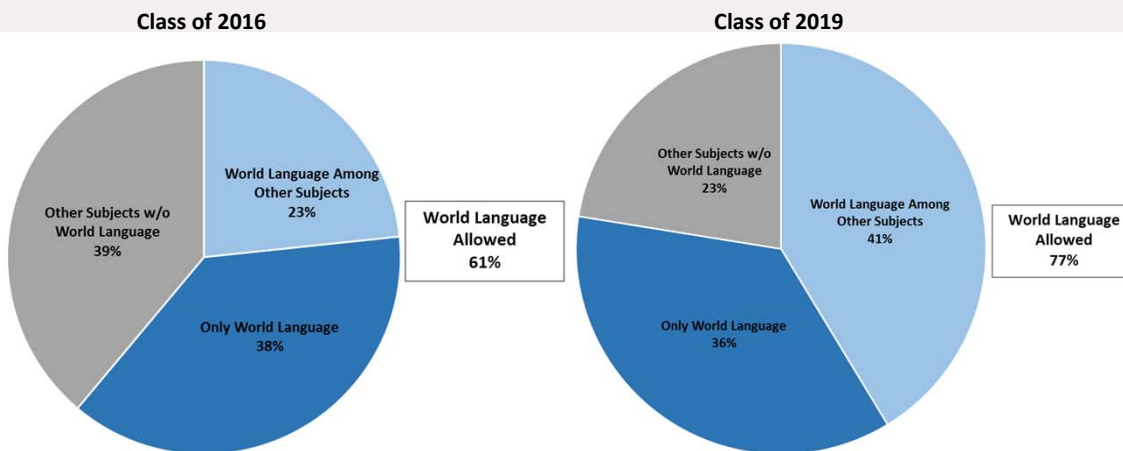


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### Number of High School Districts that Offer Competency-Based Credit



### Of the Districts Offering Competency-Based Crediting, How Many Include World Language?



## Selected Responses to Basic Education Compliance Survey: Competency-based Credit Questions



“Foreign Language, SBAC in math and English.”

“For students at Open Doors and for our school with a graduation requirement waiver.”

“We have board policy that allows for competency based crediting but have done it sparingly.”

“8th Grade Algebra”

“Physical Education - successful completion of three athletic seasons in two consecutive years or consistent participation in one sport for four years.”

“Not defined: The principal may grant a maximum of two (2) credits to students based on the individual student demonstrating mastery of course content and performance standards which is equal to or greater than a student who is regularly enrolled and successfully passes that course. These credits shall be pass/fail only.”

“The district awards competency-based credit for all subjects.”

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## Compared to Other States—

### **Washington already has state policies on which to build:**

- Definition of a credit is unrelated to seat-time
- District waiver of credit graduation requirements
- Work-based Learning and Equivalency Course of Study
- Middle school students earning high school credit
- Relatively well developed dual enrollment and early college programs

### **Other states are working on or have developed:**

- Multiple, flexible pathways to graduation
- Proficiency-based diplomas
- Programs that build district-level capacity for competency-based learning
- Alternative assessments—non-standardized, competency-based assessments
- Buy-in from institutions of higher-education for high school competency-based credit



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## Competency-based Education in Other Selected States



**New Hampshire**—Comprehensive reforms that support personalized learning, including alternative state assessments that reduce standardized testing in favor of assessments that are integrated into the classroom.

**Idaho**—Key legislation passed in 2015 that has led to an initial 20 Mastery-based Learning Incubators.

**Ohio**—Pilot program for competency-based learning that is: cross-curricula, includes learning outside of the classroom, supports struggling students, keeps all students on-track, and informs further statewide policies.

**South Carolina**—Technical support for a network of districts to implement the South Carolina Framework for Personalized Learning: Student Ownership, Learner Profiles, Learning Pathways, and Flexible Learning Environments.

**Maine**—Proficiency-based diploma; through the New England Secondary School Consortium, public colleges and universities in 6 New England states have pledged to accept proficiency-based transcripts.

**Arizona**—Grand Canyon Diploma, earned through success on a State Board-approved assessment, Cambridge and ACT Quality Core.

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## Schools with a Waiver of Credit Graduation Requirements

- Federal Way—
  - Career Academy at Truman
  - Federal Way Open Doors
- Highline—Big Picture High School
- Issaquah—Gibson Ek High School
- Lake Chelan—Chelan School of Innovation
- Methow Valley—Independent Learning Center
- Peninsula—Henderson Bay High School
- Quincy—Quincy Innovation Academy

Schools will be presenting updates to the Board on their waivers at this Board meeting.



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## Higher Education and Competency-Based Education

Higher Education has taken a leadership role in competency-based credit—some policies and practices may provide models for high school competency-based credit.

- Western Governors University
- In Washington:
  - High School 21+ program at community and technical colleges, a competency-based program for prior learning
  - WSSDA Model Policy for World Language and Seal of biliteracy meet world language admission requirement at public colleges and universities.
  - High school diploma with associate degree
  - [Academic Credit for Prior Learning Handbook](#) (WSAC)

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## Next Steps

- Promote State Board request legislation:
  - Includes a competency-based education workgroup to:
    - Explore a competency-based diploma pathway
    - Expand opportunities for competency-based credit that meets graduation requirements
    - Explore an High School and Beyond Plan credit-bearing course that aligns with Career Connect Washington and that addresses financial education standards
- Work with WSSDA and other partners to expand model policy to other subjects
- Explore programs that would promote expansion of competency-based credit and personalized learning

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