



THE WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Title: Update on Districts that Receive Credit-Based Graduation Requirement Waivers

As related to:

<input type="checkbox"/> Goal One: Develop and support policies to close the achievement and opportunity gaps.	<input type="checkbox"/> Goal Three: Ensure that every student has the opportunity to meet career and college ready standards.
<input type="checkbox"/> Goal Two: Develop comprehensive accountability, recognition, and supports for students, schools, and districts.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Four: Provide effective oversight of the K-12 system.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Relevant to Board roles:

<input type="checkbox"/> Policy leadership	<input type="checkbox"/> Communication
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> System oversight	<input type="checkbox"/> Convening and facilitating
<input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy	

Policy considerations / Key questions: This section contains an update from recipients of waivers of credit-based graduation requirements. The districts were asked to respond to five guiding requests or questions that addressed progress in meeting the standards for increased student learning set forth in the application:

1. Please describe and document the progress made by the school during the last school year in meeting the standards for increased student learning set forth in the district’s waiver application.
2. If the school’s students, whether in the aggregate or by major subgroups, are not making satisfactory progress in meeting the standards for increased student learning set forth in the district’s waiver application, please describe any changes made or planned in instructional practices, strategies, or curricula to improve student achievement against the standards.
3. Please describe any changes made in the standards for increased student learning and the evidence selected to determine whether the standards have been met. What changes, if any, are you making in goals for student learning?
4. Please submit the data (list of data not included here), preferably in tabular form, and provide any explanatory comments on each as deemed helpful for the information of the Board.
5. What challenges, if any, has the district encountered in transfer of credit equivalencies for a Big Picture School to higher education institutions or other school districts?

The summary memo in this section seeks to answer two major questions based on an analysis of all four updates:

- What are promising trends or practices among the recipients of this waiver of credit-based graduation requirements?
- What are challenges encountered by these schools, particularly regarding transfer of credits? How are those challenges being mitigated?

Relevant to business item: There is no board action expected on this topic at this board meeting.

Materials included in packet: This section contains:

- A memo summarizing the updates from each of the recipients of the credit-based graduation requirements waiver.



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- The reports from each of the four schools that provided an update. Addenda are available online. Addenda to these reports are available on www.sbe.wa.gov/waivers.php

Synopsis: This section summarizes successful practices and challenges among the recipients of the waiver. The Board will hear from a panel of school and district representatives.



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UPDATE ON DISTRICTS THAT RECEIVE CREDIT-BASED GRADUATION REQUIREMENT WAIVERS

Policy Considerations

- What are promising trends or practices among the recipients of this waiver of credit-based graduation requirements?
- What are challenges encountered by these schools, particularly regarding transfer of credits? How are those challenges being mitigated?

This report highlights promising practices and challenges described by Gibson Ek High School in Issaquah School District, Chelan School of Innovation in Lake Chelan School District, the Independent Learning Center in Methow Valley School District, and Highline Big Picture in Highline School District. This report is meant to provide a summary to board members and the public. Interested parties may read the entire reports from each of the districts at following this memo or at www.sbe.wa.gov/materials.php for a more detailed report, including data provided by each district.

Background: Credit-Based High School Graduation Requirements Waiver

In April 1999 the SBE adopted WAC 180-18-055, titled "Alternative high school graduation requirements." The rule authorizes the granting of a waiver by the Board that would enable students to earn a diploma by a demonstration of competencies in core subjects meeting state standards, in place of earning the credits required by Chapter 180-51 WAC (High school graduation requirements).

In filing the adopted rule, WSR 99-10-094, the Board stated that the purpose was to provide school districts and high schools a waiver option from credit-based graduation requirements to support performance-based education.

Accordingly, Section 1 of WAC 180-18-055 declares:

The state board of education finds that current credit-based graduation requirements may be a limitation upon the ability of high schools and districts to make the transition [from a time and credit-based education system to a standards and performance-based system] with the least amount of difficulty. Therefore, the state board will provide districts and high schools the opportunity to create and implement alternative graduation requirements.

WAC 180-18-055 provides that a school district, or a high school with permission of the district's board of directors, or an approved private school may apply to the SBE for a waiver of one or more of the requirements of Chapter 180-51 WAC. The rule is unique among provisions of Chapter 180-18 WAC in authorizing schools, as well as the districts that govern them, to apply for waiver of basic education requirements, and as well as in extending the opportunity to private schools. The SBE may grant the waiver for up to four school years.

The rule lists in detail the information that must be submitted to the SBE with the waiver request. The application must include, for example:

- Specific standards for increased learning that the district or school plans to achieve;
- How the district or school plans to achieve the higher standards, including timelines for implementation;
- How the district or school plans to determine whether the higher standards have been met;
- Evidence that students, families, parents, and citizens were involved in developing the plan; and
- Evidence that the board of directors, teachers, administrators, and classified employees are committed to working cooperatively in implementing the plan.

The applicant district or school must also provide documentation that the school is (or will be) successful as demonstrated by such indicators as assessment results, graduation rates, college admission rates, follow-up employment data, and student, parent and public satisfaction and confidence in the school, as evidenced by survey results.

Any school or district granted a waiver under this section must report annually to the SBE on the progress and effects of implementing the waiver.

WAC 180-18-055 includes no specific criteria for evaluation of a request for a waiver of credit-based graduation requirements. The rule does stipulate that the SBE may not grant the waiver unless the district or school shows that the proposed non-credit based graduation requirements meet minimum college academic distribution requirements.

History of Closed and Newly Opened Schools Receiving the Waiver

Highline School District received a four-year waiver for Big Picture high school in 2008.

Highline's request to the Board for renewal of its waiver for Big Picture School for additional years was approved in March 2012, and again in March 2015. Highline/Big Picture's current waiver runs through the 2018-19 school year.

At its January 2016 meeting the Board approved an application from Issaquah School District for a new high school called Gibson Ek for opening in 2016-17. Gibson Ek replaced a closed alternative school and is modeled on Big Picture design principles.

Methow Valley and Lake Chelan are the fourth and fifth districts to receive this waiver in the nearly 17 years of its existence and were approved in May 2016. Methow Valley School District's Independent Learning Center transitioned from being an alternative school to being an option school with the receipt of this waiver. Similarly, Lake Chelan School District's Chelan School of Innovation also offers serves as an option school rather than an alternative school. Prior to the receipt of this waiver, it was an alternative school called Glacier Valley High School.

Federal Way School District obtained a waiver of four-years for Truman High School in 2009. It did not seek renewal of the waiver on its expiration in 2013. However, in May 2017, Federal Way applied for the waiver of credit-based graduation requirements and was approved by the Board to operate Career Academy at Truman and Federal Way Open Doors. Due to how recently Federal Way received this waiver, updates from their schools are not included in this memo.

Big Picture Learning

The schools receiving this waiver are Big Picture schools, or use a largely similar model like Summit Learning for Career Academy at Truman in Federal Way School District. Big Picture Learning is a Providence, R.I.-based nonprofit, founded in 1995, that supports the creation and operation of public

schools that follow its model of personalized, competency-based learning. More than 65 Big Picture network schools in the U.S., and many more around the world. While many Big Picture schools seek a credit based waiver is not a requirement to implement the model. For example, Bellevue has operated a Big Picture School since the 2011-12 school year but has not applied for a waiver from credit-based high school graduation requirements. Students enrolled in the school must fulfill the same district credit requirements to graduate with a diploma.

Summary of Update Reports

Gibson Ek in Issaquah School District, Chelan School of Innovation in Lake Chelan School District, the Independent Learning Center in Methow Valley School District, and Highline Big Picture in Highline School District were asked to provide an update on the progress made under the waiver of credit-based graduation requirements. The full update reports address the following guiding questions:

1. Please describe and document the progress made by the school during the last school year in meeting the standards for increased student learning set forth in the district's waiver application.
2. If the school's students, whether in the aggregate or by major subgroups, are not making satisfactory progress in meeting the standards for increased student learning set forth in the district's waiver application, please describe any changes made or planned in instructional practices, strategies, or curricula to improve student achievement against the standards.
3. Please describe any changes made in the standards for increased student learning and the evidence selected to determine whether the standards have been met. What changes, if any, are you making in goals for student learning?
4. Please submit the data (list of data not included here), preferably in tabular form, and provide any explanatory comments on each as deemed helpful for the information of the Board.
5. What challenges, if any, has the district encountered in transfer of credit equivalencies for a Big Picture School to higher education institutions or other school districts?

Based on the school responses to these questions, SBE staff have summarized some of the promising practices and challenges that were present in all of the reports. Each school shares the following characteristics, most are inherent to the Big Picture Learning model:

- The five Big Picture Learning Goals – communication, empirical reasoning, quantitative reasoning, social reasoning and personal qualities.
- Reframing grade promotion as “leveling up” to make the requirements more meaningful to students and to better communicate graduation requirements.
- The schools focus on internships and each school has focused on building its partnerships with mentors, the professional community, and colleges.
- Each school emphasized the importance of parent and family engagement.
- Deep relationships among students and their advisors.
- The schools focus on project-based learning and have exhibitions of student learning to put students in a leadership role of showcasing their own learning.
- Sophisticated systems for evaluating student learning on each competency, including a “one student at a time” approach to providing feedback to students and assessing project-based learning.

Collaboration with other Big Picture Schools has been a consistent theme in the reports and serves to strengthen the school's programs. Each of the schools remarked that it is strengthened by a regional network of Big Picture Schools. For example, Highline Big Picture staff have been collaborating with Eagle Rock in Colorado on the co-created rubrics and have implemented the rubrics with most of their students. Furthermore, Highline Big Picture is implementing a project management tool called "the path" from Eagle Rock. Highline Big Picture also noted that it is leading with its implementation of the Big Picture Model and is providing support to a regional network of partners.

The schools that have received the waiver of credit-based graduation requirements are relatively small. These schools use their smaller size to their advantage by engaging families and offering a flexible organizational culture. For instance, Gibson Ek in Issaquah School District noted its small school culture and mixed-grade advisory structure as assets that allow it to improve the learning environment for its students.

Three of the schools noted higher percentages of students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) than the state average. Each of the schools noted that they took intentional steps to support students with IEPs, including increased budget allocation and paraprofessional staffing. For example, Highline Big Picture has over-representation of students with disabilities and has allocated additional resources to Individualized Education Plan support beyond the district recommended budget. The school works with the district on differentiated instruction to meet the varied needs of students and implements the co-teaching model when where appropriate. In addition, when students aren't promoted to the next grade on time, Highline Big Picture makes use of its summer school program and after-school tutorials to meet the needs of the students.

Among the data presented in the district updates, recipients of the waiver noted high internship participation rates and improvements in graduation rate.

- Chelan School of Innovation in Lake Chelan School District had graduation rates increase from 13% in 2015 to 45.8% in 2017 and the percentage of their students participating in an internship rose to a high of 96% in 2017.
- Highline Big Picture was recognized by the district superintendent for the greatest increase in students graduating of all the schools in the district. Highline Big Picture has implemented co-created rubrics developed with students, mentors, and advisors to demonstrate learning across the five Big Picture learning goals during exhibitions of student learning held three times a year for high school and twice a year for middle school. The rubric uses worksite expertise of professional mentors as part of the criteria in the evaluation process and the school focuses on "learning through interests and internships" to provide these opportunities.
- The Independent Learning Center in Methow Valley School District has 70-80% of its students participate in internships and a 72.7% four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for the 2015-16 school year and a 83.3% graduation rate for the 2016-17 school year.
- Although Gibson Ek's first graduating class will be the Class of 2019 and therefore doesn't have graduation data yet, the students are showing promising results on the state assessments with 88% of the cohort passing English Language Arts and 71% passing the math Smarter Balanced assessment. Gibson Ek noted its partnerships with Bellevue College and Washington State University to support its students' engagement in postsecondary pathways. Gibson Ek noted its robust project-based learning and senior project but did not provide as much information about internship and work-based opportunities as the other schools.

The schools all noted the importance of relationships with institutions of higher education. This seemed to be an area for future work for Big Picture Schools in Washington and nationwide. As noted in Highline

Big Picture's update, the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) does not recognize Big Picture students as having met their core course requirements, thus preventing Big Picture graduates from participating in NCAA-sanctioned collegiate sports. The national Big Picture organization is advocating for a resolution to this issue with the NCAA. However, not all of the schools have experienced challenges with students using their transcript in postsecondary education. The Independent Learning Center in Methow valley noted Wenatchee Valley College honored the diplomas and transcripts of its two graduates who attended there. Gibson Ek has not yet had its students apply to higher education institutions. The schools that have graduates attending college noted that they are proactively working to establish relationships with regional colleges and universities.

Transfer to other schools that have traditional credit systems is also an area for further work. Highline Big Picture school noted that students may lose credit if transferring to another high school prior to graduating from Big Picture, thus requiring them to take extra courses to meet graduation requirements. Gibson Ek stated that it sends a transfer letter to help schools interpret Big Picture competencies and project work for equivalencies to credit. Essentially, the schools have the challenge of providing additional information to the schools that the students transfer to so they can understand how to credit students for their work and projects.

If you have questions regarding this memo, please contact Parker Teed at parker.teed@k12.wa.us

September 2017

Dear Executive Director Rarick and team:

Thank you for your inquiry regarding Highline Big Picture's compliance with the requirements outlined in its waiver of credit-based graduation requirements. I have provided a brief response to the requests for information in regards to WAC 180-18-055 along with attached data. If after reading this document you have additional questions, feel free to contact me at the number below.

We are very invested in our program at Big Picture Schools and truly believe we are providing a rich learning experience that prepares students for college, career and citizenship. We appreciate your support of our work and we know we would not be able to provide this type of educational experience without your support. As stated by the previous principal, "we believe that we are meeting and exceeding the targets outlined in our wavier and making good on our commitments to the State Board and to our students."

Sincerely,

Lisa Escobar
Principal, Highline Big Picture Schools
206-681-6430

1. *Please describe and document the progress made by the school during the last school year in meeting the standards for increased student learning set forth in the district's waiver application.*

Attachment:

1A: Waiver Renewal Submission
1B: "The Path"

For Highline Big Picture, as outlined in the 2015 waiver renewal and the 2016 waiver update, a large part of the "the standards for increased student learning" referred to our 5 competencies or "learning goals." Each learning goal has several defining skills that correlate in some instances to the Common Core State Standards. This past year, staff have refined the 5 learning goals and created "look fors." This provides students clear indicators of ways to show mastery of the learning goals.

Assessment and feedback about the progress towards mastery of the learning goals is very important at Big Picture. Here are some of the ways student progress is assessed and communicated:

- Students demonstrate their learning across the 5 Big Picture learning goals at “exhibitions.” Exhibitions occur 3 times a year at the high school level and 2 times a year at the middle school level. Families, mentors and staff attend and evaluate a student using a rubric. This past year, there was a move toward using co-created rubrics where the student, advisor and mentor sit down and create an evaluation tool that included what student would need to accomplish to be successful in a professional setting. There was an increased effort to have mentors attend exhibitions in order to give relevant feedback to the student.
- Students and families continue to receive narratives about progress toward mastery of the learning goals twice a year. Within each learning goal, specific areas of learning that are “in progress,” “meeting,” or “exceeding” expectations are identified. Student portfolios of work are maintained by advisors. This year, student portfolios continue to be digital.
- Student projects are evaluated using rubrics and we are moving toward 100% use of co-created rubrics with students, mentors and advisors. The co-created rubrics use the worksite expertise of professional mentors as part of the criteria evaluated.
- Students are evaluated by their mentors at their internships.
- Student progress is monitored by formative assessments of their work in their advisories.
- Students at Big Picture complete all state-mandated standardized assessments, as well as, PST, SAT and NAEP.

Assessing growth in our model can be complex due to the uses of multiple assessment modalities and measures. Aside from our testing performance, here are a few things worth highlighting as progress specific to the 2016-2017.

- The growth we made in the number of students graduating at Big Picture was the largest in the district and we were recognized by the superintendent at our district back to school event.
- We have updated and refined our competencies and have established “look fors” so that students and staff are clear as to have to demonstrate progress towards mastery.
- Several common formative assessment practices continue to be used: consistent narrative transcript format sent home twice per year, common exhibition rubrics, and common project rubrics.
- As a result of staff collaborating with staff at Eagle Rock in Colorado, the concept of co-created rubrics where students create rubrics for their internship projects with their mentors and advisors was piloted by some advisors. In addition, a tool called “The Path” (see attached) to assist with project management was developed by staff at Eagle Rock and is being implemented this year by advisors.

- Students at 8th grade and 10th grade “level up” when they meet the requirements by the end of the summer. 89% of 8th graders leveled up to 9th grade and 62% of 10th graders leveled up to 11th grade. Students are required to complete the all requirements before they graduate.
2. *If the school’s students, whether in aggregate or by major subgroups, are not making satisfactory progress in meeting the standards for increased student learning set forth in the district’s waiver application, please describe any changes made or planned in instructional practices, strategies, or curricula to improve student achievement against the standards.*

Attachment:

2A: Three Year Vision Plan

2 B: 2017-18 Annual Action Plan

Narrative:

Big Picture is an innovative school with a unique approach to learning. As a result, we attract many students with significant life and academic challenges. We work with “one student at a time” and we continue to work on improving the positive impact we have on their academic and social-emotional outcomes at scale. A few general interventions we have in place for struggling students:

- After school tutorials and our own summer school, funded through Title 1 and LAP, which are focused on helping students who don’t “level up” (see above) on time.
- Because we over-represent students with IEP (roughly double the district average), we over-staff our inclusive Education Department and have a significant degree of focus on supporting these students effectively and over-allocate budget (vs. district recommendation) to IEP push-in support.
- We work with the district differentiation specialist on improving our capacity to differentiate our instruction to meet the varying needs of our students and to effectively implement the co-teaching model where appropriate.
- Our focus on “learning through interests and internships” provides our students with real life opportunities to engage in learning in settings that are relevant to them and play to their strengths.

In addition to our attached Annual Action Plan (AAP) for next year (attachment), I have pulled out some general areas of focus that seem to align to this question below:

- Develop co-created rubrics 7-12 for a minimum of one project this year.

- Align math anchor standards 7-12.
- Increase math performance task individual practice.
- Incorporate online assessment tools into math courses weekly.

3. *Please describe any changes made in the standards for increased student learning and the evidence selected to determine whether the standards have been met. What changes, if any, are you making in goals for student learning?*

Attachments:

3A: Competencies 3.0

3B: Competencies "Looks fors"

3C: Common Transcript Template

Narrative:

Aspects of this question were alluded to in our narrative for #1 (above). Key initiatives at the school included new formative and summative assessment tools and common practices (including "PIE" internship assessment tool, revised common transcript template, common exhibition feedback guide, and new common progress narratives sent home by advisors on a set schedule). We have also continued conversations about deepening and expanding engagement with the 5 competencies in response to new research (particularly with regard to "meta-cognitive variables" and "soft skills". Broadly speaking, however, we have refined our competencies for student learning in competencies 3.0. The approach to learning outlined in our 2016 Waiver renewal submission still represents our current approach.

4. *Please submit the following data, preferably in tabular form, and provide any explanatory comments on each as deemed helpful for the information of the Board.*
- a. *Enrollment by grade*
 - b. *Percent meeting standard on the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA) on English Language Arts and Mathematics, in each grade in which the assessment results are available.*
 - c. *Adjusted four-year cohort graduation rate, for most recent class available.*
 - d. *Adjust five-year cohort graduation rate, for most recent class available.*

- e. Any post-graduate employment and post-secondary participate data as may be available.

Narrative:

16-17 Enrollment Data:

7th – 31

8th- 31

9th –31

10th –29

11th – 33

12th - 29

16-17 Test Scores

Grade	SBA ELA	SBA Math
7th	55%	23%
8th	32%	25%
11th	62%	24%

Class of 2016 -2017 – 4 year graduation rate: 93%

Class of 2015 - 2016 – 5-year graduation rate: 91%

- 5. *What challenges, if any, has the district encountered in the transfer of credit equivalencies for Big Picture School to other school districts or in meeting credit distribution requirements for institutions of higher education?*

Narrative:

Challenges to date have been relatively minor, and we have managed to work through most of them thanks to strong relationships with colleges and universities and growing understanding of our model as it expands across the country and the world. However, a couple areas of lingering concern include:

- NCAA continues not to recognize our students as having met their credit requirements, resulting in students not having access to college sports if they come from a Big Picture school operating under a waiver. This has been an area of extensive discussion over the years between the national Big Picture organization and the NCAA, but we are yet to see a solution.
- In some cases, a student can lose credit if transferring prior to graduation from Big Picture, meaning they must take extra courses to meet state requirements.

There are still hurdles for us to be aware of and overcome as we progress with the Big Picture model here in Highline. It should be noted that we are considered a leader in the implementation of the model and have given key support to schools in the area that are developing the Big Picture model. Many of these schools are following suit on our credit waiver and all are improving outcomes for students they are serving by a very significant margin relative to the schools they replaced. In addition, Highline Big Picture has had a role in seeding and supporting what has now become one of its helpful sustainers, namely a regional network of critical friends and thought partners.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact me with any follow-up questions.

Lisa Escobar

Principal, Highline Big Picture Schools
Office: 206-631-7701
Cell: 206-681-6430

Note from SBE staff: Addenda to this report can be found at www.sbe.wa.gov/waivers.php in the table for waivers of credit-based graduation requirements.

From: Bamba, Julia
To: [Parker Teed](#)
Cc: phelpsp@issaquah.wednet.edu; [Ronald Thiele](#); kuperj@issaquah.wednet.edu; [School Board](#)
Subject: Update on Issaquah School District Credit-Based Graduation Requirements Waiver
Date: Tuesday, October 10, 2017 8:26:11 PM
Attachments: [GEHS Level Up Requirements per Grade.pdf](#)
[Gibson Ek Sample Transfer Letter.docx](#)
[Gibson Ek Student Handbook.pdf](#)
[Gibson Ek Explanation of Progress and Effects of Waiver.pdf](#)

Dear Washington State Board of Education,

Thank you for the opportunity for Gibson Ek to provide an update on the progress that we made last year and the effects of implementing the waiver. Before sharing our progress on last year, I'd like to give you a glimpse into what a day of learning may look like at Gibson Ek. As a school designed around engaging students who have not typically thrived in traditional schools, our spaces are set up to be able to provide the innovation, support, and tools to really inspire and support our students at a high level of engagement. With the support of our school district, PTSA, and Schools Foundation, we have the resources to allow our students to push themselves and deepen their learning in new ways that are relevant to their own lives and their future. We have remained grounded and focused on providing amazing opportunities for our students to become the directors of their own learning.

Let me help you imagine what a typical day at Gibson Ek may look like. You may see a Star Wars Costume Creator set up in a conference room, a volunteer working with a student on the electronics of a robot, another volunteer working alongside a student in the shop using CAD to design a skateboard, a teacher providing writing support as students are writing 10 pages of their autobiography, another teacher in the textiles lab supporting students as they design a shirt made with recycled material, and another staff member leading a WWI research course. We have created spaces that encourage students to explore their interests and learn how to think critically and creatively about the world around them.

Incredible students at Gibson Ek have helped us realize the potential that students have and the power of giving students the freedom and ability to explore the world around them and look at everything as an opportunity to learn or a problem to solve.

If you are ever in the Issaquah area then let me know so you can join us for a visit. You are welcome any time!

Please refer to the attachments for information about the school's progress in meeting the standards for increased student achievement. Please let me know if you need any additional information or clarification.

Sincerely,

Julia Bamba

Principal

Gibson Ek High School

425-837-6351



Gibson Ek High School

Progress and Effects of Implementing the Waiver of Credits and Grades

October 10, 2017

1. *Please describe and document the progress made by the school during the last school year in meeting the standards for increased student learning set forth in the district's waiver application.*

Below are the key design principles for our model and explanations of how we are meeting these standards for increased student learning. The Gibson Ek student handbook contains details about how we have designed our school to increase student learning. Page numbers are noted for more information and can be found in our Gibson Ek Student Handbook.

- **Learning Goals and Competencies**, pages 30-36. Gibson Ek has a set of 5 Learning Goals- Communication, Empirical Reasoning, Quantitative Reasoning, Social Reasoning, and Personal Qualities. Within each Learning Goal are 4 Competencies and each competency has 3-8 targets that students must meet. In order for a competency to be achieved, a student must meet or exceed expectations in at least 4 targets.
- **Level Up Expectations and Graduation Requirements**, pages 13 and 14. In addition to completing competencies, students must also meet requirements in order to level up each year. Pages 13 and 14 of the student handbook outline the requirements that students must meet at each level. Once students complete 101 and 201 requirements, they Gateway to Senior Institute where the level of student work deepens, becomes more rigorous, and has a greater impact in the community or the world.
- **Internships in the Real World**, page 52. Students attend full day internships two days per week on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Last year 94% of students participated in our internship program. The students who did not acquire an internship participated in on campus internships with mentors or worked with local businesses in a small business program that was led by a Gibson Ek advisor.
- **One Student at a Time Personalization**, page 23. Each student develops a Learning Plan. This is a living document that is updated 3-4 times per year. The Learning Plan includes the student's Vision, SMART Goals, and Project Work. Another aspect of personalized learning is that students are part of a small advisory where students get to know their advisor well. Students and advisors have daily check-ins, weekly one on one meetings, and weekly progress updates. Additionally, the advisor gets to know the student well so they can support, challenge, and motivate their students appropriately.
- **Authentic Assessments**, pages 23 and 63. Gibson Ek Competencies and Targets can be found on pages 30-36. Students present evidence of learning and portfolios to a panel of parents, students, advisors and mentors. Last year, students had 4 exhibitions including 3 panel exhibitions and 1 showcase exhibition that can be compared to a science fair style exhibition. Students gather evidence of learning through internships, student-driven projects, product development, community impact projects, and portfolios. During each Learning Cycle, advisors

assessed student evidence of learning, marking off targets within competencies, and supporting students as they move through their work.

- **School Organization.** The Gibson Ek campus is a vibrant, collaborative, and flexible space to encourage students to engage in innovative learning and project work. We are able to quickly adapt our campus to meet the changing needs of our students. Last year, students and staff worked closely to set up the school spaces, create systems and routines, and continued to develop supports and structures to increase student learning and engage students with real world opportunities.
 - **Advisory Structure,** page 17. Students are part of a mixed grade level advisory of about 16-20 students. The advisor supports students with their learning, provides academic learning opportunities, and helps to build a sense of belonging and trust in the school and the educational process. Advisors are also the certificated teachers responsible for assessing student work.
 - **Small School Culture.** Last year Gibson Ek started the year with 120 students and ended the year with 106 students. Students who transferred, left the school to return to their home high school. A few students moved. For the 2017-18 school year, Gibson Ek has 149 students enrolled.
 - **Leadership.** In 2016-2017, the school's leadership team consisted of a principal, Learning Through Interest Coordinator, a counselor, and 7 advisors.
 - **Parent/Family Engagement.** All advisors work closely with families to increase school and family partnerships. Advisors conducted home visits with all students in their advisory and parents were invited to attend their student's exhibition. Gibson Ek also held a showcase event that was created by the student body, held an end of year celebration and we invite parents to join us on the first day of school for breakfast.
 - **School College Partnership and College Preparation.** Sophomores attended the Great Careers Conference and attended a College Fair at Bellevue College. A group of students participated in the Imagine Tomorrow competition and stayed at Washington State University for the weekend. All sophomores and juniors take the PSAT. Students completed interest surveys and college and career exploration using Career Cruising.
 - **Professional Development.** Ongoing support and professional development occurred last year directly related to competency based grading, design thinking, project based learning, Restorative Justice, advisory model and relationship building.
2. *If the school's students, whether in the aggregate or by major subgroups, are not making satisfactory progress in meeting the standards for increased student learning set forth in the district's waiver application, please describe any changes made or planned in instructional practices, strategies, or curricula to improve student achievement against the standards.*

One of Gibson Ek's challenges last year was supporting IEP students to adequately progress throughout the year in meeting targets within the competencies. The main barriers that IEP students faced last year included organizational skills, on task behaviors, and follow through on difficult steps to complete work while tracking and organizing evidence. In 2016-2017, we had a .6 IEP teacher and a 3 hour paraprofessional. This year, we have a 1.0 IEP teacher and a 6 hour

paraprofessional. With 20% of our student population qualifying for an IEP, this increase in staffing was important.

Special Education at Gibson Ek is a full inclusion model. Gibson Ek students are only pulled from the daily routines for 1 on 1 meetings which occurs with our general education population as well. All specially designed instruction occurs in a general education classroom setting and not in a specialized classroom.

We continued to make adjustments throughout last year to support our IEP students. To continue to support our IEP students, we have the following supports and routines in place this year:

- Mapping IEP goals to the competencies and targets
- Greater collaboration between parents, students, case manager, and advisors on student needs
- Paraprofessional who has skills to support specially designed instruction under the guidance and direction of the case manager
- Provide ongoing support and math instruction for students with IEP math goals by assisting students with executive functioning skills as they relate to math and providing small group or 1 on 1 instruction during math time
- Ensuring students have adapted materials during crash labs and design labs so that students are accessing supports in a flexible and dynamic environment.
- Paraprofessional and IEP teacher providing support and instruction for IEP students in crash labs and design labs
- Weekly 1 on 1 meetings with students to support them with organization, project ideas, project management, follow through, and accountability
- Rewriting every IEP to reflect the program and the needs of the students in our school

3. *Please describe any changes made in the standards for increased student learning and the evidence selected to determine whether the standards have been met. What changes, if any, are you making in goals for student learning?*

- **Exhibition and Learning Cycles.** This year, we moved from 4 Learning Cycles to 3 to allow students time to develop and produce work between exhibitions. Conducting 4 exhibitions last school year was incredibly difficult to manage due to the time commitment of staff to participate in all of their student's exhibitions while also continuing to teach and supervise students. Each student's exhibition is approximately 1 hour.
- **Tracking of student evidence and competencies.** Last year we used a Learning Management System call Project Foundry. Due to some technical bugs and an old user interface, we've changed platforms to now use LiFT to help with overseeing student project proposals and tasks, marking competencies, and tracking level up and graduation requirements.
- **Schedule.** For 2017-2018, Gibson Ek designed a new schedule to provide more support and scaffolding for project design, development, and project completion. As students

move through freshman year, students can earn more independent work time if the student is demonstrating success in meeting requirements.

- **Senior Institute.** To continue to engage juniors and seniors in learning, Gibson Ek developed Senior Institute to create a cohort of students at the upper levels and challenge students to go deeper and make learning even more relevant. These students are also developing a Senior Project that will be developed during the junior year and implemented during the senior year. Even greater supports and scaffolding as students design and develop projects.
- **Collection of Student Work.** When learning is personalized, rubrics can often discourage students or hold students back. This year, Gibson Ek is beginning to collect samples of student work to demonstrate the range of work and rigor that can be expected of students.
- **Student and Staff Handbooks.** This summer, Gibson Ek staff wrote 2 extensive handbooks providing details about the programs at Gibson Ek. These handbooks blend systems and experiences from Big Picture Learning with the development of what learning looks like at Gibson Ek.

4. *Please submit the following data, preferably in tabular form, and provide any explanatory comments on each as deemed helpful for the information to the Board.*

a. *Enrollment by Grade*

Class of 2021, 59 students

Class of 2020, 65 students

Class of 2019, 26 students

b. *Percent meeting standard on the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA) in English Language Arts and Mathematics, in each grade in which the assessments are administered, for the most recent school year for which assessment results are available.*

88% passed ELA (22 out of 25)

71% Passed Math(10 out of 14)

██████ Passed EOC ALg 1 (██████) (most likely taken in middle school)

c. *Adjusted four-year cohort graduation rate for the most recent class available*

First graduating class is 2019

d. *Adjusted five-year cohort graduation rate, for the most recent class available*

First graduating class is 2019

Note from SBE policy analyst Parker Teed: Information above has been redacted to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

- e. *Any post-graduate employment and post-secondary participation data as may be available*

Not applicable at this time

- 5. *What challenges, if any, has the district encountered in transfer of credit equivalencies for Big Picture School to higher education institutions or other school districts?*

Gibson Ek has not had any students apply to higher education institutions. We have several students who have transferred out of Gibson Ek High School to other high schools. The challenge that we've faced is how to accurately provide equivalencies for students to help the new school interpret the work and credits that students have completed at Gibson Ek. Attached is a transfer letter that we send to help schools interpret our competencies and project work for equivalencies for credits.

Note from SBE staff: Addenda to this report can be found at www.sbe.wa.gov/waivers.php in the table for waivers of credit-based graduation requirements.



Annual Report Pursuant to WAC 180-18-055 (11):

Any school or district granted a waiver under this chapter shall report annually to the state board of education, in a form and manner to be determined by the board, on the progress and effects of implementing the waiver.

Chelan School of Innovation
324 East Johnson
Chelan, WA 98816



1. Please describe and document the progress made by the school during the last school year in meeting the standards for increased student learning set forth in the district's waiver application.

Chelan School of Innovation (CSI) has made considerable progress meeting the standards for increased student learning. This progress is largely attributed to the implementation of personalized learning included in the Big Picture Learning model and adoption of restorative justice practices. Since receiving the waiver in the spring of 2016, CSI has shown improved graduation rates, attendance rates, internship participation, enrollment, college enrollment and a reduction in discipline referrals per individual student. Additionally, the competency-based waiver allows students and staff to build individualized learning plans for every student based on their interests, passions and post high school goals.

a. Annual School Improvement Plan process

- i. See 2016 – 2017 Schoolwide Plan (Addendum A) and End of Year Report Presentation (Addendum B)

b. Graduation rates: The OSPI Report Card reports that graduation rates rose from 13% in 2015 to 45.8% in 2017. While CSI recognizes this as the official graduation rate, when students who attended Glacier Valley High School (previous incarnation) prior to 2015 are removed from the graduation rate formula, the percentage jumps to 86% in 2016 and 91% in 2017. CSI expects graduation rates to continue to climb as students who have been in the program for three years reach graduation this year.

c. Enrollment, attendance, discipline data:

- i. **Enrollment:** 34 students
- ii. **Attendance Rate:** 90%
- iii. **Unexcused Attendance Rate:** 1.5%
- iv. **Discipline:** Reduced out of school suspension by 97% from 2014 – 2015 to 2015 – 2016. In 2016 – 2017, one student was placed on long-term suspension. No suspensions occurred after October of 2016. These results are largely attributed to the adoption of a Restorative Justice program and training provided by The Restorative Justice Center of the Northwest.

d. College and post high school data: 60% of CSI seniors were accepted to a community college. This number is up from 7% in 2015.

e. Internship Rate: The percentage of students participating in internships jumped from 74% to 96% in 2016 – 2017.

2. If the school's students, whether in the aggregate or by major subgroups, are not making satisfactory progress in meeting the standards for increased student learning set forth in the district's waiver application, please describe any changes made or planned in instructional practices, strategies, or curricula to improve student achievement against the standards.

While CSI students continue to make satisfactory progress in meeting the standards for increased student learning, the model continues to evolve. The following adjustments have been made since the waiver was approved:

- a. For 2017 – 2018, CSI has adopted “four pillars” (design thinking, entrepreneurship, sustainability, social emotional wellness) that have been incorporated into core content, internships and projects.
- b. During the 2015 – 2016 school year, CSI adopted the Big Picture Learning philosophy of an “open schedule” that allowed students to be largely responsible for their time. This was modified for the 2016 – 2017 school year to accommodate direct instruction in the core content areas of math, science social studies, science and English (schedule below).

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8:20 – 9:40am	Circle (9:30 – 10:00am)	Math (Test Prep) & Social Studies	Science & ELA	Math (Test Prep) & Social Studies	Science & ELA
9:50 – 11:10am	Guided Electives/Seminars (10:05 – 11:45am)	Applied Math & Social Studies	Science & ELA	Applied Math & Social Studies	Science & ELA
11:15 – 11:45am	Lunch (11:45 – 12:15pm)	Lunch (open campus for 11/12)			→
11:45 – 2:40pm	Internship, Projects, Field Experience (12:15 – 2:40pm)	Internship, Projects, Field Experience PE/Outdoor Ed (2:00 – 2:35pm)	Leadership (1:05 – 2:35pm)	PE/Outdoor Ed (2:00 – 2:35pm)	Circle (1:05 – 2:35pm) →
2:40 – 2:50pm	Clean Up				→

3. Please describe any changes made in the standards for increased student learning and the evidence selected to determine whether the standards have been met. What changes, if any, are you making in goals for student learning?

Student learning is centered around the Big Picture Learning competencies: communication, quantitative reasoning, empirical reasoning, social reasoning and personal qualities plus the addition of non-cognitive skills. These competencies are embedded in the core content, internships and projects of each student’s individualized learning plan, which is updated twice per year. While no significant changes have been made to student learning, CSI continues to refine how these competencies are communicated, demonstrated and evaluated. Additionally, the “four pillars” (design thinking, entrepreneurship, sustainability, social emotional wellness) have been incorporated into core content, internships and projects.

4. Please submit the following data, preferably in tabular form, and provide any explanatory comments on each as deemed helpful for the information of the Board.

a. Enrollment, by grade (Sept 2017)

9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade	12 th Grade
0	10	9	10

- b. Percent meeting standard on the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA) in English Language Arts and Mathematics, in each grade in which the assessments are administered, for the most recent school year for which assessment results are available.**

Note from SBE policy analyst Parker Teed: Information below has been redacted to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

	ELA (% met)	MATH (% met)
9th Grade	N/A	N/A
10th Grade	N/A	N/A
11th Grade	████	████
12th Grade	████	████

- c. Adjusted four-year cohort graduation rate: 45.8%**
- d. Adjusted five-year cohort graduation rate: 49.2%**
- e. Any post-graduate employment and post-secondary participation: 60% of graduating seniors were accepted to a community college.**

5. What challenges, if any, has the district encountered in transfer of credit equivalencies for Big Picture School to higher education institutions or other school districts?

The main challenge CSI has experienced is the translation and communication of the Big Picture competency model to other high schools and higher education institutions. When dealing with other high schools, CSI has translated the competency-based transcript into a traditional credit-based transcript prior to sending to the requesting district. While this works, it requires time to evaluate/translate each transcript. CSI has not had any student apply to a four-year college. This is being addressed in the 2017 – 2018 Schoolwide Plan. In the previous years, CSI has provided a translated credit-based transcript for student applying to colleges, but have been encouraged by Big Picture to stop translating and provide only the competency-based transcripts.

Note from SBE staff: Addenda to this report can be found at www.sbe.wa.gov/waivers.php in the table for waivers of credit-based graduation requirements.

October 1, 2017

Dear Members of Washington State Board of Education,

This report is outlined at your request, and is intended to serve as a summary of our progress toward increased student learning as detailed in our waiver application. Enclosed, you will find qualitative and quantitative data highlighting the recent evolution of our program, areas of success and challenges to be addressed moving forward.

Defining Success: Access to Real World Learning

With a focus on developing students prepared to pursue the widest range of post secondary opportunities, including education, military, and career related training, we have expanded our program. Significant progress has been made regarding opportunities for real world learning and advanced academic opportunities over the past three years. Over the past year, specifically, we've seen a significant rise in the numbers of students engaged in internships and advanced coursework. Reasons for these shifts are twofold. First, because of the waiver, students are expected to show competency in learning goals through real world learning experiences and are supported by staff in doing so. Second, a cultural shift appears to be in progress regarding post high school planning. With more students considering college as an option, a greater number of them are choosing to challenge themselves with advanced coursework, either through rigorous internships, coursework taken at the comprehensive high school, or Running Start.



Observations

1. Data from students in internship for the year 2016/17 appears to be higher than the current year. This is due to the time of year data was collected. We anticipate that by

the spring of this year, almost 100% of our students will be engaged in internship work.

- There is no data for numbers of students choosing advanced coursework in 2015/16 and 2016/17 because in those years, students were not making that choice.

Next Steps

The internship program will continue to grow, and in doing so, expose students to opportunities for rigorous real-world learning. The relationship between traditional academic rigor and real world rigor is well described by the founder of High Tech High, Larry Rosenstock, “One misapprehension of rigor is that it’s more content. A more nuanced misapprehension of rigor is it’s increasingly complex content. I would argue that rigor is being in the company of a passionate adult who is rigorously pursuing inquiry in the area of their subject matter and is inviting students along as peers in that adult discourse.” It is our intention that each ILC student will have the opportunity to work alongside adults in their fields of study multiple times throughout their high school career.

Defining Success: From ‘Alternative’ to ‘Option’

Another area of growth is regarding school culture. A survey completed this fall assessed students and parents’ perception of nine characteristics of highly successful schools. Results show generally positive perceptions of three categories. These categories included: Supportive Learning Environment, Family & Community Involvement, and Communication & Collaboration.

	Supportive Learning Environ.		Family/Comm Involvement.		Communication/Collaboration.		Average
	Students	Parents	Student	Parents	Student	Parents	
Positive	100%	66%	83%	66%	80%	66%	70%
Negative	0	25%	16%	25%	0	8%	16%
Neutral	0	8%		8%	20%	16%	14%

Interest Based Curriculum

Some of the most significant changes to our program since the inception of the waiver have been the growth of project based, interest driven work outlined in individualized learning plan. This work, initiated by students with the support of advisors, has led to deep learning. Using student exhibitions of learning at the end of each trimester, community members, staff, families, and peers have opportunities to provide students with useful feedback regarding their academic and personal goals. These exhibitions provide students with a platform to share their successes and challenges, explaining goals on their learning plans and sharing evidence connecting goals to competencies.

Observations

A 2017 graduate hosted an open house slideshow to educate the community about his senior project, a service trip to Nepal. Describing how he used his skills learned in an internship with a concrete contractor to assist in the rebuilding of a school, the student reflected on his unique learning experience abroad.

A current senior at ILC shared highlights from her internship working in the infant/toddler program at a local Montessori school. Since then, she has completed summer Montessori training workshops and has been hired to work part-time at the school's new campus as an assistant teacher.

Another current senior has been hired as a part time paraprofessional after her widely touted success working with children in the Special Education classroom at the local elementary school. She is now certificated as a paraprofessional and can be hired as a substitute para. She intends to pursue a degree in Special Education upon graduation.

Each of the successes described above are the direct result of students having the freedom to pursue areas of interest as the basis for their academic and personal learning. These three unique young people would likely not be experiencing the same inspiration to pursue their futures without the competency based program.

Defining Success: Student Support

Our goals for student learning have not changed significantly since the waiver application in spring of 2016. What has changed, though, has been the way in which students are supported in making changes. Staffing increases in the fall of 2017 improved the way in which students are connected to community as well as the way students with IEPs are supported. A part time mentorship coordinator supports students connecting with internship, project, and long term mentors. The results of this change are reflected in the graph above illustrating increases in student interns. Also, paraprofessional staffing to support instructors in meeting needs of students with IEPs has increased.

Another change has been made in collaboration time afforded to staff. Twice monthly, staff are engaged in collaboration time in which they may plan off campus real-world learning experiences, support students of concern, share instructional practices, and modify schedules to better meet student needs.

Observations

A recently homeless 2017 graduate and first generation college student has just moved into an apartment with the support of a mentor. The security

provided by multiple scholarships she earned last spring will help with her first few months rent, while she finds a part time job to sustain herself as she pursues a two year degree in Business.

Defining Success: Communication & Community

In order to improve communication between the school and stakeholders, a weekly newsletter has been initiated this year. This newsletter, which aims to inform families and community members about school programming, also provides for increased collaboration between the school and regional partners. The intention of improved communication is to strengthen relationships between the school and families as well as invite participation by an increased number of community members. See Appendix “A” for this year’s newsletters.

One other change in process is the school’s involvement in a regional partnership. It is the intention of the school staff to strengthen relationships with other Big Picture schools to access support and exchange ideas. In addition, staff members are actively making connections with other regional alternative schools who wish to explore options for programmatic shifts.

A significant change being implemented this fall is the use of a new software program which will enable staff to more efficiently and regularly assess student progress toward competencies. Previously, competency based rubrics were not used regularly with formative assessment. With the support of the new software, regular formative assessment of student work using competencies will be efficient and provide timely feedback to students. See Appendix “B” for an example of a rubric currently being used to assess progress toward competency in a current events activity.

Data

Enrollment

Total enrollment has remained steady throughout the past three years with significant increase in the number of students qualifying for special education services.

	2016/17 (spring)	2017/18 (fall)
9th grade	5	3
10th grade	3	5
11th grade	5	6
12th grade	11	7
Transitional IEP	2	1

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Total Enrollment	21	25	22
Ethnic minority (Latino, Native American)	14%	16%	9%
Ethnic majority (White)	85%	80%	91%
Special Education	4%	24%	40%
% Qualify free/reduced lunch	57%	68%	63%

Smarter Balanced Assessment Scores

Note from SBE policy analyst Parker Teed: Information below has been redacted to comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

	spring 2016 passing	spring 2017 passing
9th grade taking Biology EOC*	██████████	██████████
10 grade Biology EOC	██████████	██████████
11th grade Biology EOC*	██	██████████
10th grade SB ELA	██████████	██████████
11th grade SB ELA	██████████	██████████
11th grade SB Math or ALG EOC	██	██████████

*Some 9th grade students at ILC join the Biology course taught to 9th/10th grade students, and therefore take the End of Course Exam at the end of 9th grade.

It is difficult to use SBA scores to measure progress at ILC since the waiver has been implemented. There are several reasons why this measure is not a reliable reflection of student progress.

1. It is difficult to generalize statistics with a very small sampling size.
2. Several students with IEPs are counted in the group of students testing. While they may have accommodations stating they may pass the test with a different scale score, this is not reflected in the recorded score.
3. Overall, we are experiencing an increase in transfer students enrolling in 11th and 12th grade. Therefore, it is difficult to accept that their scores are an accurate reflection of our program changes.

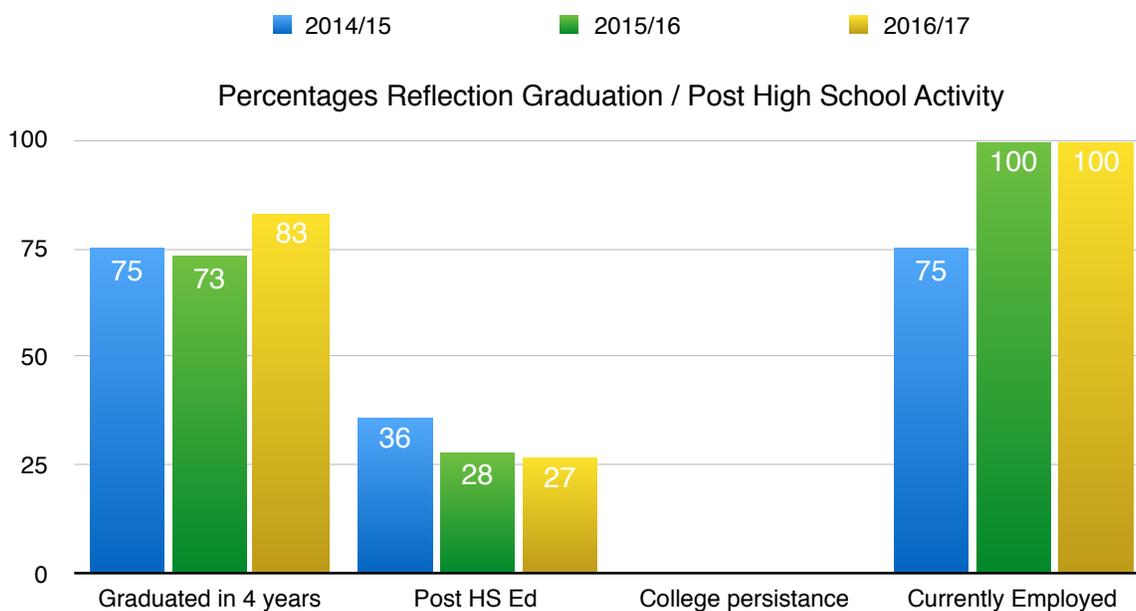
Adjusted four-year cohort graduation rate

2015/16 - 72.7%

Adjusted five-year cohort graduation rate

2016/17 - 83.3%

The graduating class of 2017 graduated eleven students, one of whom was a teen parent. Needing an extra year to complete graduation requirements, she graduated in five years. This explains the “five-year” cohort rate in 2017 rather than “four-year”.



Challenges & Next Steps

While we have significant numbers of students graduating, and rising numbers of students choosing to pursue post high school options, our college persistence levels are zero. This means that though we’re helping students pursue options, they are not able to complete the degrees they set out to complete.

We attribute this to several reasons:

1. Almost 100% of our students choosing to pursue post high school education are first generation college students. Multiple barriers exist for first generation students.

2. Our community is geographically isolated from access to colleges and universities. This creates many barriers for students, specifically those who need to work while in school, some of whom are contributing to their families livelihood.
3. Many of our students have very limited exposure to life outside of our small community. It is challenging for students to leave a supportive, familiar environment and sustain independent life elsewhere.

Next Steps

We are making several changes district wide to address these issues. The implementation of our mentorship coordinator was initiated with the specific purpose of seeking long term mentors to commit to supportive relationships beyond high school. Our hope is that if students have extra support in making decisions and taking action to pursue post high school education, they will be more likely to persist.

Second, the district has recently added funding to the position of College and Career Counselor. This counselor, accessible for all high school students, will provide extra support to students as they explore options.

For students who have chosen to pursue college, we have not faced challenges related to our competency based transcript. Both graduates from 2017 who pursued post high school education chose to start at Wenatchee Valley College, which honored their diplomas and transcripts. It is our intention, though, to actively build relationships with regional colleges and universities to create a path for students who wish to apply. In collaboration with Gibson Ek, Highline Big Picture, and Chelan School of Innovation, we believe this relationship can be established effectively.

Thank you for your support of our innovative program. We will continue to keep you updated as to our progress, and welcome your feedback and questions.

Sincerely,