

Career and Technical Education

Graduation Pathway

This paper provides the SBE background information and recommendations on HB 1599, specifically the Career and Technical Education Graduation Pathway. Secondary Career and Technical Education has federal (Perkins V), Washington state law (RCW 28A.700) and local policy and accountability. It is critical to the success of HB 1599 that the implementation is grounded in federal, state and local requirements to ease alignment for school districts and best serve students to pursue their pathway.

Overall Recommendations:

1. Require sequences be within the same WA state CTE Program Area
 - a. Provides broadest level of CTE course alignment, and ensures the sequence experienced is best aligned with postsecondary goals in a meaningful way
2. Remove language that references programs of study
 - a. Removes confusion with federal requirements
3. Align “course” definitions used for the purposes of CTE graduation pathways and Perkins CTE Concentrators
 - a. Provides consistency in implementation and data reporting, and allows for greater focus on impact and outcomes for students

Legislative Language (1599):

viii) Complete a sequence of career and technical education courses that are relevant to a student's postsecondary pathway, including those leading to workforce entry, state or nationally approved apprenticeships, or postsecondary education, and that meet either: The curriculum requirements of core plus programs for aerospace, maritime, health care, information technology, or construction and manufacturing; or the minimum criteria identified in RCW 28A.700.030.

Nothing in this subsection (1)(b)(viii) requires a student to enroll in a preparatory course that is approved under RCW 28A.700.030 for the purposes of demonstrating career and college readiness under this section.

SBE Proposed Rule Language:

(a) For this section, “course” is defined as a class or learning experience or combination thereof provided by a public school district in accordance with district policy through which a student earns a minimum of a half high school credit.

(b) For this section, “sequence” is defined as:

i) two or more high school credits of career technical education (CTE) courses within the same program of study, that align with the postsecondary plans outlined in the student’s high school and beyond plan; or

ii) two or more high school credits of CTE courses, in different programs of study, that align with the postsecondary plans outlined in the student’s high school and beyond plan.

Background for Board Consideration:

1. “Complete a sequence of career and technical education courses” and draft rules use of “program of study”

Language used within the legislation was proposed with intentionality, as this aligns with the state definition of career and technical education meaning, “a planned program of courses and learning experiences...” (RCW 28A.700.010). The federal definition of “Career and technical education” includes the requirement of offering a sequence of courses. The combination of state and federal requirements informed the proposed language of “sequence of courses”.

The term “program of study” was not used in the originating legislation, because there is a federal definition of program of study that OSPI is responsible for administering as part of the Federal Strengthening Career & Technical Education for the 21st Century law, referred to as the Perkins V Act. The Perkins V act was signed into law July 2018, and Washington has submitted a transition plan to the Department of Education, as the state engages in the state plan development process this year. Perkins V replaces the Perkins IV act that also had a requirements related to programs of study. It is important to consider the implications of using the term, “program of study” which has restrictive meaning and required associated outcomes. See sidebar for program of study definition.

The minimum criteria in RCW 28a.700.030 includes, “(2) Be comprised of a sequenced progression of multiple courses that are technically intensive and rigorous.” This component is required of any sequence used, and a sequenced progression in unrelated program areas does not seem to fit the intent of the existing legislation that guides Career and Technical Education, nor the language in HB 1599.

The rules as proposed, specifically related to the same program of study or different programs of study may lead to misalignment with the legislation required as part of RCW 28A.700.030. In consideration of the curriculum requirements of core plus include a related course sequence by nature of Core Plus program design, and include the opportunity to earn a student certificate, meeting the requirements of RCW 28A.700.030.

OSPI is recommending:

The definition of “sequence” be defined as “a series of career and technical education courses within the same CTE program area that result in two or more high school credits being earned, and that align with the postsecondary plans outlined in the student’s high school and beyond plan.”

2. Course and credit definitions used in draft rules

Perkins V legislation defines a CTE concentrator as, “A student who completes at least two courses in a single program or program of study.” This is important for a variety of reasons. School districts which will utilize state and federal CTE funding to expand CTE graduation pathway options for students will be accountable to the Perkins V performance indicators which will determine how they may spend federal funds. Data collection and valid reporting will be important for the purposes of state CTE and federal CTE accountability and performance, and also for the purposes of understanding the graduation pathways available to students in our state. It is a critical opportunity for our state to align the language and definitions used in support of students that access CTE graduation pathways and CTE sequences of courses. The performance indicators and special population elements districts will be accountable for are described below.

For the definition of CTE concentrators for the Perkins V plan, OSPI will use of the term “course” as a “learning experience that results in the opportunity to earn a high school credit.” If a student meets the CTE graduation pathway by completing a sequence of courses, earning two or more credits in the same program area, this will align with our state definition used for Perkins of a CTE concentrator earning two or more credits in the same program area. While instructional time will not be defined, this will equate to approximately 360 hours of instruction in a single program area. If these definitions align, data collection, reporting, and correlation information for addition data points beyond which pathways students use for graduation will be more readily available. This alignment also provides ease for school districts to implement and meet programmatic requirements across state and federal laws.

Washington State CTE Program Areas

Agricultural Sciences

Business & Marketing

Family & Consumer Science

Health Sciences Skilled & Technical Sciences

STEM

Washington State CTE Career Clusters

Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources

Architecture & Construction

Arts, AV Tech & Communications

Business Management & Administration

Education & Training

Finance Government & Public Administration

Health Science

Hospitality & Tourism

Human Services

Information Technology

Law

Public Safety

Corrections & Security

Manufacturing

Marketing

STEM

Transportation, Distribution & Logistics

Career Clusters are narrower in definition than the Program Areas. Within these 16 Career Clusters, Washington has identified 79 different Career Pathways. These Career Pathways are a specific collection of courses and training opportunities, which help, prepare a student for a chosen career.

OSPI is recommending:

- Defining the term “course” as a “learning experience that results in the opportunity to earn a high school credit.”
- Alignment of the 1599 rules at the program level for purposes of consistency across CTE program federal and state implementation, and for the purposes of data validity and ability to make data informed decisions for CTE sequences in the future.

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Career and Technical Education Graduation Pathways

Suggested Language for Proposed Rules

(8) Career Technical Education Course Sequence.

(a) For this section, “course” is defined as a high school credit bearing class or learning experience or combination thereof provided by a public school district in accordance with district policy.

(b) For this section, “sequence” is defined as a series of career and technical education courses within the same CTE program area that result in two or more high school credits being earned, and that align with the postsecondary plans outlined in the student’s high school and beyond plan.

(c) To satisfy this graduation pathway option, a student must complete a sequence of CTE courses that include courses leading to workforce entry, state or nationally approved apprenticeships, or postsecondary education. Each sequence of CTE courses must meet either:

i) the curriculum requirements of core plus programs for aerospace, maritime, health care, information technology, or construction and manufacturing; or

ii) the minimum criteria identified for career technical education preparatory programs in RCW 28A.700.030.

(d) This pathway does not require a student to enroll in a course that is part of a career technical education preparatory program as described in RCW 28A.700.030.

Impact

1. Amends the definition of course to include the class or learning experience is credit bearing, and remove the reference to a minimum of .5 credit, as the definition of sequence provides the required earned credit amount. (subsection a)
2. Removes the term program of study, and use CTE program area which provides alignment opportunity across CTE program implementation, and broadens options for school districts beyond the program of study language. (subsection b)

4. Removes (ii) which includes “different programs of study”. (subsection b)
5. Changes “which may” to “that” as the requirement of leading to workforce entry, state or nationally approved apprenticeships, or postsecondary education is in the original legislative language to ensure alignment of law with rules. (subsection c)
6. Removes reference to meeting requirements of English and Mathematics requirements separately, as this leads to confusion for graduation pathways vs. ELA and math requirements