



FAQs on Multiple Pathways to Graduation (HB 1599) – June 2019

House Bill ([HB 1599](#)) (2019) expands the ways Washington students show their readiness for their next step after high school. Building off a robust plan (High School and Beyond Plan) and quality instruction across core academic areas, completing a graduation pathway helps prepare students for what comes after high school graduation. It also signals to employers and postsecondary education/training institutions a student's readiness for that step.

With the passage of HB 1599, students must have a High School and Beyond Plan, earn 24 high school credits ([with some added flexibility of a waiver for up to two of those credits](#)), and complete one of several different pathway requirements in order to graduate. To do this, the legislation made changes to:

- [high school graduation requirements, including waivers for the classes of 2019 and 2020](#);
- [High School and Beyond Plans](#);
- [academic acceleration policies](#); and
- [existing statute regarding high school credits](#).

It also established a [mastery-based workgroup](#).

Below are frequently asked questions about the new law, sorted into the following sections: Graduation requirements; students with IEPs; specific pathways; High School and Beyond Plan; academic acceleration; high school credit policies; and mastery-based workgroup.

Graduation Requirements (Multiple Sections of HB 1599)

1. Are there graduation-related changes for the Class of 2019?

Yes. Students in the Class of 2019 may be eligible for an expedited assessment appeal (commonly referred to as the "waiver") to waive the assessment graduation requirements for their class, if they have met other requirements and have demonstrated they have skills and knowledge to meet the high school graduation standard.

More information is available in Bulletin B025-19 and on the Expedited Assessment Appeals (EAA) page.

Other graduation requirements and alternatives for the Class of 2019 remain the same.

2. Where can I get more information about the Expedited Assessment Appeal (also known as “the waiver”) for Class of 2019?

Please refer to the [Expedited Assessment Appeals page](#) and the [EAA FAQ page](#).

3. Are there graduation-related changes for the Class of 2020?

Yes. Starting with the Class of 2020, students have an expanded number of ways to show they are ready for the next step after high school. These are listed below, and more detail is provided [later in this FAQ](#).

- Statewide high school assessments (Smarter Balanced or WA-AIM)
- Dual credit courses in English language arts (ELA) and math
- High school transition courses in ELA and math
- Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or Cambridge International courses (or tests) in ELA and math
- SAT or ACT
- A combination of meeting ELA and math requirements from the list above (for example, completing a transition course in math and meeting the graduation standard on the Smarter Balanced Assessment in ELA).
- Sequence of career and technical education (CTE) courses, including completing a Core Plus branded program
- Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)

Changes to the required [High School and Beyond Plan](#) and to the [24 credit requirement](#) are outlined below.

4. Will students in the Class of 2020 be able to access the expedited waiver as well?

Yes. HB 1599 extended access to the waiver through the Class of 2020. This provides additional time for school districts who may have some, but not all, of the pathways available to the Class of 2020.

5. Where can I find more detail about what counts for each of the graduation pathways?

While some of the pathways are fully defined in the new law, HB 1599 requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules in the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) to implement each of the graduation pathways. This process is ongoing through the summer and fall of 2019. Information about that process is available on the [State Board of Education website](#). Some additional information is also provided below.

6. Do students still have to earn 24 credits to be eligible to graduate?

[WAC 180-51-068](#) establishes the 24 credit requirement for graduation. This requirement has some flexibility added to it in HB 1599. Districts have the ability to waive up to two high school credits for students. More information on this change is [described below](#).

A description of the high school credit requirements is available on the [State Board of Education's Graduation Requirements infographic](#).

7. Do students still need a High School and Beyond Plan to be eligible to graduate?

Yes, it is still a graduation requirement that a student have a High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP). The required elements of the HSBP were expanded in HB 1599. See more about those changes below.

8. Do students have to pass the state assessments as a requirement to graduate?

No. Students have multiple pathways to graduation with a meaningful high school diploma. The Smarter Balanced assessments in ELA and math continue to be one of several pathway options that could fulfill the graduation requirements.

9. Is the 11th grade Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science (WCAS) one of the pathways?

No, the [WCAS](#) is not part of a graduation pathway. In Washington, this test fulfills the federal requirement that students be tested in science in high school, and is a good signal to educators, students, and families about what students know and can do. More information about the WCAS is available on the [OSPI website](#).

10. Is the Washington Access to Instruction and Measurement (WA-AIM) still available?

Yes. For students with significant cognitive disabilities, the WA-AIM qualifies as a graduation pathway. It is considered part of the statewide high school assessment pathway. Please refer to [Guidance for IEP Teams](#) for eligibility requirements to participate in the WA-AIM.

11. A student in the Class of 2020 passed the Collection of Evidence-Local (Locally Administered Assessment) alternative *[or succeeded via the GPA Comparison alternative]* during the 2018–19 school year. Does that count toward meeting the graduation requirement?

Yes – **if** it was completed during the 2018–19 school year. Class of 2020 students that have already met the assessment graduation requirement via the “GPA Comparison” alternative or the “Collection of Evidence-Local” may use that to meet the requirement if it was done during the 2018–19 school year and entered into the Graduation Alternatives database.

12. Will there be other pathways available in the future?

The State Board of Education will conduct a survey regarding whether additional graduation pathways should be added and will report their findings to the Legislature (Section 202 of HB 1599).

13. How should districts record information about students' pathways achievements?

OSPI will provide more information in the coming months about how to submit information for student pathways for the classes of 2020 and beyond. OSPI will be revising existing reporting structures to capture this data and minimize administrative impacts on data collection. Data and reporting for students in the Class of 2019 and earlier will be similar to what it has been.

Students with IEPs (Sec. 104)

The existing graduation option for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) to earn a Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA) is extended through the Class of 2021.

14. Do students with IEPs have to use one of the new pathways to graduate?

Yes, though students with IEPs in the classes of 2020 and 2021 have the option to use the existing Certificate of Individual Achievement process if the student and the IEP team determine that none of the pathways are appropriate. IEP teams should work with students to determine first which of the new graduation pathways would best serve the student, and consider what, if any, additional supports are needed for the student to access that pathway. If, for the classes of 2020 and 2021, the IEP team determines none of the pathways serve the student, other measures may be used to demonstrate skills and abilities of the student.

While some of the words in RCW 28A.155.045 were changed in HB 1599, the process for IEP teams and students have not. Please see the [guidance](#) provided by the Special Education Division for more information.

Specific Pathways Questions (Sec. 201)

HB 1599 directs the State Board of Education to adopt rules for each of the pathways, which they plan to undertake through the summer and fall of 2019. There are some things we know about the pathways based on the law itself.

Importantly, the expedited waiver is extended through the Class of 2020, meaning students can continue to use it while more information about the qualifications of the various pathways is developed and disseminated.

15. Which scores count for the Smarter Balanced Assessment pathway?

HB 1599 specifies that the statewide [high school assessment graduation standard](#) established by the State Board of Education is the threshold. Currently, this is the same standard used in prior years.

16. Which dual credit courses count for the dual credit pathway?

The course must generate both high school and college credit (100 level or above), and the student must qualify for the college credit (pass the course). These courses would be offered through Running Start, College in the High School, or possibly CTE Dual Credit, and are understood to be inside ELA or math content areas. Guidance regarding which specific courses count will be dependent on the rules developed by the State Board of Education.

17. What counts for the transition course pathway?

Currently, only approved [Bridge to College](#) courses fit under this category. The law defines a transition course, and it is only those courses where successful completion by a high school student ensures the student receives college-level placement at participating institutions of higher education. Criteria for Bridge to College include a higher education placement agreement.

18. Does the Collection of Evidence – Local (COE-Local) count as a transition course under the new pathways?

No. However, COE-Local courses may count as a graduation alternative for students in the Class of 2019 **IF** the student passed the COE-Local assessment (and associated course) during the 2018–19 school year. Similarly, a student in the Class of 2020 could use COE-Local to meet the graduation requirement **IF** they passed the COE-Local assessment (and associated course) during the 2018–19 school year.

19. Which Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, or Cambridge International courses count?

The law specifies that for ELA, the AP English Language and Composition Literature, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Psychology, U.S. History, World History, U.S. Government and Politics, and Comparative Government courses work, as well as any of the Individuals and Societies courses in the IB catalog. For math, AP Statistics, Computer Science, Computer Science Principles, and Calculus count, as well as any of the Mathematics courses in the IB catalog. The law does not specify Cambridge International courses beyond “English Language Arts and Mathematics.”

Students are not required to take the assessment associated with the AP, IB, or Cambridge course they enroll in to meet this pathway requirement. A student can either earn a C+ or better grade in the course or earn a 3 or higher on the AP exam or a 4 or higher on the IB exam.

20. What are the cut scores for the SAT or ACT that count for a graduation pathway?

[The current cut scores are available on the OSPI website.](#) The State Board of Education may update these scores in the future.

21. What does it mean to combine ELA and math options?

A student can use any combination of the Smarter Balanced Assessment, dual credit, transition courses, AP/IB/Cambridge, and ACT or SAT scores to meet the ELA and math requirements of those pathways. For example, a student may combine an AP Statistics course with their SBA score in ELA to show readiness for the next step after high school.

22. What counts for the CTE graduation pathway?

The CTE pathway is the most exciting addition to the new graduation pathways; nothing like it has been done before in Washington state. The State Board of Education will provide more information about this pathway through rulemaking, which will drive additional assistance to the field.

The law provides some guidance that is helpful for districts to consider while additional information and technical assistance is being developed. The CTE courses must be a **sequence**, which is defined in a related statute ([RCW 28A.700.030](#)) as a progression of multiple courses which are technically intensive and rigorous.

The sequence of courses must also allow students to either earn dual credit or an industry recognized credential; and the CTE courses must lead to employment, postsecondary education, and/or an apprenticeship. OSPI is working on a process to develop a list of qualifying industry recognized credentials in order to support this pathway.

If the sequence of courses meets the curriculum requirements of Core Plus, that also qualifies for the CTE graduation pathway.

23. Which scores are necessary on the ASVAB to qualify as a graduation pathway?

The intent of the legislation for this pathway is to meet the entrance requirements for the military services. The State Board of Education will be clarifying the language for this pathway through their rule writing. More information will be coming throughout 2019.

High School and Beyond Plan (Sec. 103 and Sec. 504)

The Legislature continues to emphasize the importance of a robust HSBP and made several additions to HSBP requirements through HB 1599 that will impact the development and use of the plan by students and educators.

24. Which new elements must be added to the HSBP to comply with the law?

There is only one new content area added to the HSBP. There must be evidence that the student received information on federal and state financial aid programs, including information about the required documentation, timelines for completion, information specific to students who are or have been in foster care or who are or are at risk of being homeless, and opportunities to participate in help sessions to complete the applications.

OSPI is working to update templates which may assist districts in complying with this addition, as well as technical assistance to support adoption.

25. What other changes to the HSBP do educators and students need to be aware of?

Additional changes to the process of developing or using the HSBP include:

- Students with IEPs must have a HSBP that is developed and updated in alignment with their IEP. The plan must be developed in a similar manner and with similar personnel as for all other students.
- Each HSBP must be updated to inform junior year course-taking. While many schools practice a regular update to the HSBP, as often as annually, the Legislature established a mandatory update. The intent of this change is to support the development of a plan that will help the student identify the best graduation pathway for themselves and ensure courses are aligned with that pathway.
- HB 1599 requires all districts to adopt an academic acceleration plan (more on this below) and was explicit in ensuring that **students' goals** inform any automatic enrollment in the next most rigorous course. Appropriate potential

course sequences need to be laid out in the students' HSBP in order to prevent students being enrolled into courses that don't match their goals.

26. When do the changes to the HSBP take effect?

The HSBP sections of HB 1599 (Sec. 103 and Sec. 504) take effect for the 2019-20 school year. Additional technical assistance, templates and other resources will be made available to districts beginning in the summer of 2019 and through

27. What about the requirement that schools provide an electronic version of the HSBP?

HB 1599 requires each district make available an electronic HSBP to students at the beginning of the 2020–21 school year. To support districts in selecting an electronic HSBP, OSPI must create a list of available platforms for HSBPs that meet the criteria listed in HB 1599. The criteria state the platform must:

- allow students to create and revise their HSBPs,
- allow appropriate access to educators and families,
- allow for updates as statutory requirements change,
- comply with privacy requirements, and
- allow for the portability between platforms so HSBPs move seamlessly with students.

OSPI must include, to the extent possible, existing platforms in use during the 2018–19 school year. OSPI is targeting late fall/early winter to publish this list.

Academic Acceleration (Sec. 502)

Academic acceleration is a policy that requires automatic enrollment for high school students in the next most rigorous level of advanced courses or programs based on their performance on the statewide assessments in 8th grade and high school. Once such advanced course is completed, the student is then automatically enrolled in the next most rigorous course after that. A model policy was previously created by WSSDA, and may be updated in the future.

28. Will my district be required to adopt an academic acceleration policy?

Yes. [RCW 28A.320.195](#) was codified in 2013 and encouraged school boards to adopt an academic acceleration policy for high school students. HB 1599 changes this law to require that boards adopt an academic acceleration policy for high school students by the 2021–22 school year.

29. How do we know which courses a student should be accelerated into?

HB 1599 requires that the assessment results on the statewide 8th grade and high school tests be used to inform the courses a student is automatically enrolled in. Students who meet or exceed the standard on the ELA portion are eligible for enrollment in advanced courses in English, social studies, humanities, and other related subjects. Students who meet or exceed the standard on the math portion are eligible for enrollment in advanced courses in math. Beginning in the 2021–22 school year, students who meet or exceed the standard on the Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science are eligible for enrollment in advanced courses in science.

It is critical to note that any academic acceleration for a student must be aligned with the student’s goals in their HSBP.

30. Will students or parents/guardians be allowed to opt a student out of academic acceleration?

Yes. The district must provide the opportunity to opt a student out of academic acceleration and enroll the student in an alternative course or program.

High School Credit Policies (Sec. 103)

HB 1599 made changes to the credit waiver districts can use for students as well as how high school courses taken in middle school can be applied to a student’s high school transcript.

31. Can a student still access a waiver toward their 24 credit requirement?

Yes. The legislature continues to look to create more flexibility across graduation requirements for districts and students, including in how districts can waive parts of the 24 credit graduation requirement. Some initial steps in adding local flexibility for the 24 credit requirement were taken in HB 1599. The criteria for which two credits may be waived is changed, starting in the 2019–20 school year. School boards must adopt policies in line with the law, which is changed as follows:

- The waiver for credits is now based on “a student’s circumstances.” Before this legislation, the requirement was that the waiver was based on “unusual circumstances.” This change allows the student’s plans and circumstances to drive the waiver.
- None of the waived credits can be the mandatory core credits, as identified by the State Board of Education. (On the [State Board of Education’s infographic](#), “mandatory core credits” are identified as “foundational credits.”)

32. How did HB 1599 change how high school courses taken in middle school work?

Previously, high school coursework completed by students in middle school was not automatically applied to fulfilling high school graduation requirements and added to the high school transcript unless requested by the student and the student’s family.

HB 1599 requires that unless a student and the student’s family requests otherwise, any high school course completed in middle school shall be given high school credit, added to the high school transcript (including the grade earned), and applied to fulfilling high school graduation requirements.

33. When will districts have to comply with the change in applying high school courses taken in middle school to a student’s graduation requirements and transcript?

High school courses completed by middle school students beginning in the 2019–20 school year fall under this change in statute. High school courses completed by middle

school students prior to the 2019–20 school year are not required to automatically apply to a student’s graduation requirements and high school transcript unless requested by the student and their family.

Mastery-based Workgroup (Sec. 301)

The State Board of Education is required to coordinate and staff a 13-person workgroup. The membership is specified in the new law. This workgroup is tasked with providing two reports to the Legislature regarding the barriers and opportunities to increase access to mastery-based learning. The workgroup is slated to complete its tasks and submit its final report by December 1, 2020.