

GRADUATION PATHWAYS TOOLKIT

CLASS OF 2020

February 2020





Welcome to Washington state's Graduation Pathways Toolkit for the Class of 2020!

I am excited you are joining us as we embrace new opportunities for students to demonstrate their readiness for a meaningful next step after high school.

The revised Class of 2020 Graduation Pathways Toolkit is intended to provide school counselors and school leaders with a comprehensive understanding of Washington's new graduation requirements and pathways, as well as a suite of tools and resources.

The role of the school counselor is always evolving, and I know just how critical our school counselors and other support staff are to the development of school systems that maximize learning and growth for all students. Many changes have been made to graduation requirements and pathways over the past few years, and with change comes different expectations and new ways of doing our work.

The impetus for the work, though, is clear. Roughly two-thirds of all jobs now require post-high school training and education. Thus, the need for robust high school and beyond planning, academic guidance, and career exploration opportunities continues to grow.

Washington is leading the nation in the critical work to prepare students for an ever-changing economy through the expansion of Graduation Pathways and post-high school planning. The High School and Beyond Plan needs to become the framework for annually guiding our students through middle and high school decision points that will lead them to opportunities that align with their interests, skills, values, and goals.

The OSPI team stands ready to partner with you in this new and exciting era of pathway-based learning in caring, engaging environments where all students are supported as they prepare for life beyond high school.

Thank you for the work you do!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chris P.S. Reykdal".

Chris Reykdal
Superintendent of
Public Instruction

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from Superintendent Reykdal.....	i
NEW! State Requirements for the Class of 2020	1
<i>High School and Beyond Plan, Graduation Pathways, 24 Credits</i>	
Develop a High School and Beyond Plan.....	3
<i>Description, Minimum Required Elements, Other Related Requirements</i>	
Complete a Graduation Pathway.....	7
<i>Policy Change, Exam-based Pathways, Course-based Pathways</i>	
Graduation Pathways.....	8
<i>Statewide assessment scores in ELA and/or math, College admission exam scores for ELA and/or math, Dual credit exam scores for ELA and/or math, Dual credit courses for ELA and/or math, High school transition course for ELA and/or math, Combination of graduation pathways for ELA and/or math, Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery exam, Career and technical education course sequence</i>	
Earn 24 Credits	16
<i>Class of 2020 Credit Requirements</i>	
Graduation Requirement Appeals and Waivers.....	20
<i>Expedited Assessment Appeal Waiver, Two-Credit Waiver, Special Unavoidable Circumstances Appeal, WA-AIM, Out-of-State Transfer Waiver</i>	
Graduation Ceremonies.....	23
Options for Students Needing More Time to Meet Graduation Requirements	24
Smarter Balanced Assessment Scores and Washington Public Colleges' Placement Agreements	27
Graduation Pathways by Cohort: Quick Reference Guide.....	28
Appendix A: Resources.....	30
Appendix B: Abbreviations	31
Revision Log and Copyright Statement.....	32

NEW! State Requirements for the Class of 2020

Completion of Washington state’s minimum graduation requirements, as established by the state legislature, signifies that a student is prepared for a meaningful next step in life. In 2019, the legislature approved multiple Graduation Pathways that provide students with more options to prepare and demonstrate their readiness for their first step after high school.

Students must fulfill the graduation requirements that are in place when they first enter 9th grade. For students who need more than four years to graduate, they remain obligated to meet the graduation requirements of their original graduation year.

Students who entered 9th grade during the 2016–17 school year (Class of 2020) must meet all state and local requirements related to building a High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP), earning [minimum Credit Requirements](#), and completing at least one [Graduation Pathway](#) aligned with their post-high school goal(s).

Develop a High School and Beyond Plan

To graduate from high school, all students must develop a HSBP that illustrates how they will meet high school graduation requirements and what they will do following high school. A student's HSBP, which starts no later than 8th grade, is revised throughout high school. See [High School and Beyond Planning](#) and pages 3–6 in this toolkit for detailed information.

NEW! Complete a Graduation Pathway

Students will demonstrate their readiness to enter a postsecondary career, including the military, or attend college, by completing one of the Graduation Pathways. The Graduation Pathway(s) used by a student must be aligned with their HSBP, as designated in House Bill 1599, [RCW 28A.655.250](#) and [WAC 180-51-230](#). See pages 7–15 in this toolkit for detailed information.

Earn 24 High School Credits

All students must meet specific course requirements, including any Personalized Pathway Requirement courses, and other credit requirements established by their local districts. See [WAC 180-51-210](#) and page 16 in this toolkit for detailed information.

State and Local Graduation Requirements

School districts may have additional locally determined graduation requirements, such as additional credits, community service, or a senior project. While schools are expected to communicate all graduation requirements and regularly share information regarding all students' progress toward graduation, students and their families should be aware of all state and local graduation requirements when they begin high school.

School districts are encouraged to involve parents and guardians in the process of developing and updating the HSBP as a way to increase awareness of academic progress and track completion of all graduation requirements.

Parents should direct specific questions about graduation requirements to their student(s) and staff at the high school or school district office.



Develop a High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP)

The HSBP is intended to provide students with annual career and college exploration and preparation activities that address the guiding questions of “Who am I?”, “What can I become?”, and “How do I become that?”. Students work with school staff and their family to create their own personalized plan that begins no later than 8th grade, is revised throughout high school, and results in a plan for a meaningful first step following graduation.



Established in [RCW 28A.230.090](#), the HSBP must include the following primary components, *at a minimum*:

1. Identification of **career goals**, aided by a **skills and interest assessment**
2. Identification of **educational goals**
3. A **course taking plan** that:
 - fulfills state and local graduation requirements
 - aligns with the student’s career and educational goals
 - includes options for advanced coursework (see pg. 11 for details)
 - documents chosen Graduation Pathway(s) (see pgs. 7–15 for details)
4. A **résumé or activity log**
5. Evidence that the student has received **information on state and federal financial aid programs** that help pay for college (see pg. 6 for details)

HSBP Process and Development

This section includes additional details and updates about other required elements that must be completed and outlines important processes and timelines that must be followed when developing a HSBP.

1. The HSBP must be started in 7th or 8th grade with a **career and skill interest inventory**.
 - The results of the career assessment *should* be used to establish initial **career goals** and **inform both 8th and 9th grade course taking** to support a more meaningful transition to high school.

Important Note: 7th and 8th grade students must also be informed of the **College Bound Scholarship (CBS)** per [Chapter 28B.118 RCW](#). Resources such as free flyers, the middle school CBS portal, family letters explaining the CBS, and the Counselor Signature Form can be found on the [WSAC website](#).

2. **UPDATED REQUIREMENT!** The HSBP must be **updated at the end of 10th grade** to:
 - reflect academic progress toward graduation (via a transcript review);
 - be revised to reflect changing interests, goals, or needs;
 - incorporate the results of the statewide assessments in ELA and Math¹; and
 - **NEW!** inform 11th grade course taking, per RCW 28A,230.090 and RCW 28A.655.070(3)(b).

The HSBP should be updated annually to assess progress toward identified goals; be revised as needed to reflect changing interests, goals and needs; and identify available interventions and academic supports and/or courses.

Note: The 2020 test window goes from March 2 through June 5. Preliminary SBA score results can be accessed in the Online Reporting System (ORS) within 7–8 days of the student completing the Computer Adaptive Test and the Performance Task.

¹ Students' score reports on the 10th grade statewide assessments in English language arts (ELA) and math are not a required component of the HSBP. Students' course plans within the HSBP **must** be updated to reflect their performance on these tests and their assessment scores must inform students' junior year course selections. Students without a score still must update their plan before 11th grade.

Since most sophomores will pre-register for 11th grade courses before SBA results are available, districts should enable school counselors or other staff to conduct a late spring “double check” of current sophomores’ course selections relative to their SBA results. Anomalies between student course choices and SBA test results should result in a quick check-in with the student’s HSBP to determine if junior-year course adjustments are needed.

3. NEW! For students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Transition Plan (required to be started during the year during which they will turn 16), **their HSBP must be developed and updated in alignment with their high school to post-high school transition plan.** Per [RCW 28A.230.090](#), the HSBP must be updated in a similar manner and with similar school personnel as for all other students.
 - Students with an IEP Transition Plan may use these plans in support of, but not as a replacement for, their HSBP.
 - [Guidelines for Aligning High School and Beyond Plans and IEP Transition Plans](#) provides guidance on essential elements and best practices around creating HSBP that align with IEPs, as well information on available resources and both student and educator checklists that support student transitions.
4. The HSBP must include evidence that the student has received information about the **College Bound Scholarship (CBS)**.
 - Students in the CBS Program should be reminded about the requirements to remain eligible.
 - For more information on the College Bound Scholarship Program, go to the [Washington Student Achievement Council’s \(WSAC\)](#) website.
5. Districts are highly encouraged to involve parents and guardians in the processes of developing and updating the HSBP.
 - The HSBP **must** be provided to the student’s parents or guardians in their native language if that language is one of the two most frequently spoken non-English languages for students in the district.
6. The HSBP must include identification of **available dual credit and career and technical education programs**, including **eligibility for automatic enrollment in advanced classes** under [RCW 28A.320.195](#), as aligned with a student’s post-high school goals.

- The term “dual credit” refers to general education and career and technical education courses that provide students with the potential to earn high school and college credit (100 level or above) for the same course.
7. **NEW!** The HSBP must include evidence that the student has received **information on state and federal financial aid programs** that help pay for college, which includes:
- Documentation needed for completing a FAFSA or WASFA
 - Application timelines and submission deadlines
 - The importance of submitting these applications early
 - Specific financial aid information for students who have been or are in foster care and who are or are at risk of being homeless
 - Information about how to receive assistance with completing applications
 - Reference to the [WSAC website](#) for more information and resources
8. For students not on track to graduate, their HSBP must also identify **interventions and academic supports, courses, or both** that are available to help them fulfill high school graduation requirements as defined in [RCW 28A.230.090](#).
- Possible courses may include career and technical education equivalencies in ELA or math adapted pursuant to [RCW 28A.230.097](#).
9. For students not earning a score of 3 or 4 on the math statewide assessment in 8th grade, as identified in [RCW 28A.655.070](#), a school district must update the HSBP to ensure that the **student takes a math course in both 9th and 10th grades**.
- The math courses may include career and technical education equivalencies.
10. For students not earning a score of 3 or 4 on the ELA or science statewide assessments in middle school, districts are encouraged to inform students of supports and courses that will address their learning needs.

Note: Students in 8th grade who need to complete a [Student Learning Plan \(SLP\)](#) before high school may use their SLP in support of, but not as a replacement for, their HSBP.

Complete a Graduation Pathway

[House Bill 1599](#) (2019) expanded the ways in which Washington students can organize their preparation and show their readiness for a meaningful next step after high school. In combination with a robust career and college exploration and planning process (the HSBP) and quality instruction, completing a Graduation Pathway helps prepare students for what comes after high school. HB 1599 requires students to complete at least one Graduation Pathway, in alignment with their HSBP, to graduate. All Graduation Pathways are available for all students.

The use of the term “Pathway” in multiple contexts

What is the difference between Graduation Pathways and other “pathways” related to graduation requirements? The following definitions should help:

❖ Graduation Pathways

One of many ways in which students can demonstrate readiness for a meaningful first step after high school, as established in HB 1599.

❖ Personalized Pathway Requirements (PPR)

Refers to three “flexible” credits (2.0 credits of World Language and the second 1.0 of Fine Art). If requested, students can choose to take other classes that better prepare them for the goals outlined their High School and Beyond Plan.

❖ Career Pathways or CTE Pathways

One of many ways in which schools are establishing options for students to take a series of courses, which may include both career-related and “core” academic subjects, that are tied to occupational outcomes designed to prepare students for success in a career cluster or CTE program area. This is also different than a CTE Course Sequence Graduation Pathway (see pg. 14).

❖ Guided Pathways

Washington’s community and technical colleges are using Guided Pathways to simplify career and course choices to help students make better course selections, minimize achievement gaps, and increase the number of students who graduate with a high value certificate or degree. Click [here](#) for more information.

Graduation Pathways

I. Statewide Assessment Scores in ELA and/or Math

Washington's statewide assessments provide students with one measure of their skill development and give schools important information on where to reassess and improve instruction. All students, regardless of which Graduation Pathway they intend to use, are expected to take the appropriate Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBA) in English language arts (ELA) and math during 10th grade and to incorporate their results in their HSBP. For some students, the SBA or WA-AIM may also serve as their Graduation Pathway, which can be met by either:

1. Achieving the high school graduation cut score, as set by the State Board of Education (SBE), on the on-grade level SBA for

ELA = 2548 and/or math = 2595

2. For students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who qualify per their IEP, achieving the high school graduation cut score on the on-grade level Washington Access to Instruction and Measurement (WA-AIM) assessment

ELA = 105 and/or math = 103

Statewide Assessment Alternative for Students Receiving Special Education Services: Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA)

Through the Class of 2021, for students with IEPs who do not meet the expected performance standards, the Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA) can fulfill assessment graduation requirements **after the student first attempts the on-grade assessment**. Prior to selecting the CIA as a Graduation Pathway, IEP teams should consider the need for additional or increased special education services, in conjunction with grade level core instruction, to support the student's goals.

The CIA Graduation Pathway option is available to students with disabilities and only if the student and the IEP team determine that none of the other Graduation Pathways are appropriate. Students with a Section 504 Plan are not eligible to use any of the Graduation Pathways developed specifically for students with IEPs. The CIA option is available through the Class of 2021.

Note: Graduation Pathway options are determined based on a student's 4-year graduation cohort not the year they may graduate. Students needing additional time will be expected to meet the graduation requirements of their original graduation year.

IEP teams should work with the students and families to determine which Graduation Pathway(s) would best serve the student. Through the Class of 2021, the CIA statewide assessment pathway for ELA and/or math can be met by either:

- Achieving the CIA Cut Score (Level 2) on the Smarter Balanced Assessments
- Meeting standard (Level 3) on the Off-Grade Level Smarter Balanced Assessments
- Meeting standard on a Locally Determined Assessment (LDA)

Off-Grade Level (OGL) Tests

Students are administered a state assessment (e.g., Smarter Balanced, or WA-AIM) in ELA or math, with or without accommodations, at either an elementary or middle school level. The student must earn a Level 3 or 4 for the grade level assessed. Per Washington's ESSA plan, students are expected to participate in on-grade level exam(s) before submitting an OGL score.

Locally Determined Assessments

Students who have this option may apply scores from one of several approved published achievement tests that are administered at the local level during the student's 10th, 11th, or 12th grade year (e.g., as one of the tests administered during a student's eligibility evaluation or newly administered).

OSPI has determined the required subtests in each content area and established cut scores for each subtest within a content area. Students must meet the designated Grade Equivalency (G.E.) cut score(s) in order to meet the graduation requirement associated with the content area. Students are expected to participate in the on-grade level SBA exam(s) required by Washington's ESSA plan before submitting an LDA score.

Statewide Assessment Alternative: Locally Administered Assessment (LDC-LAA)

Students in the classes of 2019 and 2020 who completed the "Collection of Evidence-Local" (Locally Administered Assessment, or LAA), tied to an approved Locally Determined Course (LDC) for ELA and/or math may use that exam score to meet their statewide assessment Graduation Pathway requirement. However, this option is only valid IF the Collection of Evidence-Local was completed during the **2018–19** school year.

II. College Admission Exam Scores for ELA and/or Math (SAT/ACT)

Students may demonstrate their readiness for postsecondary education options by using the college admission exam score Graduation Pathway. Exam scores from the SAT, SAT with Essay, ACT, or ACT with Writing may be used, as applicable.

Students must meet or exceed the minimum scores set by the SBE on an approved college admission exam in ELA and/or math as follows:

Minimum Scores Needed for the Classes of 2017 Through 2020

	SAT with Essay	SAT®	ACT with Writing	ACT®
Math	430	430	16	16
ELA	410	N/A	14	N/A

Note: The Accuplacer and Compass exams, often utilized by Washington’s two-year college system for Running Start eligibility, are not currently considered part of this pathway, as they are typically used for course placement not college admissions.

III. Dual Credit (AP/CI/IB) Exam Scores for ELA and/or Math

Dual credit courses provide participants with the *potential* to earn high school and college credit (100 level or higher) within the same course. Students meeting standard, as described below, on approved ELA and/or math exams for courses offered within an Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge International (CI), or International Baccalaureate (IB) program can meet the dual credit exam score Graduation Pathway via the following options:

- Scoring a 3 or higher on one of the approved AP exams
- Scoring a 4 or higher on one of the approved IB exams
- Scoring an “E” or better on one of the approved Advanced or Advanced Subsidiary (A/AS) CI exams

The following dual credit course exams qualify for this Graduation Pathway:

Advanced Placement Exams

- *English Language Arts*: English Language and Composition, English Literature and Composition, Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Psychology, US History, World History, US Government and Politics, or Comparative Government and Politics
- *Mathematics*: Statistics, Computer Science, Computer Science Principles, or Calculus

Cambridge International Exams* – Advanced (A) or Advanced Subsidiary (AS) only

- *English Language Arts*: English Language, Literature in English, English General Paper, Psychology, History, Sociology, Global Perspective and Research, or Law
- *Mathematics*: Mathematics or Further Mathematics

International Baccalaureate Exams

- *English Language Arts*: Language A: Literature, Language A: Language and Literature, Business and Management, Economics, Geography, History, Information Technology in a Global Society, Philosophy, Psychology, or Social and Cultural Anthropology
- *Mathematics*: any IB math course

IV. Dual Credit Courses for ELA and/or Math

Students who complete an approved dual credit course in ELA or math in which they have the potential to earn college credit (100 level or above) may use passage of the course to meet the dual credit course Graduation Pathway. Eligible courses must be offered through AP/CI/IB, Career and Technical Education (CTE) Dual Credit, College in the High School (CHS), Running Start (RS), or other state-approved dual credit programs.

For AP/CI/IB dual credit courses, students must earn at least a 1.0 high school credit with a grade of C+ or higher each term to qualify for using the course as a Graduation Pathway. Students do not need to take or pass the corresponding AP/CI/IB exam to use this Graduation Pathway. The list of eligible AP/CI/IB courses for this pathway is the same as the list for dual credit exams. See description of Dual Credit Exams above for a list of accepted dual credit courses for this Graduation Pathway.

For CHS/CTE Dual Credit/RS, students must earn at least 1.0 high school credit and be eligible to earn college credit at a 100 level or higher by meeting the course or program

criteria established by the local school district and the institute of higher education. Students do not have to pay fees or actually earn the college credit to meet this pathway.

Note: The previous requirements related to using dual credit courses as an alternative to meeting standards on the state assessment does not apply. These dual credit courses do not have to be acknowledged by the sponsoring college as being able to fulfill a “Math/Quantitative” or “English/Communications” course. Instead, the high school must approve the dual credit course as an ELA or math option.

V. High School Transition Course for ELA and/or Math

For this Graduation Pathway, the definition of a transition course includes an ELA or math course offered in high school that satisfies core or elective credits for high school graduation and, based on the final grade, allows the student to place directly into a credit-bearing college level course at participating colleges per [RCW 28B.10.016](#).

This definition includes transition courses identified through local agreements between colleges and school districts or any agreements that have been approved at the state level, such as the Bridge to College (BTC) courses. Successful completion for this Graduation Pathway is defined as passing the course and earning at least a 1.0 high school credit throughout the duration of an entire school year.

BTC math courses are ideal for students who scored a level 2 on the 10th grade SBA and have completed Algebra II or its equivalent. Students who scored in level 1 on the SBA and struggled in Algebra II will likely find the material in the course very challenging.

Note: To earn placement into college-level courses (100 level or higher) at any community and technical college in Washington, students must earn a B grade or better for the **final term** of the BTC course. See the SBCTCs [Bridge To College Frequently Asked Questions](#) or [website](#) for additional information.

VI. Combination of Graduation Pathways for ELA and/or Math

Students may choose to meet their Graduation Pathway requirement with any combination of at least one ELA and at least one math Graduation Pathway option, as established in options I–V already described in this toolkit.

VII. NEW! Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) Exam

Taking the ASVAB helps students understand their skills and aptitudes in 8 topic areas, several of which are not tested by other standardized exams. Participants are given access to a national career exploration website and can use it and other resources to explore career options within military service that match their skills.

By earning at least the minimum score on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) portion of the ASVAB, as posted on the [SBE website](#) no later than September 1 each year, students demonstrate their readiness to enter the military and take a meaningful next step after high school. The AFQT tests, which are the sections of the ASVAB exam required for eligibility to serve in a branch of the armed services, include arithmetic reasoning, mathematics knowledge, paragraph comprehension, and word knowledge.

Students must take the ASVAB while in high school. They may either meet the minimum score the year they take the ASVAB or the score established by any military branch on a later date prior to the student turning 21 years of age.

Note: For the Class of 2020, the minimum AFQT score is **31**.

For students choosing to follow the ASVAB Graduation Pathway, the school must inform students about the following:



- the minimum AFQT eligibility score required by each branch of the military,
- the eligibility requirements of specific military occupations, as listed on the SBE's website and available through the [ASVAB Career Exploration Program](#),
- how their scores and personal information might be shared with the Department of Defense, and
- how to opt out of sharing their scores with the military recruiters.

Pursuant to the rules set by SBE in [WAC 180-51-230](#), students who meet the SBE determined eligibility score on the AFQT section of the ASVAB will have met the

requirement for the ASVAB Graduation Pathway. Students do not have to meet other minimum requirements for military enlistment, nor do they have to enlist or provide their scores to the military for purposes of recruitment.

VIII. NEW! Career and Technical Education (CTE) Course Sequence

The CTE Course Sequence Graduation Pathway is the most unique addition to the new Graduation Pathways; nothing like it has been done before in Washington state. By building upon what has been in place to guide the development of CTE programs, schools will provide new Graduation Pathway options that represent an even broader range of interests and post-high school goals.

To complete this Graduation Pathway, students may complete a Core Plus program, which results in earning a Core Plus certificate, indicating readiness for entry-level employment with Core Plus employer partners.

OR, students may complete (at least) a 2.0-credit sequence comprised of courses in a progression relevant to the student's postsecondary goals, as outlined in the student's HSBP, and that meets the following criteria:

- Leads to a state or nationally recognized certificate or credential OR provides students the opportunity to earn dual credit.
 - OSPI is developing a list of qualifying industry-recognized credentials to support this pathway.
- Is comprised of a sequenced progression of multiple courses that are technically intensive and rigorous.
- Leads to workforce entry, a state or nationally approved apprenticeship, or postsecondary education in a related field.
- Exists in a single CTE program area (if in more than one program area, see below).

If the sequence of courses is in more than one CTE program area, it **must be approved** by:

- A local school board or designee, and/or a district CTE advisory committee (established under [RCW 28A.150.500](#)), and
- By OSPI through an expedited approval process using a new Expedited CTE Course Sequence Approval Form found on OSPI's [CTE webpage](#).

- The course sequence will be deemed approved if the district does not receive a response from OSPI within 45 calendar days.
- OSPI must provide a written explanation if the sequence is not approved.
- Once approved, a local sequence may be implemented by other districts upon notifying OSPI (further approval by OSPI is not necessary).

Note: The CTE Course Sequence pathway does not require students to take a preparatory CTE course, as defined in [RCW 28A.700.030](#).

Students using this pathway to prepare for a postsecondary goal also do not have to meet separate ELA and math requirements.



Earn 24 Credits: Requirements for the Class of 2020

Cohort: Students entering 9th grade from July 2016 through June 2017

The requirements for the Class of 2020 are described in [WAC 180-51-210](#). Districts may have additional local requirements. Students and families should check with high school counselors for additional for information about local graduation requirements.

Subject	Number of Credits	Additional Information
English	4	
Math	3	Algebra 1 or Integrated Math 1 Geometry or Integrated Math 2 A 3rd credit of math*
Science	3	At least two lab sciences and a 3rd credit of science*
Social Studies	3	1.0 US History and Government 0.5 Contemporary World History, Geography, and Problems 0.5 credits of Civics 1.0 credits of social studies elective Washington State History (can be for no credit)
Fine, Visual or Performing Arts	2	1.0 credit of Art can be used as part of the student's Personalized Pathway**
World Language	2	1.0 or 2.0 credits of World Language can be used as part of the student's Personalized Pathway**
Career & Technical Education	1	May be a course that meets the definition of an exploratory course as described in the CTE program standards in RCW 28A.700.010
Health and Fitness	2	0.5 credit of Health 1.5 credits of Physical Education***
Electives	4	

- * The 3rd credit of math and 3rd credit of science are chosen by the student, based on the student's interest and HSBP, and approved by the parent/guardian. If the parent or guardian is unavailable or does not indicate a preference, the school counselor or principal can approve the student's academic plan per [WAC 180-51-210](#).
- ** Personalized Pathway Requirement courses lead to a specific post-high school career or educational outcome chosen by students based on their interests and HSBP. The flexibility of these 3.0 credits provides students an opportunity to include additional CTE or other relevant preparatory courses that allow for more personalized learning.
- *** Students must earn credit for physical education (PE) unless excused per [RCW 28A.230.050](#). Students may be excused from PE (but not health). Students who are excused from PE must "demonstrate competency/mastery in the knowledge portion of PE in a district-approved competency assessment that is aligned to Physical Education K–12 learning standards, in accordance with written district policy." ([WAC 180-51-068](#)).

HB 1599 provided flexibility for districts to waive up to two of the 24 state-required credits for individual students "based on a student's circumstances, provided that none of the waived credits are identified as mandatory core credits by the state board of education." PE credits are mandatory core credits. (Separately, the .5 credits of health are mandatory as well.)

- If a student is excused from PE course(s), the up to 1.5 PE credits earned through demonstration of competency/mastery per written district policy must appear on the student's transcript, coded in CEDARS with the appropriate designation to indicate how the credits were earned; e.g., "L" for Local Competency Test, "N" for National Competency Test, etc.

Note: For districts already approved by the SBE to implement a delay, the 24-credit graduation requirements will be implemented for the Class of 2020 or Class of 2021. For districts not yet implementing the 24-credit diploma, applying the two-credit waiver for "student circumstances" is not an option.

School boards must adopt or amend local policy directing the implementation of this credit waiver and follow that policy and procedure. Districts are not required to apply for approval or submit additional documentation to OSPI for the two-credit waiver. Districts will be required, starting with the 2020–21 school year, to report through CEDARS whether students are eligible to waive up to two credits.

NEW! Partial Credit Practices to Support Highly Mobile Students

In 2017, the legislature passed SB 5241 and HB 1444, amending [RCW 28A.320.192](#). NEW! Now districts must adopt **credit consolidation, partial credit, and course waiving practices** that can help facilitate the on-time grade level progression and graduation of students in Foster Care, At-Risk Youth, Children in Need of Services (CHINS), and Dependent Child populations as they are eligible for these supports.

A NEW! Implementation Guide posted on OSPI's [Homeless Education website](#) can be found [here](#).

The amendments to RCW 28A.320.192 enable Washington school districts to be fair and creative in transferring in partial credits in order to support progress toward graduation for our most highly mobile students.

NOTE: There is nothing in state or federal law that would prohibit a district from applying these practices to all students.

NEW! High School Transcript Developer User Guides and FAQ Documents

The OSPI [High School Transcript](#) webpage has been updated with documents that incorporate the changes outlined in HB 1599.

The following documents have been updated and are available on the Transcripts page:

- [The High School Transcript Developer User Guide for Students with Graduation Requirements Years of 2020](#)
- [The High School Transcript Developer User Guide for Students with Graduation Requirements Years Prior to 2020](#)
- [High School Transcript FAQ](#)

Transcribing High School Credit Earned in Middle School – [WAC 180-51-030](#)

This policy was changed under HB 1599. Beginning in the 2019–20 school year, students who earn high school credit before attending high school must have that credit automatically transcribed on their high school transcript. This means courses completed in the 2019–20 school year are subject to this policy change.

Students and their parent/guardian now must opt out from having credit earned before attending high school awarded and transcribed on the student's high school transcript. Students and their parent/guardian have until the end of the 11th grade to opt out.

Students who enroll in a high school credit bearing course prior to attending high school must pass the course in order to have the course added to their high school transcript. The new policy prevents courses that students fail from being automatically transcribed.

Students and their parent/guardian may also request that the credit earned before high school be transcribed with a nonnumerical grade, such as "pass" or "credit." Nonnumerical grades are not included in the student's high school grade point average, but the course still applies to fulfilling high school graduation requirements. Students and their parent/guardian have until the end of the 11th grade to request credit earned before attending high school to be transcribed with a nonnumerical grade.

OSPI recommends districts adopt a policy and procedure for consistently and efficiently administering this requirement, including the number of times students can opt out and back in and how nonnumerical grade requests will be administered.

Graduation Requirement Waivers and Appeals

Expedited Assessment Appeals (EAA) Waiver

Some students may be eligible to have their Graduation Pathway waived. It is required that the student, through one of the options below, show that they have attained the skills and knowledge to meet the high school standards and possess the skills necessary to successfully achieve college or career goals established in their HSBP.

- Admission to a higher education institution or career preparation program
- Award of a scholarship for higher education
- Enlistment in a branch of the military
- Successful completion of a college level class in the relevant subject area. This does not apply to Bridge to College or Dual Credit.
- “Other” – If a student has demonstrated the “necessary skills and knowledge” through an option other than listed above. Districts must also submit the necessary [form\(s\)](#) depending on the waiver area(s).

Note: The EAA waiver is still “open” for the Class of 2019. Updated forms and a new Graduation Pathways database are being developed for the Class of 2020. The EAA waiver ends with the Class of 2020.

Read OSPI’s January 2020 Bulletin [#B007-20](#) for additional details about the development of new reporting processes for the Graduation Pathways.

Two-Credit Academic Waiver

Starting in the 2019–20 school year, local school boards must adopt policies in line with House Bill 1599, which changed the criteria for which up-to-two high school credits may be waived. This only applies if the school is requiring 24 or more credits.

What Stayed the Same	None of the waived credits can be any of the 17 mandatory core credits, as identified by the SBE. See the chart of required course credits on page 16 for more information.
What Changed	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.”

Special, Unavoidable Circumstance Appeal

If a student transfers during their 12th grade year after the beginning of the second semester or February 15 (whichever is earlier), a Special, Unavoidable Circumstance Appeal application can be submitted for OSPI review. More information can be found on the [OSPI website](#).

Appeals are reviewed by a board twice a school year (October and May).

11th and 12th Grade Transfer Students

Out-of-State Transfer Waiver

Students who transfer into a Washington public school from another state or from an in-state, non-public school setting (private or home school) after the administration of the statewide assessments (Smarter Balanced or WA-AIM) will be eligible to access Graduation Pathways.

Transfer students may consider their statewide assessment Graduation Pathway met if they have previously earned the required ELA and math scores on an out-of-state exam that has been approved by OSPI.

For students in an active duty military family who transfer in the 11th or 12th grade, additional graduation options are outlined in Washington's Interstate Compact for Education Opportunities for Military Youth. More information can be found at <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/equity-education/military-kids/interstate-compact-military-children>.

Students with Disabilities

While state laws and rules ([RCW 28A.155.045](#) and [WAC 180-51-115](#)) acknowledge the critical role of the IEP team in determining the most appropriate high school credit **substitutions** (per [WAC 180-51-115](#)) and assessment options for students eligible for special education, **IEP teams may not waive state graduation requirements.**

Students with disabilities who have an IEP are eligible to access all Graduation Pathways and should not be restricted based on their disability. IEP teams, as part of the annual meeting to review and revise the IEP and transition plan, should refer to the HSBP and consider additional supports that students may need for success in the pathway option that best aligns with their post-school goals.

WA-AIM Engagement Rubric

For students with the most significant cognitive disabilities whose level of cognitive development would be considered awareness and who are unable to participate even minimally in the WA-AIM Performance Tasks at the lowest complexity level for any standard within a content area, the IEP team may determine that use of an Engagement Rubric is appropriate.

Some or all of the following criteria must be met for the IEP team to consider using the Engagement Rubric for a WA-AIM content area:

- The student communicates primarily through cries, facial expressions, or change in muscle tone but has no clear use of objects/textures, regularized gestures, picture signs, etc.
- The student alerts to sensory input from another person (auditory, visual, touch, movement, etc.) but requires physical assistance to follow simple directions; or the student's response to sensory stimuli is unclear.
- Parents and teachers must interpret child's state from behaviors such as sounds, body movements, and facial expressions.

Graduation Ceremonies



School districts, directed by their own school board policies, establish eligibility practices for determining who participates in graduation ceremonies. **The state has no authority over graduation ceremonies.**

Most school districts allow students to participate only if they can demonstrate that they have fulfilled all graduation requirements prior to the ceremony. However, some districts do make exceptions to minimize barriers faced by students in unique circumstances. Families should consult with their student's high school and/or district about the graduation ceremony policy.

Kevin's Law and Graduation

Kevin's Law ([RCW 28A.155.170](#)) allows students who will continue to receive special education services under an IEP between the ages of 18 and 21 to participate in the graduation ceremony and activities after four years of high school attendance with their age-appropriate peers and receive a certificate of attendance.

The law requires each school district to adopt a policy and develop procedures to determine which students can participate in graduation ceremonies after four years, even if they will remain in school beyond four years.

Students who participate in the graduation ceremony will receive a certificate of attendance, which is not a high school diploma. Students will receive a diploma when they complete their graduation requirements.

Options for Students Needing More Time to Graduate

Students who have not yet met their high school graduation requirements nor earned a high school diploma after four years are eligible for a free public education through the school year in which they turn 21 years old. This includes students under 21 who have earned a high school equivalency certificate.

For students with disabilities, according to [WAC 180-51-115](#), districts must have a board-approved policy and procedures for granting a diploma to a student with disabilities that:

1. does not deny the student the opportunity to earn a high school diploma solely because of the student's disability, and
2. provides for meeting the "unique limitations of the student."

It is the responsibility of the IEP team to determine when the student has met state and local graduation requirements.

Federal and state regulations do not require a school district to graduate a student with a disability who has met a district's graduation requirements. The IEP team determines what is in the best interest of the student for continuing their secondary education.

If the IEP team determines and documents that the student has not met these graduation requirements, the student is still entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and can continue to be claimed for basic and special education apportionment until the school year in which they turn 21.

Free Options

The free options available for students who are not graduating after four years of high school and want to meet their high school graduation requirements include:

1. **Stay enrolled in high school:** Through the school year in which they turn 21, all students are eligible to attend their resident high school and may have the option of transferring to another high school or alternative high school in the district or use the choice transfer process to enroll in a high school in another school district.
2. **Continue Running Start:** Students who participated in Running Start during their 11th and/or 12th grade years but did not complete the classes required for high

school graduation may still be eligible to continue their Running Start participation. Students who are beyond their initial four years of high school may only take those classes through Running Start that specifically meet any remaining high school graduation requirements and count toward a high school diploma. The expectation is that students are working toward their high school diploma not solely toward an Associate's Degree or other certification.

3. **Enroll in a skill center:** Students may have the option of spending part or all of their school day at a local skill center. Skill centers that have also been recognized as high schools may grant a high school diploma to students who meet the resident district's graduation requirements.
4. **Enroll in an alternative school or program:** Many districts have an alternative, online, and/or credit recovery program to provide students a different setting in which to finish their high school education. Check with your school counselor and/or administrator for the options in your community. OSPI maintains a list of [approved statewide online public school programs](#).
5. **Enroll in an Open Doors Youth Reengagement Program:** Open Doors serves students interested in obtaining their diploma or GED, engaging in Community College coursework to obtain credits toward their diploma or to earn an industry certificate or Associate's Degree, and/or gain employability skills. This flexible outcome-based education model is only available to students who are credit deficient and over 16 years old but not yet 21 as of September 1 of the school year. OSPI maintains a list of [districts that offer Open Doors](#).
6. **Enroll in a school district high school completion program:** School districts may contract with community colleges to offer tuition-free high school completion programs to students still enrolled in their resident school district (CEO programs). Upon completion of the program, students would receive a high school diploma from that district.

At-Cost Options

The at-cost options available for students who are not graduating after four years of high school and still want to meet their high school graduation requirements include:

1. **Enroll in a community/technical college high school completion program:** Check first to see if the college offers either Open Doors or high school completion through a district partnership (CEO) for free.

Some of Washington's community colleges offer high school completion programs, providing students with a high school diploma from the college. Students must drop out of their resident high school to enroll in these programs. Students may be charged \$25 tuition and other applicable fees. Students 16–18 years of age must have a signed release from their resident school district to enroll.

2. **Pursue a high school equivalency certificate:** Check first to see if there is an Open Doors program to access GED preparation for free.

Students 16 and older may earn a high school equivalency certificate or GED by passing required tests through a high school completion program. Students must have dropped out or withdrawn from their resident high school.

State community and technical colleges are the official testing centers for the GED. Students pay fees for the assessment(s) and may need to pay nominal tuition and fees for preparation courses. The GED is not identical to a high school diploma, and students who earn a GED are considered dropouts for high school accountability purposes. However, students who are under 21 years of age and who have a GED are still eligible to fulfill their high school graduation requirements and get their diploma.

3. **Enroll in a public two- or four-year college:** Washington's public colleges do not require students to have a high school diploma in order to enroll, although a diploma significantly increases the chances of admission to the state's four-year universities. Students without a diploma who enroll in colleges must pay full tuition and fees. Students who do not have a diploma or GED may not be eligible for certain federal, state, and private financial aid.

Smarter Balanced Assessment Scores and Washington Public Colleges' Placement Agreements

High school students who score at college-ready levels of 3 or 4 on the Smarter Balanced assessments may use the score to enroll directly into college-level courses at Washington's public community and technical colleges.

[More information](#) about the agreement is available from the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges.

Following the change to a 10th grade test, Washington's Council of Presidents (COP), representing our public four-year colleges, also have several [resources](#) related to the SBA as one element of a student's path toward college preparation.

Graduation Pathways by Cohort

A Quick Reference Guide



Career/Technical Field = CTE Course Sequence

- Complete 2.0 or more credits that either include a dual credit course or lead to an industry recognized credential
- Complete a Core Plus program

Military Career Interest – ASVAB Exam (AFQT Section)

- Score for Class of 2020 = 31
- Check the State Board of Education website by September 1 annually
www.sbe.wa.gov/our-work/graduation-pathway-options/asvab

Postsecondary Education = English Language Arts (ELA) and Math Courses and Exams

(Can use any combination of the ELA and math options listed in this section.)

- ACT (ELA = 14; math = 16) or SAT (ELA = 410; math = 430)
- Dual credit courses:
 - AP/IB/Cambridge: Earn a C+ in state-approved course
 - CTE Dual Credit: B or higher grade if in articulation agreement with college
 - College in the High School or Running Start courses (local approval)
- Dual credit exams (for state-approved courses):
 - AP = 3+
 - Cambridge = E
 - IB = 4+
- State assessments:
 - Smarter Balanced: ELA = 2548; math = 2595
 - WA-AIM: ELA = 104; math = 103

- Transition courses:
 - Bridge to College courses have state-level approval
 - Local articulation agreement between districts and sponsoring colleges

Please contact OSPI staff at graduation.pathways@k12.wa.us with questions.

Appendix A: Resources

High School and Beyond Plan Resources

- **OSPI** – <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/graduation/graduation-requirements/graduation-toolkit/high-school-beyond-planning> and <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/special-education/program-improvement/technical-assistance/secondary-transition#hsbp-ieps> (Aligning HSBP and IEP transition plans)
- **SBE** – <https://sbe.wa.gov/our-work/high-school-and-beyond-plan>

Graduation Pathways Resources

- **OSPI** – <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/graduation/graduation-requirements/hb-1599-multiple-pathways-graduation>
- **SBE** – https://sbe.wa.gov/faqs/1599_pathways

Graduation Requirements

- **SBE** – <https://sbe.wa.gov/our-work/graduation-requirements>

Learning by Choice

[Answers to commonly asked questions](#) about the Learning by Choice law and enrollment options. Students who choose to transfer into another district may have additional graduation requirements to complete.

Alternative Learning Experience (ALE)

[Explore guidance resources](#) related to offering ALE, including guidelines for serving students with disabilities; sample learning plans; online learning; Graduation, Reality, and Dual-role Skills (GRADS) support program for pregnant and/or parenting teens; and much more.

Appendix B: Abbreviations

AP: Advanced Placement

BEA: Basic Education Allocation

BTC: Bridge to College

CBS: College Bound Scholarship

CI: Cambridge International

CIA: Certificate of Individual Achievement

COP: Council of Presidents (representing Washington’s public 4-year institutions)

ELA: English Language Arts

FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid

GRADS: Graduation, Reality, and Dual-role Skills

IB: International Baccalaureate

IEP: Individualized Education Program

LAA: Locally Administered Assessments

LDA: Locally Determined Assessments

LDC: Locally Determined Course

ORS: Online Reporting System (for SBA scores)

SBA: Smarter Balanced Assessment

SBCTC: State Board of Community and Technical Colleges

SBE: State Board of Education

WA-AIM: Washington Access to Instruction & Measurement

WASFA: Washington Application for Student Financial Aid | Go to www.wsac.wa.gov for more information

WSAC: Washington Student Achievement Council

Revision Log

Updates to the Graduation Toolkit after June 2019 are noted below.

Page(s) Revised	Section	Description	Date
Most	Throughout all	Updated most sections with final SBE rules and updated guidance/resources	2/28/2020
All	Entire document	Updated entire document, with new legislation, format	8/20/2019



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Download this material in PDF at OSPI’s [Graduation FAQ page](https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/graduation/frequently-asked-questions-faq-what-are-graduation-requirements) (https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/graduation/frequently-asked-questions-faq-what-are-graduation-requirements). This material is available in alternative format upon request. Contact the Resource Center at 888-595-3276, TTY 360-664-3631. Please refer to this document number for quicker service: 19-0025.



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