

GRADUATION PATHWAYS TOOLKIT

CLASS OF 2020

August 2019



Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Chris Reykdal, State Superintendent

*All students prepared
for post-secondary pathways,
careers, & civic engagement.*

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!



Chris Reykdal
Superintendent of
Public Instruction



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NEW! State Requirements for the Class of 2020

Completion of Washington state's minimum graduation requirements, as established by the State Board of Education (SBE), signifies that a student is prepared for the next steps in life. In 2019, the Legislature approved multiple graduation pathways that provide students with options to demonstrate their readiness for the next step after high school. Students must choose and complete a pathway that aligns with their HSBP and post-high school goals.

Students must fulfill the graduation requirements that are in place when they first enter 9th grade. Graduation requirements remain the same for students who need more than four years to graduate.

Students who entered 9th grade during the 2016–17 school year must fulfill the following requirements.

Develop a High School and Beyond Plan

To graduate from high school, all students must develop a High School and Beyond Plan (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 by 8th grade, is revised throughout high school. See [WAC 180-51-068](#) and pages 6-8 in this toolkit for detailed information.

NEW! Complete a Graduation Pathway

Students will demonstrate their readiness to enter a postsecondary career or attend college by completing one of the eight graduation pathways, which will be aligned with their HSBP, as designated in House Bill 1599 and [Chapter 28A.655 RCW](#). See pages 9–17 in this toolkit for more information.

Earn 24 High School Credits

All students must meet the specific course requirements, including any Personalized Pathway Requirement courses, and other credit requirements established by their local districts. See [WAC 180-51-068](#) and page 18 in this toolkit for more information.

State and Local Graduation Requirements

School districts may have locally determined graduation requirements, such as additional credit and/or non-credit graduation requirements like community service or a senior project. 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 and track completion of all graduation requirements.

Parents should direct specific questions about graduation requirements to their students 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 next steps following high school graduation.

Established in [RCW 28A.230.090](#), the HSBP must include the following 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
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



HSBP Process and Development

This section includes additional details about the required components that must be included and outlines important processes and timelines that must be followed when developing a HSBP.

- ✓ 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 9th grade course taking** for the transition to high school.
 - 7th and 8th grade students must also be informed of the **College Bound Scholarship** per [Chapter 28B.118 RCW](#).

- ✓ Districts are 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 of students in the district.
- ✓ NEW! The HSBP must be **updated at the end of 10th grade** to:
 - reflect academic progress toward graduation (via a transcript review),
 - incorporate the results of the statewide assessments in ELA and Math¹, and
 - inform 11th grade course taking, per [RCW 28A.230.090](#).
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ The HSBP must include identification of **available dual credit and career & 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.
- ✓ 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.



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; however, the 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.

- ✓ 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 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 in foster care or who are, or at risk of being, homeless
 - Information about how to receive assistance with completing applications
 - Reference to the WSAC website for more information and resources
- ✓ 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](#).
- ✓ 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 per [RCW 28A.230.097](#).
- ✓ 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 show their readiness for their next step after high school. In combination with a robust career and college exploration and planning process (the HSBP) and quality instruction across core academic areas, completing a graduation pathway helps prepare students for what comes after high school graduation. House Bill 1599 requires students to complete at least one of these graduation pathways, in alignment with their HSBP, in order to graduate.

I. Statewide Assessment Scores in ELA and/or Math

The 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 statewide English language arts (ELA) and math assessments during 10th grade and to incorporate their results in their HSBP.

This statewide assessment graduation pathway option 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 Smarter Balanced Assessment for ELA and/or math,

OR

2. For students 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 in ELA and/or math.

Statewide Assessment Alternative: 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) pathways can fulfill assessment graduation requirements **after the student first attempts the on-grade assessment**. Prior to selecting a CIA 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 attainment of proficiency.

These graduation pathway options are available to students with disabilities, and only if the student and the IEP team determine that none of the other 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 pathways are available through the Class of 2021.

Note: Graduation pathway options are determined based on a student's 4-year cohort, not the year they may graduate. Students needing additional time to 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. 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 accountability test (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. Students are expected to participate in on-grade level exam(s) required for federal accountability before submitting an OGL score.

Locally Determined Assessments

Students who have the option to 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 on-grade level exam(s) required for federal accountability before submitting an LDA score.

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

Students in the classes of 2019 and 2020 who have previously met the statewide assessment graduation requirement via 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 exams 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
- *Subject to final rules that will be approved by the SBE in November 2019:*
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 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

* These exams are pending approval by the SBE. New WAC rules should be available by November 2019

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 a C+ or higher 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.

For CHS/CTE Dual Credit/RS, students must pass the course and have the potential to earn college credit at a 100 level or higher. In addition, the course must be acknowledged by the sponsoring college as being able to fulfill a "Math/Quantitative" or "English/Communications" course, to qualify for dual credit and use this graduation pathway.

The SBE sets the rules regarding which courses are approved for this graduation pathway. See [WAC Chapter 180-51](#) for more information.

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

Currently, only approved Bridge to College (BTC) courses fit under this pathway. The law defines a transition course and includes only those courses where successful completion by a high school student ensures the student receives college-level placement at participating institutions of higher education.

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.

For math, BTC courses are ideal for students who scored a level 2 on the 10th grade Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) and have completed Algebra II or its equivalent. Students who scored in level 1 on the SBA and who struggled in Algebra II could take the course but will likely find the material in the course very challenging.

See the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges' (SBCTCs) [Bridge To College Frequently Asked Questions](#) for additional information.

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. Additional information is available on the [SBCTC's website](#).

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 pathway option, as established in options I–V already described in this toolkit.

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

Additional information about the ASVAB graduation pathway will be available on the SBE website by November 2019.

This unique pathway provides students with a new way to demonstrate their readiness for life beyond high school by earning at least the minimum score on the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) portion of the ASVAB, as will be set by the SBE. 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.

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 will be listed on the SBE's website, and
- how their scores and personal information are being shared, and the option to opt out of sharing their scores with the military recruiters.



Pursuant to the rules set by SBE in [WAC 180-18-055](#), 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.

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

Additional information about the ASVAB graduation pathway will be available on the SBE website by November 2019.

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 progression of courses which are technically intensive and rigorous and aligned with the student's HSBP.

One option is the sequence of courses must allow students to either earn dual credit or an industry recognized credential per [RCW 28A.700.030](#); or if the sequence of courses meets the curriculum requirements of Core Plus, that also qualifies for the CTE graduation pathway. OSPI is working on a process to develop a list of qualifying industry-recognized credentials in order to support this pathway.

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 180-51-068](#). 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	US History and Government Contemporary World History, Geography, and Problems 0.5 credits of Civics 0.5 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 the 3rd credit of science are chosen by the student, based on the student's interest and HSBP, and approved by the parent or 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 180-51-068](#).
- ** 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 career and technical education courses and is intended to allow for a personalized focus for the student's learning.
- *** Students must earn credit for physical education unless excused per [RCW 28A.230.050](#).

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.

Graduation Requirement Appeals and Waivers

Expedited Assessment Appeals 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 possesses 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).

The expedited assessment appeal waiver ends with the Class of 2020.

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.

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 18 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).

Students with Disabilities

WA-AIM Engagement Rubric

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 and assessment options for students eligible for special education, districts may not waive the assessment requirements for high school graduation.

For students 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. The Engagement Rubric measures the student's engagement and attention to academic activities. Use of an Engagement Rubric in high school during state accountability testing fulfills the student's participation in the state testing program and will also be used in waiving the student's assessment graduation requirements.

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.

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>.

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 certain students receiving special education or related services under an IEP, and who will continue to receive such services 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 or are enrolled in:

- Career and technical education programs, including skill centers;
- Transitional bilingual instruction programs;
- Special education programs; or
- Migrant education programs.

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 Individualized Education Program (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 local high school or alternative high school, or use the choice transfer process to enroll in a high school in a neighboring 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:** Depending on the 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 have the ability to grant a high school diploma to students who meet the resident district's graduation requirements.

Enroll in an alternative school or program or online program: Many districts have an alternative, online, or credit recovery program designed to help students who want a different setting to finish their high school education. Admissions requirements vary in different districts. 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 over age, under credit students who are interested in obtaining their High School Diploma or GED, engaging in Community College coursework to obtain credits toward their diploma or to earn an industry certificate or Associate's Degree, 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 Sept 1 of the school year. [OSPI maintains a list of districts that offer Open Doors](#), either in partnership with a community college or a community-based organization, and those that run their own programs.

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 and technical college high school completion program:** Check first to see if the community college offers either Open Doors or high school completion through a district partnership (CEO) for free. A number of community colleges in the state 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. In most cases, students may be charged \$25 tuition and other applicable fees, although the colleges have the authority to waive tuition and fees for students 19 and older. Students 16–18 years of age must have a signed release from their resident school district in order to enroll in a community college high school completion program.
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 by passing required tests through a high school completion program. In order to take the tests, students must have dropped out, or withdrawn, from their resident high school. State community and technical colleges are the official testing centers for the high school equivalency certificates. Students pay fees for the assessment(s) and may have to pay nominal tuition and fees for preparation courses offered through community and technical colleges. The certificate is not identical to a high school diploma, and students who earn a high school equivalency certificate are considered dropouts for high school accountability purposes. However, students who are under 21 years of age and who have a high school equivalency certificate are eligible to still 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 be admitted, although a high school diploma significantly increases the chances of admission to the state's four-year universities. Students without high school diplomas who enroll in colleges must pay full tuition and fees like all other students. Students who do not have a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate 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, [issued a statement](#) about a student's path towards college preparation.



Graduation Pathways by Cohort

A Quick Reference Guide

	Student’s Goal: 1 st Year After Graduation		Graduation Pathways: Class of 2020 and Beyond
HSBP	Career/Technical Field (Additional postsecondary education/training, technical college, apprenticeship, or workforce entry)	Graduation Pathway	Complete sequence of CTE courses which includes the potential to earn college credit or earn an industry recognized credential
	Military Enlistment		ASVAB Score
	General Postsecondary Education (Two- or four-year college)		Smarter Balanced HS Assessment or WA-AIM (ELA and/or math)
			SAT or ACT scores on ELA and/or math sections
			Earn College Credit in ELA and/or math
			Transition Course in ELA and/or math
			AP/IB/Cambridge Courses or Exams in ELA and/or math
			Combination of ELA and math option from any of the General Postsecondary Education Pathways

Alternatives for Students Receiving Special Education Services (Through Class of 2021)	Class of 2020	Class of 2021
CIA Cut Score on Smarter Balanced Assessment	✓	✓
Off-grade Level Assessment (WA-AIM or Smarter Balanced)	✓	✓
Locally Determined Assessment	✓	✓

1 Class of 2020 students may use the expedited assessment appeals waiver to waive the graduation pathway requirement. Class of 2020 students who completed a Locally Determined Course/Locally Administered Assessment course in ELA and/or Math during the 2018–19 school year may use those courses to meet the General Postsecondary Education pathway ELA and/or Math requirements.

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>
- **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, on-line 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

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

SBCTC: State Board of Community and Technical Colleges

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
All	Entire document	Updated entire document, with new rules, 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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