

GRADUATION PATHWAYS TOOLKIT

CLASS OF 2021

September 2020



Welcome to Washington state's Graduation Pathways Toolkit for the Class of 2021!

As you may imagine, the Graduation Pathways Toolkit takes on renewed importance for the Class of 2021 as we face unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I encourage you to make time this fall to explore new ways to provide your seniors with guidance and supports that will prepare them for graduation and the road ahead.

The updated Class of 2021 Graduation Pathways Toolkit is intended to provide school counselors and school leaders with a comprehensive understanding of Washington's graduation requirements and available resources. Growing and enriching your understanding of senior year transition processes can provide groundwork for new and innovative practices to help students succeed in preparing for their future.

The school counselor role is always evolving, and your work is vital to the development of school systems that maximize learning, safety, and growth for all students. Connecting with all seniors this year will be critical as they navigate complex processes virtually, often with uncertainty on when they will return to traditional school settings.

I implore you to provide more course flexibility for seniors to help meet graduation requirements and to ensure they receive needed support to graduate prepared for their post-high school goal. This work is extremely important since two-thirds of all jobs require post-high school training and education. All students need opportunities for *annual* high school and beyond planning, academic guidance, and career exploration.

Washington is leading the nation in the critical work to equitably prepare every student for an ever-changing economy through the expansion of graduation pathways and post-high school planning. More than just graduation requirements, the graduation pathways and High School and Beyond Plan needs to become the framework for annually guiding our students through middle and high school.

The OSPI team is your partner 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



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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State Requirements for the Class of 2021

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 will still need to meet the graduation requirements of their original graduation year.

Students who entered 9th grade during the 2017–18 school year (Class of 2021) 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 [RCW 28A.230.090](#), [WAC 180-51-220](#), and pages 3–7 in this toolkit for detailed information.

Complete a Graduation Pathway

Students will complete a graduation pathway to demonstrate their readiness for a meaningful first step after high school; which could include obtaining a job, starting an apprenticeship, attending college, or joining the military. The Graduation Pathway(s) used by a student must be aligned with their HSBP, as designated in House Bill (HB)1599, [RCW 28A.655.250](#) and [WAC 180-51-230](#). See pages 9–16 in this toolkit for detailed information.

Earn Required 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 pages 17–18 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 made aware of all state and local graduation requirements when they begin high school.

School districts are strongly 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 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 inventory/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 pgs. 12–13 for details)
 - documents chosen **graduation pathway(s)** (see pgs. 9–16 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 by 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 middle school and 9th grade course-taking** to support more meaningful preparation for, and transition to, high school.

Important Note:

[Eligible 7th and 8th grade students](#) must also be informed about how to apply for the **College Bound Scholarship (CBS)**. Resources such as free flyers, the middle school CBS portal, family letters explaining the CBS, and the School Counselor Signature Form can be found on the [WSAC website](#).

2. 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
 - inform 11th grade course taking, per [RCW 28A.230.090](#).

*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 tentative 2021 test window, assuming it is safe to administer the SBA this school year, runs from March 1–June 4. Guidance about the 2021 statewide assessments will be forthcoming, including options for Class of 2022 students who did not have the ability to take the SBA in 2020.

¹ Students' English language arts (ELA) and math scores on the 10th grade statewide assessments are not required HSBP components. However, students' HSBP course-taking plans **must** be updated to reflect their performance on the SBA relative to their junior year course selections. Students without SBA scores still must update their course-taking plan before 11th grade.

Since most current 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. Preliminary SBA score results can be accessed through the online reporting system within 7–8 days of the student completing the Computer Adaptive Test and the Performance Task. 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. 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 HSBPs that align with IEPs, as well as information on available resources, best practice models, 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)**.
 - High school 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. 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.

6. 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.
7. 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 (see pgs. 19 and 31).
 - Information about how to receive assistance with completing applications.
 - Refer students to the [WSAC website](#) for more information and resources.

Important Note:

Beginning with the Class of 2021, all seniors must be given the option to attend a school-sponsored Financial Aid Advising Day (FAAD) per Senate Bill (SB) 6141 (2020). During this new FAAD, seniors shall receive information and assistance to help with completing the FAFSA or WASFA applications.

- For more details about the FAAD and free resources to help schools provide this opportunity to support students’ post-high school dreams, go to the [WSAC’s 12th Year Campaign website](#).

Schools are encouraged to utilize the FAAD as a time to ensure all seniors can indicate that this required financial aid component of their HSBP is done.

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. Possible courses may include career and technical education equivalencies in ELA or math adapted pursuant to [RCW 28A.230.097](#) and listed on OSPI’s [CTE Resources webpage](#).

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, as listed on OSPI's [CTE Resources webpage](#).

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 career preparation coursework 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 in their High School and Beyond Plan.

❖ Career Pathways or CTE Pathways

These terms may be used to describe 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. These are *different* than a CTE Course Sequence Graduation Pathway (pgs. 10–11).

❖ 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. See the [Issue Brief](#) on the SBCTC website for more information

Graduation Pathways

I. Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)

Taking the ASVAB exam helps students understand their skills and aptitudes in eight (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 or in civilian jobs 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 2021, 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.

II. Career and Technical Education (CTE) Course Sequence

The CTE Course Sequence Graduation Pathway is the most unique of the Graduation Pathways. 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.

One option is to complete a Core Plus program, which results in earning a Core Plus certificate, indicating readiness for entry-level employment with Core Plus partners.

The mostly widely available Core Plus program is in [Aerospace Manufacturing](#) in partnership with Boeing. There is also a newly available Core Plus Construction program, and a Maritime Core Plus program is currently being developed.

- OSPI's [CTE Resources webpage](#) links to the NEW! Statewide Framework for Core Plus Construction; more information can also be found at the [Core Plus website](#).

OR, students may complete a 2.0-credit sequence of courses relevant to the student's postsecondary goals, as outlined in the 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 via a course in the sequence.
 - OSPI continues to work with education and industry partners to develop a comprehensive list of qualifying industry-recognized credentials.
- Consists of a sequenced progression of technically intensive and rigorous courses.
- 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 spans 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 submission of the Local CTE Graduation Pathway form found in the Graduation Alternatives application in EDS.
 - The district should expect a response from OSPI within 45 calendar days.
 - Once approved, a local sequence may be implemented by other districts upon notifying OSPI (further approval by OSPI is not necessary).
- The growing list of OSPI approved and available CTE Course Sequences spanning more than one program area can be found on OSPI's [CTE webpage](#).

Note: The CTE Course Sequence graduation pathway does not require students to take a preparatory CTE course, as defined in [RCW 28A.700.030](#). Also, students using this graduation pathway do not have to meet separate ELA and math requirements.

CTE Course Sequences in an Alternative Learning Setting

Alternative schools may offer CTE courses; however, courses must be approved by OSPI's CTE Department through the course approval process to be counted toward this graduation pathway. Based on current funding rules, ALE courses are not eligible for enhanced CTE funding.

To offer this graduation pathway through an alternative learning setting, connect with your local CTE director for more information on what course sequences your district is approved to offer. For districts choosing to prioritize offering CTE Course Sequence Graduation Pathways in an alternative learning setting, the options may include:

- Forgo the enhanced CTE funding to offer a CTE course sequence through ALE.
- Use an in-person, seat-time based model at an alternative school to offer a CTE course sequence.
- Create policies and systems allowing for co-enrollment across multiple school settings such as an alternative school, high school, and/or a skill center.

III. College Admission Exam Scores for ELA and/or Math

Students may demonstrate their readiness for postsecondary education options by using a 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 (reading and writing) and/or math as follows:

Minimum Scores Needed for the Classes of 2017 Through 2021

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

Note: The Accuplacer / Compass exams, often utilized by Washington’s 2-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.

IV. Combination of Graduation Pathways (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 described in pathway III and pathways V–VIII within this section of the toolkit.

V. 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 by 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 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.

For CHS/CTE Dual Credit/RS, students must earn at least 1.0 high school credit and be eligible to earn college credit (100 level or higher) by meeting 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 Graduation 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.

The list of eligible AP/CI/IB courses for the Dual Credit Courses pathway is the same as the list of exams in the Dual Credit Exam Scores pathway (see below).

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

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 course exams are approved options for both the dual credit course and exam Graduation Pathways:

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)

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

VII. 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:

- 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
- 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 = 104 and/or math = 103

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

HB 1599 expanded the pathways that all students can use to graduate and established that the Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA) would sunset after the Class of 2021.

Multiple pathways for all students is one of the ways that OSPI and Washington State are delivering on the promise that all students are prepared for postsecondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement.

Through the Class of 2021 for students with IEPs who do not meet the expected performance standards, the Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA) can still 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 in accessing a Graduation Pathway that is available to all students.

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.

Note: Graduation Pathway options are determined based on a student's original 4-year graduation cohort, not the year they may plan to graduate. Students needing additional time to graduate can access services until the age of 21, if determined appropriate by the IEP team, and 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 based on his/her interests for after completing high school.

Through the Class of 2021, the CIA statewide assessment pathway for ELA and/or math can be met any of the options below:

- Achieving the CIA Cut Score (Level 2) on the Smarter Balanced Assessments
- 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)

This option does not apply to the Class of 2021.

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.

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

Meet State and Local Credit Requirements

Cohort: Students entering 9th grade from July 2017 through June 2018

The requirements for the Class of 2021 are described in [WAC 180-51-210](#). Districts may have additional local requirements. Students and families should check with high school counselors for additional 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 (standalone for Class of 2024) 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 Requirement (PPR)**
World Language	2	1.0 or 2.0 credits of World Language can be used as part of the student's PPR**
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 credits of math and science are chosen by students based on their HSBP and approved by a parent/guardian. If a parent/guardian is unavailable or unsure, a school counselor/principal can approve students' courses per [WAC 180-51-210](#).
- ** PPR courses prepare students for a specific post-high school career or educational outcome based on their HSBP. The flexibility of these 3.0 credits allows students to take more relevant preparatory courses that support their postsecondary goals.
- *** 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." ([WAC 180-51-068](#)).

HB 1599 allows districts to waive up to two (2) credits for individual students "based on a student's circumstances, provided that none of the waived credits are identified as mandatory core credits." PE and health credits are mandatory core credits.

- If a student is **excused** from PE course(s), the up to 1.5 credits of PE 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.



Partial Credit Practices to Support Highly Mobile Students

In 2017, the legislature passed SB 5241 and HB 1444, amending [RCW 28A.320.192](#).

Districts must adopt credit consolidation, partial credit, and course-waiving practices to facilitate the on-time graduation of students experiencing homelessness, students in foster care (dependent children), At-Risk Youth (ARY), and Children in Need of Services (CHINS). These practices can help staff *piece together* mobile students' academic records in a more cohesive way.

An [Implementation Guide](#) for supporting highly mobile students via partial credit practices is posted on OSPI's [Homeless Education website](#).

The amendments to RCW 28A.320.192 enable Washington school districts to be fair and creative in transferring 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 any student who needs additional support to meet his/her credit requirements, including students impacted by extended school closures during the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Additional Support for Students Who Have Been in Foster Care

The primary purpose of the [Passport to Careers program](#) is to provide former foster care youth and unaccompanied homeless youth with financial assistance beyond other state, federal, private, and institutional financial aid for which they are eligible.

Through **Passport to College**, students can receive a scholarship to assist with all college expenses, support services at the college, and priority consideration for the Washington College Grant and Work Study.

Through **Passport to Apprenticeship**, students can get assistance with occupational-specific costs for registered apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship programs.

Passport to Careers is a comprehensive program providing multiple avenues of support to students from high school through higher education completion via:

- a student scholarship,
- incentive funding for colleges to provide recruitment and retention services, and
- a partnership with the College Success Foundation (CSF) to provide support to students and training and technical assistance to college campus staff.

Currently, 42 institutions are participating in the "viable plan" to offer these support services. Since 2008, the Passport scholarship has been awarded to about 345 students annually.

More information about the resources to support students in foster care in attainment of postsecondary goals can be found on [OSPI's website](#) and on WSAC's partner website at www.readysetgrad.org/fostercare.

High School Transcript Developer User Guides and FAQ Documents

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

The following documents are available on the Transcripts page:

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

Transcribing High School Credit Earned in Middle School

This policy was changed under HB 1599. 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, as described in [WAC 180-51-030](#).

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 family 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 transcribing courses that students fail.

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 family have until the end of the 11th grade to request a nonnumerical grade for credit earned before attending high school.

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

For Class of 2020 only; the EAA is not available for the Class of 2021.

Due to the disruption of the extended school building closures last spring, this information remains in the Graduation Pathways Toolkit to support staff in assisting any Class of 2020 seniors still working to meet their graduation requirements.

Some Class of 2020 seniors may be eligible to have their Graduation Pathway waived. It is required that students, through attainment of any option listed 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.

1. Admission to a higher education institution or career preparation program
2. Award of a scholarship for higher education
3. Enlistment in a branch of the military
4. Successful completion of a college level class in the relevant subject area. This does not apply to Bridge to College or Dual Credit.
5. Other demonstration of student's skills and knowledge.
6. Other – Student was enrolled in a spring 2020 course that would have met a graduation pathway, but the credit was waived.
7. Other – Student intended to take a test (such as Smarter Balanced, ACT, SAT, ASVAB, or LDA) to demonstrate proficiency, but the test session was cancelled in spring 2020.

Note: Again, EAA waiver is still “open” for the Class of 2020 only. The EAA waiver is not an option for the Class of 2021. Read OSPI’s January 2020 Bulletin [#B007-20](#) for additional details about the reporting processes for the Graduation Pathways.

Two-Credit Academic Waiver

In 2019, local school boards should have adopted policies in line with [RCW 28A.230.090](#), 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 infographic of required credits on the SBE’s website for more information.
What Changed	The waiver for credits is now based on “a student’s circumstances.” Before HB 1599, the requirement was that the credit waiver was based on “ <i>unusual</i> circumstances.”

Special, Unavoidable Circumstance Appeal

Note: For students in the Class of 2019 or earlier who transferred 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](#).

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 on the [OSPI website](#).

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.**

According to WAC 180-51-115 (emphasis added), "A student with an IEP must be provided needed accommodations to progress in the general curriculum toward meeting state and local graduation requirements. In **limited circumstances**, when **determined necessary by the individualized education program team** due to the unique needs resulting from the student's disability, a graduation credit and subject area requirement may be **substituted with comparable content course work**, as identified in the individualized education program team course of study and aligned to the student's high school and beyond plan."

Students with disabilities who have an IEP have access to 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.

It is important to note that under Kevin's Law, a student can continue to receive educational or transitional services beyond the fourth year of high school, if determined appropriate by an IEP team, even if the student meets the 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:

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

A student with an IEP must be provided needed accommodations to progress in the general curriculum toward meeting state and local graduation requirements.

- In limited circumstances, when determined necessary by the IEP team due to the unique needs resulting from the student's disability, a graduation credit and subject area requirement may be substituted with comparable content course work, as identified in the individualized education program team course of study and aligned to the student's high school and beyond plan.
- 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 (RS) 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 RS participation. Students who are beyond their initial four years of high school may only take those classes through RS 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 are also high schools may grant diplomas to seniors meeting the resident district's graduation requirements.
4. **Enroll in another school or program that's a better fit.** 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 who want a high school diploma, GED plus, community college credits toward their diploma, an industry certificate or Associate degree, and/or employability skills. This flexible 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 either the college or the district.

At-Cost Options

The at-cost options available for students who are not yet 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.

All 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. Students under 19 will need a release to take the GED signed by their resident school district and a parent if under 18.

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. The current placement agreement will end with the Class of 2022.

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.



Class of 2021 Graduation Pathways

A Quick Reference Guide

Career/Technical Field = CTE Course Sequence

- Complete a sequence of 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 only)

- Score for Class of 2021 = 31
- Check the [State Board of Education website](#) by September 1 annually for score

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 (1.0 credit total for ELA and/or math):
 - AP/IB/Cambridge: Earn a C+ (each term) in state-approved course
 - CTE Dual Credit: must earn high school credit; local approval
 - College in the High School or Running Start courses: local approval
- Dual credit exams (for state-approved courses):
 - AP = 3+
 - Cambridge = E or better
 - IB = 4+
- State assessments:
 - Smarter Balanced: ELA = 2548; math = 2595
 - WA-AIM: ELA = 104; math = 103
- Transition courses (1.0 credit total for ELA and/or math):
 - 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's** HSBP [Webpage](#); HSBP-IEP Transition Plan Alignment Resources [Webpage](#)
- **SBE's** HSBP [Webpage](#)

Graduation Pathways Resources

- **OSPI's** Graduation Pathways [Webpage](#) and HB1599 [Webpage](#)
- **SBE's** Graduation Pathways [Webpage](#) and HB1599 [FAQ](#)

Graduation and Credit Requirements

- **SBE's** Graduation Requirements [Webpage](#)

Dual Credit

OSPI's Dual Credit [webpage](#) has information about all six dual credit programs.

Alternative Learning Experience (ALE)

[Explore guidance resources](#) related to offering ALE, including a guide to program implementation, sample documents and communication resources.

Online Learning

Find information on OSPI's [website](#) about approved online school programs, enrolling students, district applications for online school programs or course providers, and more.

Learning by Choice

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

Foster Youth/Youth Experiencing Homelessness

The [WSAC website](#) has information on the Supplemental Education Transition Planning (SETuP) program, to assist foster care and unaccompanied homeless youth in successfully making the transition from high school to postsecondary enrollment, career, or service.

Additional SETuP information can be found at the [Independence for Washington State Foster Youth website](#)

The [National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth](#) has a collection of higher education resources for students experiencing homelessness.

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

FAAD: Financial Aid Advising Day (new requirement for fall 2020)

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)

PPR: Personalized Pathway Requirement (up to 3.0 flexible credits)

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 following the policy-change generated transition to a Graduation Pathways Toolkit in June 2019 are noted below.

Page(s) Revised	Section	Description	Date
Most	Entire document	At least minimal updates to most sections throughout entire document	9/8/2020
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 toolkit in PDF at OSPI’s [Graduation Pathways Toolkit webpage](#) (<https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/graduation/graduation-requirements/graduation-pathways/graduation-pathways-toolkit>). 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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