

<b>Title</b>	Student Readiness: High School to Postsecondary Alignment		
<b>Challenge area:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Student Readiness <input type="checkbox"/> Affordability <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional Capacity & Student Success <input type="checkbox"/> Capturing the Potential of Technology <input type="checkbox"/> Stable and Accountable Funding	<b>Staff lead:</b>	Randy Spaulding
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<b>Synopsis:</b>	To address gaps in student achievement in Washington, adopted K-12 learning standards that are aligned with the academic requirements for career and college success. This report offers policy options that will support ongoing activities to implement these new standards and further improve the transition from high school to postsecondary education.		
<b>Guiding questions:</b>	A key problem found in Washington, and in other states, is that a gap exists between the high school curriculum and graduation requirements and the skills and knowledge required for postsecondary success. Washington must develop a systematic approach to facilitate alignment of expectations and requirements across sectors.		
<b>Possible council action:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Only <input type="checkbox"/> Approve/Adopt <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		
<b>Documents and attachments:</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brief/Report <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint <input type="checkbox"/> Third-party materials		

## **Ten-Year Roadmap Policy Options**

### **Challenge Area**

#### ***Student Readiness: High School to Postsecondary Alignment***

### **Planning Activity**

Fully align high school graduation and college admission requirements and sustain ongoing alignment.

#### **Council Lead Members**

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# Executive Summary

The Washington Student Achievement Council has identified **student readiness for postsecondary opportunity and success** as one of five critical challenge areas to be addressed in the Ten-Year Roadmap. Improving alignment of course requirements and curriculum from high school to postsecondary education is critical to improving student achievement in Washington.

A high school to postsecondary alignment workgroup, comprising representatives from key agencies, institutions, and organizations supporting Washington's P-20 system, is working to help Council members address this challenge area. The following report outlines this workgroup's policy recommendations.

The recommendations are founded on the understanding that preparation levels and success are not distributed evenly across the population. Underrepresented minority students and low-income students are less likely to successfully complete high school or to graduate and go on to postsecondary education and training. As Washington's population becomes more diverse, achievement gaps will worsen unless the state makes substantial progress in closing preparation gaps.

To begin to address these gaps, every state has now adopted K-12 learning standards that are aligned with the academic requirements for career and college success. Washington is further addressing the gap by phasing in changes to high school graduation and college admission requirements, working toward an aligned student assessment system, and modifying the school accountability system to recognize student achievement and growth.

The policy options recommended by the workgroup align with ongoing work to improve student success in Washington. The workgroup has highlighted a set of recommendations that include work in five broad areas:

- Implement the Common Core State Standards and Smarter Balanced Assessment System.
- Enhance student planning resources and improve alignment of course requirements to ensure students are prepared for a broad set of postsecondary options when they complete high school.
- Leverage 12th grade to propel student success.
- Align professional development efforts and provide curricular materials and support for implementation of Common Core State Standards.
- Measure progress and celebrate success.

This report reflects a diversity of input, empowering the Council to consider and prioritize policy options for inclusion in the Ten-Year Roadmap. In addition, the Roadmap will also address the outcomes, metrics, and fiscal impacts of those recommendations.

## Context of the Ten-Year Roadmap

Increasing educational attainment is vital to the well-being of Washington residents and to the health of our state's economy. To this end, the Washington Student Achievement Council is working to propose goals and strategies for increasing educational attainment through a Ten-Year Roadmap and a two-year Strategic Action Plan.

The Council's Strategic Action Plan, adopted in November 2012, identifies five critical challenges to be addressed in the Roadmap. The five challenge areas are:

- 1. Student Readiness** (with four planning activities: Early Learning; Outreach and Support; Alignment; Remedial Postsecondary Education)
- 2. Affordability**
- 3. Institutional Capacity and Student Success** (with two planning activities: Meeting Increased Demand; Assessment of Student Skills and Knowledge)
- 4. Capturing the Potential of Technology**
- 5. Stable and Accountable Funding**

To inform the Council's work of creating the first Roadmap, workgroups comprising lead Washington Student Achievement Council Members, Council staff, and external workgroup members were formed to research, discuss, and develop issue briefings and policy recommendations for each of these five critical challenge areas. The Challenge Areas are complex and interrelated. While the Roadmap will recommend actions for each of the Challenge Areas, these recommendations will be integrated into a cohesive plan.

## Introduction

In order to raise the educational attainment of Washington residents, we must make progress on critical issues that impact student access and success. Unfortunately, too many students fail to complete high school and, as discussed in a recent briefing paper on remedial education,<sup>1</sup> too many students who do complete high school are not yet ready for college-level coursework in math and English.

A key problem found in Washington, and in other states, is that a gap exists between the high school curriculum and graduation requirements and the skills and knowledge required for postsecondary success. Washington must develop a systematic approach to facilitate alignment of expectations and requirements across sectors.

Preparation levels and success are not distributed evenly across the population. Minority students and low-income students are less likely to successfully complete high school or to graduate and go on to postsecondary education and training.<sup>2,3</sup> As Washington's population becomes more diverse, achievement gaps will worsen, unless the state makes substantial progress in closing preparation gaps.

At its May 23 meeting, the Council reviewed an issue brief that outlined some of the key areas of progress and remaining challenges in this area.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, the report addressed:

1. The degree to which curriculum requirements for high school graduation are aligned with expectations for success in postsecondary coursework.
2. Improvements in alignment expected with implementation of planned changes in graduation requirements, increased funding of basic education, and implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS).
3. Improvements in assessment, curriculum, and learning environments that have potential to improve student transitions from secondary to postsecondary education and training.
4. Strategies for the state to ensure students are engaged in a rigorous and meaningful experience in 12th grade, including more intentional use of dual-credit programs that prepare them for career and college success.

Course requirements, and the content and outcomes of those courses, must be aligned to provide students a foundation for their next step in learning or work. The recommendations in this paper are intended to leverage and enhance existing efforts to improve alignment, such as implementation of the Common Core State Standards, and to draw on experience in previous efforts, such as the Transition Math Project (TMP) and the development of the College Readiness Math Test (CRMT). While some of the options may apply to a specific sector, the general approach is to include all sectors so that the policies impact the greatest number of students.

Although there was broad agreement on many of the proposals, the contributors to this report did not uniformly support each policy option. The report reflects a diversity of input, empowering the Council to consider and prioritize policy options for inclusion in the Ten-Year Roadmap.

## Development of Policy Options

The policy options discussed below were developed by a workgroup including representatives from key agencies, institutions, and organizations that support the P-20 system in Washington. The recommendations were also influenced by presentations from experts in the field who spoke at the May 23, 2013, Council meeting. Presenters included Jane Wellman, consultant and Pacific Regional Advisor for the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, and Linda Drake, Senior Policy Analyst for the State Board of Education. Additionally, the Council conducted a Listening Tour of the state in fall 2012 during which participants expressed a clear need for education partners to collaborate and provide a more seamless system that supports students as they progress through every level of education.<sup>5</sup>

## Policy Options for Recommended Actions

The workgroup recognized that a great deal of work is already underway to improve alignment of secondary and postsecondary requirements and expectations. It is the Council's role to work with partners in K-12 and postsecondary education to leverage these efforts and develop policies that will enhance our ability to serve students. Accordingly, the policy options recommended by the workgroup align with ongoing work to improve student success in Washington.

### **1. Fully implement Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC).**

The Council should convene partners to develop a mechanism for K-12 and postsecondary faculty and staff to understand the CCSS and use the 11th grade Smarter Balanced Assessment to inform 12th grade course selection. For students who demonstrate college readiness on the assessment, provide access to credit-bearing college coursework: a *launch year*. The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is working with states to ensure the 11th grade assessment is recognized as a valid measure of Common Core content proficiency. In addition, participating states will agree on common performance standards in English language arts/literacy and mathematics that define college and career readiness. Once this work is complete, actions at the institutional and state level will be required to determine whether and how the assessment will be used as evidence that students are ready for entry-level, transferrable, college credit-bearing courses and would therefore not require precollege coursework. In addition, the Council may wish to consider how the assessment could be included in the minimum college admission standards.

### **2. Establish a task force to enhance student planning resources and improve alignment of coursework requirements to ensure students are prepared for a variety of postsecondary options upon completion of high school. The task force would:**

- a) **Recommend revision of the third-year math requirement for high school graduation and college admission** to provide a path for students who do not intend to take calculus-related math in college. The course could include greater emphasis on probability and statistics and less emphasis on precalculus concepts currently covered in Algebra II or Integrated Math III. This option could draw on work by the Carnegie Foundation in the Statway/Quantway<sup>6</sup> project or the Dana Center's New Mathways<sup>7</sup> project.

- b) **Develop a Direct Entry Certificate Agreement** that would be awarded based on district guidelines consistent with the state minimum college admission requirements. Core to College is piloting transcript-based placement at the local level with a few colleges and school districts in Washington; this would be a means to scale that effort to the state level. The certificate would be developed through a collaborative model similar to that used to develop and maintain the statewide Direct Transfer Agreement. The agreement would define a high school curriculum that would meet the minimum admission requirements for public baccalaureate institutions and provide students the opportunity to directly enter college level coursework in all subjects. All institutions, public and private, in the state would be encouraged to participate in the agreement.
- c) **Develop recommendations for focused and targeted requirements for the *High School and Beyond Plan* and resources to expand and improve advising and student support in grades 6-12.** The High School and Beyond Plan is a critical part of the new graduation requirements. Through their plans, students will choose programs of study that meet their education and career goals and, if needed, access flexibility in graduation requirements. The requirements for the High School and Beyond Plan should be clearly defined at the state level, and schools should have the needed resources, including additional counseling staff, to effectively advise students as they develop their plans. For example, the Navigation 101 model combines assessment resources, a standard curriculum, and a whole-school approach to provide students with a wealth of planning resources and support.<sup>8</sup>

**3. Leverage 12th grade to propel student success. All students should be challenged to perform to their highest potential.**

- a) **Develop a *Senior Year Counts* information campaign.** Seek grant funding to develop an information campaign to promote a rigorous senior year, with long-term funding to be requested based on results. Students would be encouraged to take a full schedule senior year that includes math, English, and science coursework. The campaign would leverage the Launch Year Act<sup>9</sup> to encourage many more students to challenge themselves with college-level courses while still enrolled in high school. Washington offers a variety of dual-credit options, including Advanced Placement, College in the High School, Running Start, Tech Prep, and others.
- b) **Develop targeted and rigorous coursework in 12th grade to ensure students are ready for college-level courses.** Provide a framework for secondary and postsecondary faculty to jointly develop 12th grade transition courses for students not meeting the Smarter Balanced Assessment cut-score. These courses would allow students to avoid remedial coursework and prepare them for direct entry into credit-bearing college courses by the end of 12th grade.
- c) **Align funding models, student fees, and incentives across dual-enrollment programs to fully support Launch Year.** Align policies for Running Start, College in the High School, and Tech Prep so that schools can offer the options that provide the greatest benefit to students and colleges, and so colleges have the necessary resources to participate. Currently students face a range of choices for dual-credit or dual-enrollment courses that are further confused by different fee structures, assessments, and processes for application for college credit. Teachers, schools, and colleges face challenges due to different reimbursement policies and stipends.

- d) **Simplify the process to receive college credit in the Tech Prep program.** A critical issue identified by the workgroup is the need for automatic transcription of Tech Prep coursework to create parity with the model used for College in the High School. This would ensure students receive the credit they deserve for successful completion of college-level work.
- e) **Recommend new approaches to dual credit.** Investigate new approaches to providing high quality dual-credit programs, especially for students in remote or rural areas. For example, local high schools could provide classroom support and mentoring for cohorts of students who are taking online Running Start courses.

#### **4. Align professional development efforts and provide curricular materials and support for implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS).**

- a) **Support development of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium digital library,** a shared online repository of instructional materials, assignments, and assessments aligned with the CCSS.
- b) **Support cross-sector professional learning communities,** creating opportunities for Pre-K, K-12, and postsecondary educators to share resources and align teaching and learning from one level to the next along a student's educational pathway.
- c) Continue to collaborate with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to **align and support professional development activities for in-service teachers and administrators to support implementation of the CCSS and college and career readiness.**
- d) Collaborate with the Professional Educator Standards Board, Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, and institutional education departments to **ensure that preparation programs for pre-service teachers and administrators support implementation of the CCSS and college and career readiness.**
- e) Collaborate with the Professional Educator Standards Board to **develop a better understanding of educator needs in Washington.** Support policies and system growth necessary to ensure sufficient numbers of educators are prepared to meet regional needs as well as needs for specific specializations.

#### **5. Measure progress and celebrate success.**

- a) **Ensure students, parents, teachers, and school and district leaders know what students need to close achievement gaps and successfully meet standards.** Encourage schools and teachers to use the Smarter Balanced formative and summative assessment tools to track individual growth and achievement and provide students with feedback that will help them stay on track for college and career readiness.
- b) **Adopt state-level metrics to assess improvement in high school to college alignment.** Leverage existing reporting systems to develop a set of metrics that will track student progress from preschool through college and into the workforce. Much of the hard work has been done developing metrics in various systems. The Council would draw on those resources to develop a single dashboard to track progress on Roadmap goals.



- c) **Measure and celebrate the success of schools and districts that help students grow and achieve academically.** The revised Washington State Achievement Index<sup>10</sup> will provide better information about school performance, taking into account student achievement data, student growth over time, graduation rates, and the percentage of students demonstrating readiness on indicators of college and career readiness. The Index provides a fair and consistent measurement that highlights closing achievement gaps. It is used to recognize high-performing schools, as well as schools in need of additional support. Processes and procedures used by high-performing schools can be shared to improve system performance.

## Next Steps

Following the Council's consideration and discussion of the above policy options at its July 2013 meeting, Council staff will prepare a framework for Roadmap recommendations for this planning area. The framework for Roadmap recommendations will include specific strategic actions, addressing the following factors for each:

1. Expected outcome of the action
2. Action time period
3. Outcome time period
4. Metrics for measuring outcomes
5. Legislative action needed
6. Fiscal impact

Staff will develop the framework in close consultation with Council members and the alignment workgroup. The Council will use this framework to help shape the Ten-Year Roadmap.

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*Bill Moore - Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges*

*Jane Sherman - Council of Presidents*

*Jennifer Wallace - Professional Educator Standards Board*

*Gena Wikstrom - Northwest Career Colleges Federation*

*Greg Williamson - Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction*

*Bryan Wilson - Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board*

## Appendix – Policy Options

Strategy	Actions
<b>Fully implement Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC).</b>  <b>Establish a task force to enhance student planning resources and improve alignment of coursework requirements to ensure students are prepared for a variety of postsecondary options upon completion of high school.</b>	The Council should convene partners to develop a mechanism for K-12 and postsecondary faculty and staff to understand the CCSS and use the 11th grade Smarter Balanced Assessment to inform 12th grade course selection.
	Recommend revision of the third-year math requirement for high school graduation and college admission.
	Develop a Direct Entry Certificate Agreement awarded based on district guidelines consistent with the state minimum college admission requirements.
<b>Leverage 12th grade to propel student success.</b>	Develop recommendations for focused and targeted requirements for the <i>High School and Beyond Plan</i> and resources to expand and improve advising and student support in grades 6-12.
	Develop a <i>Senior Year Counts</i> information campaign.
	Develop targeted and rigorous coursework in 12th grade to ensure students are ready for college-level courses.
<b>Align professional development efforts and provide curricular materials and support for implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS).</b>	Align funding models, student fees, and incentives across dual-enrollment programs to fully support Launch Year.
	Simplify the process to receive college credit in the Tech Prep program.
	Recommend new approaches to dual credit.
	Support development of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium digital library.
	Support cross-sector professional learning communities.
	Align and support professional development activities for in-service teachers and administrators to support implementation of the CCSS and college and career readiness.
	Ensure that preparation programs for pre-service teachers and administrators support implementation of the CCSS and college and career readiness.
Develop a better understanding of educator needs in Washington.	
<b>Measure progress and celebrate success</b>	Ensure students, parents, teachers, and school and district leaders know what students need to close achievement gaps and successfully meet standards.
	Adopt state level metrics to assess improvement in high school to college alignment.
	Measure and celebrate the success of schools and districts that help students grow and achieve academically.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Washington Student Achievement Council. 2013. *Issue Briefing: Student Readiness: Remedial Education*. Olympia: Washington Student Achievement Council. [http://www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Remedial\\_Issue\\_Briefing.pdf](http://www.wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/Remedial_Issue_Briefing.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) statistics for students who started 9th grade in 2006 and dropped out of high school by 2011: Came, Deb, and Ireland, Lisa. 2012. "Graduation and Dropout Statistics Annual Report 2010-11." [www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/pubdocs/GradDropout/10-11/GradDropoutStats\\_2010-11.pdf](http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/pubdocs/GradDropout/10-11/GradDropoutStats_2010-11.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Education Research & Data Center. 2012. "Postsecondary Education Enrollment Patterns." <http://www.ercd.wa.gov/briefs/pdf/201201.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Ten-Year Roadmap Issue Briefing Student Readiness: High School to Postsecondary Alignment (May 2013). Washington Student Achievement Council.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.wsac.wa.gov/PlanningAndResearch/Roadmap/Listening>

<sup>6</sup> Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/developmental-math>

<sup>7</sup> The University of Texas Charles A. Dana Center New Mathways Project. <http://www.utdanacenter.org/higher-education/new-mathways-project/>.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.k12.wa.us/secondaryeducation/careercollegereadiness/>

<sup>9</sup> RCW 28A.230.130 - 2011 c 77 § 2

<sup>10</sup> <https://eds.ospi.k12.wa.us/WAI>