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## Preparing students to live and work in a global economy

*College readiness in the arts, social studies, and world languages*

*Prepared by*

Michele  
Anciaux  
Aoki, Ph.D.

### Introduction

Washington state has embarked on a path to create a world-class and seamless education system to prepare all Washingtonians to be competitive worldwide and participate in a healthy democracy.<sup>1</sup>

The *Washington Learns* report, presented by Governor Chris Gregoire in November 2006, lists three goals that relate directly to preparing students for college or for work in a knowledge-driven and technology-based global economy:

*"In Washington and other states, we learn about talented high-school students who don't fulfill their promise – not because they fail at school, but because our schools fail them."*

– Bill Gates

- ◊ All students will graduate from high school with an international perspective and the skills to live, learn, and work in a diverse state and a global society.
- ◊ All students will complete a rigorous high school course of study and demonstrate the abilities needed to enter a postsecondary education program or career path.
- ◊ Washington will have a well-trained and educated workforce that meets the needs of our knowledge-based economy.

Consistent with the direction provided by the *Washington Learns* report and Governor Gregoire, the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) is engaged in efforts to define college readiness as a key strategy in preparing students for postsecondary education.

Washington's 2004 Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education, Section 8: *Helping Students Make the Transition to College*, calls for defining college readiness in mathematics, English, science, the arts, social studies, and world languages. The intent is to help students transition to college by:

Division of  
Academic  
Affairs

Washington  
Higher Education  
Coordinating  
Board

917 Lakeridge  
Way SW  
PO Box 43430  
Olympia, WA  
98504-3430

360-753-7800  
[www.hecb.wa.gov](http://www.hecb.wa.gov)

- ◊ Defining the skills and knowledge students need to be prepared for entry-level college coursework, without the need for remediation.
- ◊ Aligning college readiness requirements with Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs).

The HECB became engaged in the effort to define college readiness in mathematics, English, and science in 2004 through the Transition Mathematics Project (TMP), led by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. The TMP published standards approved by the board in July 2006 are being field tested in classrooms throughout the state. To view the math standards and see more information, go to <http://www.transitionmathproject.org/highlights.asp>.<sup>2</sup>

In 2005, the Washington Legislature provided funds for the HECB to define college readiness in English and science. Following extensive input from K-20 educators across the state, the board will consider adoption of preliminary English and science college readiness definitions in January 2007. View draft definitions in English and science and see more information at <http://www.learningconnections.org/clc/hecb.htm>.<sup>3</sup>

This policy brief focuses on the areas not yet addressed—the arts, social studies, and world languages—by examining **Current Requirements** for high school graduation and college admissions in Washington; **Preparing for Success** in college; **Critical Connections** among these three subjects; and, **Challenges for College Readiness** (internationalization of curriculum, study abroad, etc.). This report will serve as a first step in the process of establishing college readiness definitions for the arts, social studies, and world languages in Washington state.

## **Current Requirements**

*“In Washington and other states, we learn about talented high-school students who don’t fulfill their promise – not because they fail at school, but because our schools fail them. They study hard, do well and get into college. But in college, instead of the good grades they’re used to, they get D’s and F’s. They take remedial classes, but still they can’t keep up—so they quit.*

*“These are bright kids. All through grade school and high school, they do everything we ask of them. But we don’t ask enough. And then, after 12 years of not asking enough, we suddenly ask way too much.”<sup>4</sup>*

***Bill Gates, speaking at Washington Learns Education Summit, November 13, 2006***

## Credits for Classes

The State Board of Education and the Higher Education Coordinating Board are responsible for setting minimum high school graduation requirements and minimum college admissions requirements, respectively. One requirement is credits earned based on seat time in approved classes, as outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1.** High School Graduation and College Admissions Requirements in Washington

Subject	Minimum state high school graduation requirements	Minimum admissions requirements for public, four-year colleges and universities in Washington state	Recommended courses for highly selective colleges and universities
<b>Social Studies</b> (including U.S. and Washington State history)	2.5 credits	3 years	3-4 years
<b>World language</b> (same language)	0 credits	2 years	3-4 years
<b>Visual or performing arts</b>	1 credit	1 year	2-3 years

Source: Adapted from <http://www.k12.wa.us/GraduationRequirements/CreditReq.aspx> (accessed 11/12/2006)<sup>5</sup>

Note: One “credit” in high school equates to one “year” or “unit” for college admissions purposes.

Table 2 shows a comparison of several national colleges considered “highly selective.”

**Table 2.** Recommended Courses for Admission to “Highly Selective” Colleges and Universities

Subject	Brown University	Harvard University	Stanford University	University of Washington
<b>Social Studies</b>	2 units History	3 units (+ 2 History)	2 units (+ 1 History)	4 units
<b>World language</b> (may be called “Foreign” Language)	4 units	4 units	3 units	3 units
<b>Visual or performing arts</b>	Not listed	Not listed	Not listed	Not listed

Source: <http://apps.collegeboard.com/search/index.jsp> (accessed 11/24/2006)

Note: One “unit” in this table corresponds to one “credit” in Washington high schools.

Focusing on credit requirements, we can compare the difference between high school graduation requirements and college admissions requirements in Washington. A student who has earned a high school diploma in Washington state can satisfy minimum college admissions requirements in the arts with no extra coursework and with just one additional semester of social studies in high school (see Table 1). However, that same student would need at least two credits of world/foreign language study in order to meet minimum college admissions requirements, and three or four credits if the student intended to apply to a “highly selective” college or university (Table 2).

*“All students will need to take courses traditionally reserved for the college bound if they are going to have a chance at a good job that pays well and allows for career advancement.”*

Achieve <http://www.achieve.org/> (accessed 11/11/2006) *Closing the Expectations Gap*  
<http://www.achieve.org/files/50-statepub-06.pdf> p.17

### **State Standards & Assessments**

In addition to earning credits toward high school graduation, students in Washington must demonstrate mastery of the state standards (EALRs).<sup>6</sup> Starting in 2008-09, schools are encouraged to implement classroom-based performance assessments (CBPAs) in the arts and classroom-based assessments (CBAs) in the social studies.<sup>7</sup> The Civics CBA is required starting in 2008-09. The state has not developed a test like the WASL (Washington Assessment of Student Learning) for the arts or social studies.<sup>8</sup> Rather, through extensive professional development, teachers are learning to use classroom projects for assessment; based on a common set of expectations and scoring rubric as ways to ensure quality and fairness from classroom to classroom.

Some districts are combining the CBA with the senior culminating project, which will also be a graduation requirement with the class of 2008. Here is an example of a very creative culminating project incorporating social studies skills: “Graduation Requirements: 4. Culminating Projects.” Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. 26 Nov. 2006,  
<http://www.k12.wa.us/graduationrequirements/CulminatingProjects/examples.aspx><sup>9</sup>

*Before embarking on her culminating project, Alaina volunteered with an international organization as a camp counselor in Croatia. She worked to promote peace and conflict resolution with children in Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia, and on the island of Badija. Returning to Washington, she established her own conflict resolution curriculum and program by designing and organizing activities to help 6th graders from low-income neighborhoods understand their own and each other’s cultures, learn about other cultures, and create “pen pal” relationships with students in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>11</sup>*

World languages were not explicitly included in the four learning goals that launched Washington’s education reform effort in 1993,<sup>10</sup> so no state standards or state assessments have been developed for languages other than English. In December 2005, the Superintendent of Public Instruction did adopt Voluntary World Language Standards.<sup>11</sup> These are content standards (similar to the Essential Academic Learning Requirements in other subject areas in Washington State) and will be helpful for planning curriculum content, but don’t include benchmarks for assessing language proficiency.<sup>12</sup>

While the HECB has investigated<sup>13</sup> the possibility of making the WASL (Washington Assessment of Student Learning) an element of minimum college admissions requirements in Washington’s four-year public colleges and universities, no one has explored the possibility of using the classroom-based performance assessments for arts or classroom-based assessments for social studies as a college-admissions requirement. In general, there is currently no direct link between college admissions and the performance-based K-12 educational system resulting from the education reform efforts launched in 1993.

## Preparing for Success

*"To identify students who will be likely to succeed in college, the admissions officers have to look deeper than grades or test scores. They need to look at what kind of courses students were taking and whether they were challenging themselves."*

**Doug Scrima, Director of Admissions, The Evergreen State College**  
**(Interviewed 11/14/2006)**

While credits indicate students have satisfied specific course requirements for high school graduation and college admissions, and state assessments may demonstrate that students have mastered the state standards in K-12 education, do they answer the question: "What must students know and be able to do to succeed in entry-level university courses?" This question was addressed in a study undertaken by the American Association of Universities and The Pew Charitable Trusts, entitled, "Understanding University Success."<sup>14</sup> More than 400 faculty and staff members from 20 research universities contributed to the two-year study, producing "the most comprehensive and thoroughly grounded set of standards for college success yet developed."<sup>15</sup>

Besides content knowledge in specific disciplines, the study found that **even more important to college success** were the "habits of mind," such as:

- Critical thinking, analytic thinking and problem solving;
- An inquisitive nature and interest in taking advantage of what a research university has to offer;
- Willingness to accept critical feedback and to adjust based on such feedback;
- Openness to possible failures from time to time; and
- The ability and desire to cope with frustrating and ambiguous learning tasks.<sup>16</sup>

*"State high school standards and tests should have some relationship to university success, given that close to two-thirds of American high school graduates go on directly to some form of postsecondary education."*

**"Understanding University Success"<sup>17</sup>**

A good starting place for the HECB as it considers college readiness in the arts, social studies, and world languages would be to compare the college readiness standards identified in "Understanding University Success" (often referred to as "Knowledge and Skills for University Success" or **KSUS**) with the standards and practices in these subjects in Washington high schools today. Let us explore preparing for success in the arts, in social studies, and in world languages.

## ***In the Arts***

*“Children will have the human characteristics to succeed in all academic areas because of the skills they gain in the Arts, e.g., discipline, creative thinking, collaboration, poise, presentation skills and the ability to express themselves in a variety of ways.”*

**Lael Williams, Chair of the Arts Subject Advisory Committee, Commission on Student Learning (Interviewed 10/9/2006)**

## **KSUS Standards in the Arts**

The Knowledge and Skills for University Success Standards in the Arts identify knowledge and skills in the various arts disciplines: dance, music, theatre, and visual arts. KSUS standards also include a component of art history. Each discipline includes standards for Technical Knowledge and Skills, Cultural and Historical Knowledge and Skills, and Aesthetics and Art Criticism Knowledge and Skills.<sup>18</sup>

The KSUS standards note that the arts differ from other academic disciplines because students may not necessarily take art classes during the freshman year, so “readiness” really refers to readiness for any college-level work in the arts. A significant distinction between high school- and college-level work in the arts is that students must “know how to practice in a sustained, focused fashion without external supervision, how to manage their time, and how to discipline themselves to remain focused for extended periods of time while mastering the technical aspects of their area of endeavor.”<sup>19</sup>

## **K-12 Arts in Washington State**

Arts educators in Washington think that completing the Arts CBPAs would be an effective way for students to demonstrate their college readiness in the arts.<sup>20</sup> The CBPAs cover the range of disciplines identified in the arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts), and the performance assessments offer students the opportunity to develop and demonstrate other critical characteristics needed for college success.

The CBPAs can contribute to a student’s arts portfolio. An arts major in college needs a portfolio, many arts credits, and recommendations. For the non-arts major, creating a portfolio is still a powerful way to demonstrate creativity, discipline, and perseverance. Advanced Placement (AP) classes for arts (Dance, Theater, Art, and Music Theory) require students to create an AP Portfolio, as well.

*“You must view the Arts Classroom-Based Performance Assessments to see the scope and magnitude of our work on behalf of the arts and how students create, perform, and respond to demonstrate what they know and are able to do. This work is unique in the world, and historic! The CBPAs are making more arts education happen wherever they are given.”*

**AnnRené Joseph, Supervisor for the Arts, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (Interviewed 10/9/2006)**

## ***In Social Studies***

### **KSUS Standards in Social Sciences**

The Knowledge and Skills for University Success Standards in the Social Sciences<sup>21</sup> consist of eight main components (representative topics given in parentheses):

- I. General Knowledge & Skills (history, economics, geography, political science, sociology)
- II. History (U.S. and world history, and historical perspective and analysis)
- III. Economics (economics basics, conflict, and how to use economic analysis tools)
- IV. Geography (geographic locations, human populations, environmental, and human change)
- V. Political Science (civics, types of governments, and U.S. political system)
- VI. Sociology (social problems, social structure, class, human behaviors, social groups, mediation, cooperation, and conflict resolution)
- VII. Inquiry, Research & Analysis (scientific method, reading and interpreting data, use of information, analyzing problems)
- VIII. Communication (presenting a coherent thesis, making an argument, organizing ideas, writing research papers, understanding plagiarism, and knowing English grammar)

The KSUS standards indicate successful students in the social sciences need a strong foundation in writing, grammar, and communication, as well as mathematical and statistical knowledge for interpreting economic and sociological data and reports. They also need to understand the scientific method and how to differentiate theory from opinion.<sup>22</sup>

*“Teaching and encouraging the development of civic skills and attitudes among young people have long been recognized as important goals of education. The primary impetus, in fact, for originally establishing public schools was the recognition of literacy and citizenship education as critical to the health of a democratic society.”*

***“The Civic Mission of Schools”***<sup>23</sup>

### **K-12 Social Studies in Washington State**

Washington’s Social Studies standards (EALRs<sup>24</sup>) cover the range of disciplines identified in the KSUS Standards: civics, economics, geography, history, and social studies skills (but no explicit component of sociology). The recommendations from the KSUS report would suggest that Washington’s current efforts to bring all students to high standards in reading, writing, and math (through the WASL and alternative assessments) are important for preparing students to be successful in college in the social sciences. In particular, recent work to encourage teachers to use the Social Studies CBAs as tools for helping students meet the Writing Grade Level Expectations could bolster both writing and social studies skills. Perhaps social studies teachers could work more explicitly with math teachers to ensure that the mathematical and statistical knowledge students are gaining is being applied to relevant issues being studied in social studies.

College professors assume students come to college with the skills to do courses in the social sciences. However, in practice, Washington colleges find that students have not mastered basic research and writing skills, such as those identified by KSUS and in the Social Studies Skills EALRs: Inquiry & Information Skills, Interpersonal and Group Process Skills, and Critical Reasoning Skills. These skills are built into the Social Studies CBAs.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps encouraging (or requiring) college-bound high school students to complete the full range of Social Studies CBAs available to them would be one way to improve success in college in the social sciences.

### ***In World Languages***

*“I can’t think of a single career that wouldn’t be enhanced by knowledge of a language. Plus you get the fringe benefit of knowledge of a culture (values, nuances, etc.).”*

*Michael Launius, Executive Director, International Studies and Programs, Central Washington University (Interviewed 11/6/2006)*

### **KSUS Standards in Second Languages<sup>26</sup>**

The Knowledge and Skills for University Success Standards in Second Languages<sup>27</sup> consist of four main components (representative topics given in parentheses):

- I. Communication Skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing in the interpersonal mode, presentational mode, and interpretive mode)
- II. Culture (products, practices, and perspectives of the target culture, geophysical landmarks, historical facts, current events)
- III. Structure (basic knowledge of English syntax, semantics, and discourse structures and how to compare these with the target language)
- IV. Learning Behaviors (strategies in the process of learning, discipline, group work, speaking in front of others, risk-taking, use of reference materials, curiosity, asking questions, memorization, testing hypotheses, coping with ambiguity, use of meta-cognitive and meta-linguistic strategies)

The KSUS standards emphasize the importance of developing the ability to employ learning strategies. A student who can successfully “negotiate meaning” using a variety of strategies (outlined in IV) may be more successful at comprehending and communicating than a student without such strategies whose language knowledge has come mainly from studying the textbook. Other key characteristics for college success in a second (world) language are openness to learning new things and a high tolerance for linguistic and cultural ambiguity.

### **K-12 World Languages in Washington State**

World languages are taught in Washington state without the benefit of required standards (EALRs and Benchmarks) to ensure a level of consistency in learner outcomes from school-to-school and district-to-district. There are no common standards to ensure students coming from Washington high schools are “ready” to be successful studying a language in college. High school language teachers have lamented the fact that, while the focus in high school language classes has been to get students to communicate more, the college placement tests for world

languages tend to weight knowledge of grammar more heavily, and the high school graduates often get placed in remedial language courses.<sup>28</sup>

The KSUS Standards for Second Languages align quite well with the Standards for Foreign Language Learning,<sup>29</sup> which are the basis for the Voluntary World Language Standards<sup>30</sup> adopted in 2005 in Washington state. By further developing and widely disseminating KSUS standards in Washington state, it should be possible to ensure more students are prepared to be successful language learners in college and to develop the high levels of language proficiency needed by this country in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>31</sup>

*“An essential component of U.S. national security in the post-9/11 world is the ability to engage foreign governments and peoples, especially in critical regions, to encourage reform, promote understanding, convey respect for other cultures and provide an opportunity to learn more about our country and its citizens. To do this, we must be able to communicate in other languages, a challenge for which we are unprepared.”*

*National Security Language Initiative January 5, 2006<sup>32</sup>*

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/58733.htm> (accessed 11/24/2006)

## Critical Connections

Washington’s Voluntary World Language Standards (based on the Standards for Foreign Language Learning developed with U.S. Department of Education funding) encompass five areas: Communications, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities. While Communications entails the specific language skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking through various modes of communication, the other “C’s” integrate well with the arts and social studies through the study of:

- **Cultures** (learning about a culture involves learning its history, geography, economy, and social and political contexts, as well as arts, both fine arts and folk arts)
- **Connections** (learning the disciplines of social studies and the arts, as well as science and math as content, while learning the language)
- **Comparisons** (experiencing how cultures and languages differ or are similar)
- **Communities** (extending the learning outside the classroom, which may well involve the arts or civics, for example).

The arts naturally integrate with other disciplines. History, geography, and culture provide the context for understanding the evolution and relationship of the arts. Singers may need to develop skills in multiple languages, and classical musicians may choose to live and study in the birthplace of the great composers. The arts foster a sense of perspective and the ability to see patterns – attributes that contribute greatly to being a successful language learner or social scientist. All three subject areas train the brain in different ways, helping students develop flexibility and the ability to deal with uncertainty and change – key characteristics for success in college and life.

The U.S. tends to be an individualistic society. The creativity that defines American culture is widely admired throughout the world. As the curriculum emphasis is shifting toward basic skills in reading and writing, plus a new focus on math and science, we must watch for unintended consequences, such as neglecting those areas of the curriculum that foster creativity.

*“While traveling through Japan on a study tour organized by the UW’s East Asia Resource Center, I was struck by the number of times business leaders, educators, and government officials mentioned how creative Americans were. To them creativity was a national asset that needed to be cultivated in their elementary and secondary schools....just like in the United States.”*

***Joe Gotchy, Former Social Studies Teacher, Consultant to the Asia Society  
(Interviewed 11/20/2006)***

*“People who are creative and imaginative thrive in the knowledge economy. The old model of a hierarchical bureaucracy has largely been replaced with flexible business organizations whose employees have the authority to create solutions as challenges and opportunities arise.”*

***Washington Learns Report, November 2006***

As the HECB continues its work on defining college readiness, it makes sense to capitalize on the synergy of these three subject areas by examining them together.

## **Challenges for College Readiness**

The plan for the HECB to examine college readiness in the arts, social studies, and world languages could not be better timed. The stakes are high if our state is to achieve the primary mission of *Washington Learns*: “To be competitive in the global economy, we must educate more people to achieve at higher levels.”<sup>33</sup> There are a number of challenges to college readiness that need to be examined.

### ***Challenge 1: The gap between high school graduation and college admissions***

Who is making the choice about whether students are college bound or aiming for high school graduation? Do parents and families even realize there is a difference in the coursework and the number of credits a student must earn? Do high school teachers and college professors understand that there is a major gap? Is it time to make college-bound the default and make minimum high school graduation requirements the personal choice?

*“[T]here are provisions that allow parents to opt their children out of college-and work-ready courses of study, provided they sign a waiver acknowledging the risks of allowing their children to study a less rigorous curriculum. Although technically not a requirement for all students, this approach has a number of virtues. It sets and communicates a very clear expectation for what courses students should take to be prepared for life after high school, and it removes obstacles students frequently encounter in gaining access to advanced college-and work-prep courses. It simultaneously underscores the ultimate responsibility of students and their parents for taking advantage of the opportunity.”*

***Achieve, Inc., “Closing the Expectations Gap”<sup>34</sup>***

A bill with a similar proposal was introduced in the 2005 legislative session: HB 2706 calling for a more rigorous high school curriculum for high school graduation.<sup>35</sup> *Washington Learns* has made an explicit recommendation: “Align high school graduation requirements and college admissions standards so that students are prepared for work or college-level courses.”<sup>36</sup>

Pathways to College Network, an alliance of 38 national organizations and funders committed to advancing college access and success for underserved students, including those who are the first generation in their families to go to college, low-income students, underrepresented minorities, and students with disabilities has identified this as one of its top priorities for 2004-06: “Encourage schools to make a rigorous college-prep curriculum the standard course of study for all students, so they will have the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in both postsecondary education and the workplace.”<sup>37</sup>

### ***Challenge 2: World-class graduation requirements***

Even if the gap between high school graduation requirements and minimum college admissions requirements is addressed, will that make our educational system “world-class?” *Washington Learns* has embraced the concept of benchmarking our educational system against a group of “Global Challenge States (GCS)” — states that are the top eight performers on the New Economy Index.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps it is time to compare Washington’s high school graduation requirements in the areas of arts, social sciences, and world languages with those of the GCS.

### ***Challenge 3: Credits for seat-time or performance?***

The current high school graduation and college admissions systems depend heavily on credits earned for “seat time” in established courses. For world languages, in particular, seat time is not necessarily indicative of proficiency level. Work was done in the late 1990s through the board’s Admission Standards Action Committee to develop college admission standards using classroom-based evidence to satisfy college admissions requirements in English, math, and world languages. Perhaps it is time to revisit that work and consider how to make education more about creating results and less about “doing time.”

### ***Challenge 4: Continuity of learning***

Lack of continued exposure to math and world languages in the senior year too often leads to costly remediation. Encouraging students to accomplish more than the minimum is the best way to ensure they will maintain and further develop the skills and knowledge needed for success in college. In addition, we can explore creative ways to build in continuity of learning, for example, through culminating projects that incorporate world languages, social studies, arts, and other disciplines. Credits and seat time are not the only way.

### ***Challenge 5: Study abroad***

In the past, when opportunities for study abroad in college were few and far between, only the most qualified students got a chance to have those experiences. Now that opportunities are more plentiful, colleges are discovering that even students without much prior language or travel experience can achieve dramatic results when they have a chance to study abroad. It’s not just culture and language, but a different world view. It impacts stereotypes and encourages further language study.<sup>39</sup>

*“The Institute for the International Education of Students (IES), [www.iesabroad.com](http://www.iesabroad.com), surveyed alumni from all IES study abroad programs from 1950 to 1999. Regardless of where students studied and for how long, the data from the more than 3,400 respondents (a 23 percent response rate) shows that studying abroad is usually a defining moment in a young person’s life and continues to impact the participant’s life for years after the experience.” ... 86% said it “Reinforced commitment to foreign language study” and 98% said it “Helped me better understand my own cultural values and biases”*

**“The Benefits of Study Abroad”<sup>40</sup>**

Unfortunately, few of the college students taking advantage of study abroad come from our teacher preparation programs.<sup>41</sup> Yet, these are the very people who will enter our classrooms and be tasked with preparing our children for the global interconnectedness of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Will they be prepared to do that if they themselves have not experienced the benefits of study abroad?

**Challenge 6: Readiness for college, readiness for work**

Ultimately, even college students will enter the workforce, so readiness for college should also be a path toward readiness for work. However, a 2006 study by the Conference Board, Corporate Voices for Working Families, The Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and The Society for Human Resource Management revealed that even college graduates are not excelling in workplace skills, as they should be.

*“Young people need a range of skills, both basic academic skills as well as the ability to apply these skills and knowledge in the workplace. The survey results indicate that far too many young people are inadequately prepared to be successful in the workplace. At the high school level, well over one-half of new entrants are deficiently prepared in the most important skills—Oral and Written Communications, Professionalism/Work Ethic, and Critical Thinking/ Problem Solving. College graduates are better prepared, with lower levels of deficiency on the most important skills, but too few are excelling. Only about one-quarter of four-year college graduates are perceived to be excellent in many of the most important skills, and more than one-quarter of four-year college graduates are perceived to be deficiently prepared in Written Communications.”*

**“Are They Really Ready to Work? Employers’ Perspectives On The Basic Knowledge And Applied Skills Of New Entrants To The 21st Century U.S. Workforce”<sup>42</sup>**

The study also identified that, “Knowledge of Foreign Languages will ‘increase in importance’ in the next five years, more than any other basic skill, according to over 60 percent (63.3 percent) of the employer respondents.” Is Washington State ready to meet that challenge?

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<sup>1</sup> "Washington Learns Report." [Washington Learns](http://www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov/FinalReport.pdf). 21 Nov. 2006  
<http://www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov/FinalReport.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Setting the Standards for Student Success, Transition Mathematics Project,  
<http://www.transitionmathproject.org/highlights.asp>

<sup>3</sup> College Readiness Project, English and Science College Readiness Definitions Project Milestones, October 5, 2006, <http://www.learningconnections.org/clc/hecb.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in an Op Ed to the Seattle Times:  
"Getting our children ready for school, college and work." [Seattle Times](http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/opinion/2003432481_billgates16.html) 16 Nov. 2006  
[http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/opinion/2003432481\\_billgates16.html](http://seattletimes.nwsource.com/html/opinion/2003432481_billgates16.html)

<sup>5</sup> There are additional credit requirements in other subject areas: English, Math, Science, etc. See: "Graduation Requirements." [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#). 25 Nov. 2006  
<http://www.k12.wa.us/graduationrequirements/CreditReq.aspx>

<sup>6</sup> All of the state standards—Essential Academic Learning Requirements—are available on the website of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction:  
"Curriculum and Instruction." [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#). 12 Nov. 2006  
[http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/EALR\\_GLE.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/EALR_GLE.aspx).

<sup>7</sup> Reference to HB 2195 for the Arts:  
"Implementing Arts Education and Classroom-Based Performance Assessments (CBPAs) in Washington State OSPI Timeline of Events." [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#). 12 Nov. 2006  
<http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/WASL/Arts/pubdocs/ArtsEducationTimeline.doc>  
and Social Studies: "Social Studies Classroom-Based Assessments (CBAs) & Scorer Training Packets." [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#). 12 Nov. 2006  
<http://www.k12.wa.us/assessment/WASL/SocialStudies/default.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> The WASL is an "on-demand" test, i.e. it is given at a preset time and place with strict guidelines for how it is to be administered, and the tests are scored by a professional scoring company. The classroom-based assessments are administered at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

<sup>9</sup> "Graduation Requirements: 4. Culminating Projects." [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#). 26 Nov. 2006, <http://www.k12.wa.us/graduationrequirements/CulminatingProjects/examples.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> "Curriculum & Instruction: Overview." [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#). 25 Nov. 2006  
<http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/default.aspx>

<sup>11</sup> "Voluntary Standards for World Languages." [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#). 12 Nov. 2006  
<http://www.k12.wa.us/curriculuminstruct/socstudies/WorldLanguages/voluntarystandards.aspx>

<sup>12</sup> There are Language Proficiency Guidelines from ACTFL, but these have not been adopted in Washington State. See:  
"ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines." [American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages](#). 26 Nov. 2006  
<http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=4236>

<sup>13</sup> See the survey questions from this February, 2004 HECB document:  
"Minimum College Admission Standards Review." [Higher Education Coordinating Board](#). 24 Nov. 2006  
<http://www.hecb.wa.gov/research/issues/feb-17-04.AdmissionsStandards.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> "Understanding University Success describes foundational skills and content standards (elsewhere referred to as Knowledge and Skills for University Success) in English, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, second languages and the arts." Quoted from: "Understanding University Success." Center for Education Policy Research. 24 Nov. 2006 <http://www.s4s.org/cepr.uus.php>

<sup>15</sup> "Understanding University Success: Introduction." Center for Education Policy Research. 24 Nov. 2006 [http://www.s4s.org/KSUS\\_introduction.pdf](http://www.s4s.org/KSUS_introduction.pdf) p.8

<sup>16</sup> "Understanding University Success: Introduction." Center for Education Policy Research. 24 Nov. 2006 [http://www.s4s.org/KSUS\\_introduction.pdf](http://www.s4s.org/KSUS_introduction.pdf) p.8

<sup>17</sup> "Understanding University Success: Introduction." Center for Education Policy Research. 24 Nov. 2006 [http://www.s4s.org/KSUS\\_introduction.pdf](http://www.s4s.org/KSUS_introduction.pdf) p.10

<sup>18</sup> "Understanding University Success: The Arts." Center for Education Policy Research. 24 Nov. 2006 [http://www.s4s.org/KSUS\\_arts.pdf](http://www.s4s.org/KSUS_arts.pdf) p. 76

<sup>19</sup> "Understanding University Success: The Arts." Center for Education Policy Research. 24 Nov. 2006 [http://www.s4s.org/KSUS\\_arts.pdf](http://www.s4s.org/KSUS_arts.pdf) p. 73

<sup>20</sup> AnnRené Joseph, Supervisor for the Arts at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, interviewed 10/9/2006. See also:

"The Arts Classroom-Based Performance Assessments (CBPAs)." Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. 9 Oct. 2006 <http://www.k12.wa.us/Assessment/WASL/Arts/default.aspx>

<sup>21</sup> "Understanding University Success: Social Sciences." Center for Education Policy Research. 12 Nov. 2006 [http://www.s4s.org/KSUS\\_social\\_sci.pdf](http://www.s4s.org/KSUS_social_sci.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> "Understanding University Success: Social Sciences." Center for Education Policy Research. 12 Nov. 2006 [http://www.s4s.org/KSUS\\_social\\_sci.pdf](http://www.s4s.org/KSUS_social_sci.pdf) p. 57

<sup>23</sup> "The Civic Mission of Schools." Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools. 26 Nov. 2006 [http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/cmos/site/campaign/cms\\_report.html](http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/cmos/site/campaign/cms_report.html)

<sup>24</sup> "Social Studies Essential Academic Learning Requirements." Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. 6 Oct. 2006 <http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/SocStudies/default.aspx>.  
Civics <http://www.k12.wa.us/curriculumInstruct/SocStudies/civicsEALRs.aspx>  
Economics <http://www.k12.wa.us/curriculumInstruct/SocStudies/econEALRs.aspx>  
Geography <http://www.k12.wa.us/curriculumInstruct/SocStudies/geographyEALRs.aspx>  
History <http://www.k12.wa.us/curriculumInstruct/SocStudies/historyEALRs.aspx>  
Social Studies Skills <http://www.k12.wa.us/curriculumInstruct/SocStudies/socstudiesskillsEALRs.aspx>

<sup>25</sup> Caleb Perkins, Supervisor for Social Studies and International Education at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, interviewed 10/6/2006

<sup>26</sup> KSUS uses the term "Second Language" to refer to learning a language other than English. In most academic circles, other languages are called "foreign" languages or "world languages."

<sup>27</sup> "Understanding University Success: Second Languages." Center for Education Policy Research. 12 Nov. 2006 [http://www.s4s.org/KSUS\\_second\\_lang.pdf](http://www.s4s.org/KSUS_second_lang.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> Personal Communication from Dr. Paul Aoki, Director of the UW Language Learning Center.

<sup>29</sup> "Standards for Foreign Language Learning." American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. 26 Nov. 2006 <http://www.actfl.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3324>

<sup>30</sup> "Voluntary Standards for World Languages." Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. 12 Nov. 2006 <http://www.k12.wa.us/curriculuminstruct/socstudies/WorldLanguages/voluntarystandards.aspx>

<sup>31</sup> The importance of adopting state standards in world languages was a frequent comment in the 2004 World Languages Survey conducted by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. See:

<sup>32</sup> "National Security Language Initiative." U.S. Department of State. 24 Nov. 2006  
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/58733.htm>

<sup>33</sup> "Washington Learns Report." Washington Learns. 21 Nov. 2006  
<http://www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov/FinalReport.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> "Closing the Expectations Gap 2006." Achieve.org. 12 Nov. 2006. The Eight states include: Arkansas, Texas, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, New York, Oklahoma, South Dakota. Note that Achieve was looking at graduation requirements for English and mathematics, so this statement does not imply that these states have high graduation requirements in other areas  
<http://www.achieve.org/files/50-statepub-06.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> "HB 2706 Regarding a more rigorous high school curriculum for high school graduation." Washington State Legislature. 26 Nov. 2006 <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=2706>

<sup>36</sup> "Washington Learns Report." Washington Learns. 21 Nov. 2006  
<http://www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov/FinalReport.pdf>. p. 34.

<sup>37</sup> "About the Pathways to College Network." Pathways to College Network. 24 Nov. 2006  
<http://www.pathwaystocollege.net/aboutus/index.html>

<sup>38</sup> "Washington Learns Report." Washington Learns. 21 Nov. 2006  
<http://www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov/FinalReport.pdf>. p. 16-17.

<sup>39</sup> David Fenner, Assistant Vice Provost for International Education; Director, International Programs and Exchanges; at the University of Washington, interviewed 10/23/2006.

<sup>40</sup> "The Benefits of Study Abroad." Transitions Abroad.com 24 Nov. 2006  
[http://www.transitionsabroad.com/publications/magazine/0403/benefits\\_study\\_abroad.shtml](http://www.transitionsabroad.com/publications/magazine/0403/benefits_study_abroad.shtml)

<sup>41</sup> Michael Launius, Director of International Studies, Central Washington University, interviewed 11/6/2006.

<sup>42</sup> "Are They Really Ready to Work? Employers' Perspectives On The Basic Knowledge And Applied Skills Of New Entrants To The 21st Century U.S. Workforce." Infoedge. 24 Nov. 2006  
<http://www.infoedge.com/samples/CB-BED6free.pdf>