



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

UPDATE: Graduation Pathways, Class of 2024

2024

Authorizing Legislation: [RCW 28A.230.720](#)

Deb Came, Ph.D.

**Assistant Superintendent, Data Strategy and
Student Information**

Rebecca Wallace

**Assistant Superintendent, Secondary Education and
Pathway Preparation**

Prepared by:

- **Clarisse Leong**, Director of Operations, Secondary Education and Pathway Preparation
clarisse.leong@k12.wa.us | 564-999-0148

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the passage of House Bill 1599 in 2019, graduation pathways were established as one of the requirements for high school graduation. Students can meet the requirements of graduation pathways in multiple ways, including test-based, course-based, and performance-based options. The pathway must be aligned with a student's post-secondary goals as described in their High School and Beyond Plan.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is required by [RCW 28A.230.720](#) to collect and report on graduation pathways data annually. This report includes which pathways students accessed, a data summary, and disaggregated pathway completion data.

BACKGROUND

In 2019, the Legislature established different graduation pathway options as part of statewide high school graduation requirements through House Bill 1599. Graduation pathways focus on providing evidence that a student is ready for their next step after high school, whether that be employment, post-secondary education or training, or a military career. The graduation pathway(s) a student completes must be aligned with their postsecondary goal as described in their High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP).

The Class of 2020 was the first graduating class required to meet one or more graduation pathways. The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) is required to report annually:

- Which pathways students are utilizing at each school district and State-Tribal Education Compact (STEC) school.
- Student participation in each pathway disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and income status (as defined by their eligibility for free or reduced-price meals).

To meet all statewide graduation requirements, students must complete at least one graduation pathway aligned with their postsecondary goals, earn 24 credits, and complete their HSBP.

Graduation Pathways

Graduation pathways start with the end in mind and are aligned with the entry requirements of employers, postsecondary education or training institutions, or the military. Depending on how a student wants to work toward their postsecondary goals, any one of these options could likely support their goal.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) graduation pathways are a sequence of rigorous, related CTE courses that include dual credit options, industry-recognized credentials, or a Core Plus program. Students completing a CTE pathway may plan to enter an apprenticeship or employment directly after high school or enroll in a training program, college, or university.

English language arts (ELA) and math pathway options include courses and/or exams. Students must complete an ELA component and a math component. Options include dual credit courses or exams (Running Start, College in the High School, CTE Dual Credit, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Cambridge International), college transition courses, college entrance exams (SAT or ACT), the Performance-based pathway, and the statewide summative high school assessment (Smarter Balanced or WA-AIM). Students completing these pathways are likely planning for post-secondary education as their first step after high school.

The **military pathway** uses the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), an assessment required for entry into any of the military branches. Students who complete this pathway are prepared to pursue their career goals across occupational fields through military service.

Pathway Data Collection

Reporting on graduation pathways requires compiling data from multiple data sources. The State Board of Education's (SBE) [annual compliance report](#) captures self-reported information about pathway availability from each school district/STEC. This is the most complete source for understanding pathway availability because it collects information on district/STEC-sponsored testing events and course offerings. To report on the count of students using each graduation pathway for graduation, OSPI compiles data across multiple sources, including:

- Course-based pathways (including college transition courses, dual credit, and CTE course sequences), identified using OSPI's student-level data collection.
- SAT exam and AP test score pathways, identified using files obtained from the College Board, the proprietary exam company offering those assessments.
- ACT, IB, and Cambridge International exam-based pathways identified using files from ACT, IB, and Cambridge, respectively.
- Performance-based pathway completion provided by school districts/STEC and submitted to OSPI.
- ASVAB Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT) score provided by school districts/STEC and submitted to OSPI.

From these sources, OSPI can tell which graduation pathways a student completed. However, because of the flexible nature of these pathway options, many students may complete more than one pathway option, and OSPI cannot tell which one was identified in the student's High School and Beyond Plan and used for graduation.

Use of Waivers for the Class of 2024

In the spring of 2020, the SBE adopted rules for an emergency waiver program. SBE subsequently adopted permanent rules in July 2021. The purpose was to allow school districts/STECs to waive certain graduation requirements (credits and/or pathway) on an individual student basis. The program was to prevent students from being unduly impacted by unforeseen disruptions to their education resulting from an emergency or disaster. [WAC 180-111-050](#) specifically addressed the waiver program to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and applied to students through the 2023–24 school year.

Over one percent (1.2%) of the graduates in the Class of 2024 used a waiver for the graduation pathway requirement.

GRADUATION PATHWAYS DATA SUMMARY

Pathway Availability

Graduation pathways are critical information for district/STEC planning and statewide policy. Because pathways are flexible, students may be counted as completing more than one pathway at a single district/STEC.

Number of Students Completing Each Graduation Pathway

The determination of which pathways are indicated in a student's HSBPs happens at the local level. OSPI's data reporting encompasses all completed graduation pathways rather than what was indicated for each student's plan.

The graduates in the Class of 2024 completed the graduation pathways at the following rates. Some students completed more than one pathway, and thus there is some duplication across categories.

63.6%

ELA and Math
Courses/Exams

61.8%

CTE Graduation
Pathway

7.3%

Military Pathway
(ASVAB)

Pathway Completion, Disaggregated

Users can explore the [graduation pathways](#) to see how student groups completed the different graduation pathways or [completion by pathway](#). The implementation of graduation pathways has reinforced that the student groups who are the furthest from educational justice are completing the requirement at lower rates than their peers.

Table 1: All Students in the Class of 2024 cohort, by student group*

	Completed ELA/Math Pathway	Completed ASVAB Pathway	Completed CTE Pathway	No Pathway	Number of Students in Class of 2024
All Students	54.7%	6.6%	54.1%	19.8%	87,585
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	33.9%	7.9%	42.9%	35.8%	1,125
Asian	80.7%	2.8%	55.8%	8.7%	7,291
Black/African American	46.7%	3.9%	47.4%	26.8%	4,310
Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	40.3%	5.4%	56.3%	26.2%	22,816
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	36.2%	6.1%	50.3%	33.8%	1,184
Two or More Races	59.1%	7.9%	54.1%	17.1%	43,834
White	58.1%	7.0%	52.1%	18.5%	7,021
Students with Disabilities	24.3%	3.7%	53.7%	32.5%	11,363
Low-Income	40.9%	6.5%	52.9%	27.4%	47,303
English Language Learners	26.5%	2.3%	48.2%	38.4%	9,740
Female	56.4%	5.8%	52.0%	19.3%	42,089
Male	53.2%	7.2%	56.4%	20.1%	44,860
Gender X	46.1%	6.0%	37.6%	34.3%	636

Source: Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) and the Graduation Pathways Database

*Includes all students in the Class of 2024, including those who graduated, are continuing their education, or have left school.

Table 2: Graduates in the Class of 2024 cohort, by student group**

	Completed ELA/Math Pathway	Completed ASVAB Pathway	Completed CTE Pathway	No Pathway	Number of Graduates in Class of 2024
All Students	63.6%	7.3%	61.8%	8.9%	72,483
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	45.4%	9.7%	53.3%	19.1%	797
Asian	85.3%	2.9%	59.0%	4.3%	6,699
Black/African American	56.6%	4.3%	56.4%	13.2%	3,380
Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	49.7%	6.3%	67.7%	11.7%	17,728
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	46.1%	7.6%	62.3%	18.1%	889
Two or More Races	67.2%	8.6%	60.6%	7.7%	3,7091
White	66.8%	7.6%	58.7%	8.5%	5,899
Students with Disabilities	27.3%	4.7%	69.5%	17.0%	7,437
Low-Income	50.9%	7.6%	64.2%	12.6%	35,965
English Language Learners	35.5%	3.0%	63.5%	19.4%	6,699
Female	64.5%	6.4%	58.4%	9.6%	35,768
Male	62.8%	8.1%	65.3%	8.2%	36,278
Gender X	62.2%	6.6%	49.7%	14.4%	437

Source: Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS) and the Graduation Pathways Database

**Includes all students in the Class of 2024 who graduated.

NEXT STEPS

In 2024, the newest performance-based pathway allowed eligible school districts/STECs to offer the pathway if a local policy was adopted. Less than one percent (0.1%) of the 2024 cohort were reported to have met their pathway requirement through this option.

In the future, data collected in the HSBP platform will reflect students' graduation pathways and how it aligns with their post-secondary goals.

OSPI will continue to monitor graduation pathway completion and, in collaboration with the SBE, consider future policy recommendations to accelerate the growth of meaningful and useful graduation pathways, as well as focus on eliminating gaps in access for historically underserved student groups.

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Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Chris Reykdal | State Superintendent
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction
Old Capitol Building | P.O. Box 47200
Olympia, WA 98504-7200