



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

*Class of 2027 Graduation
Toolkit: Frequently Asked
Questions and Answers*

CLASS OF 2027 GRADUATION TOOLKIT: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

2027

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BACKGROUND

This Graduation Toolkit Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) is a companion resource that was developed in partnership with the Washington State Board of Education (SBE) to provide more detailed guidance on the implementation of graduation requirements detailed in the [Graduation Toolkit](#) for each graduating class.

This FAQ provides additional information supporting unique student populations' progress toward graduation, especially students with disabilities and multilingual/English learners. However, the information and resources shared are also beneficial practices for all students, including those who are highly mobile; students experiencing home, financial, or other insecurity; and students in foster care. Ultimately, this FAQ is intended to support staff by ensuring all learners make meaningful progress toward graduation requirements and preparing for their postsecondary goals.

At the beginning of each section within this FAQ, the most commonly used statewide resources, guidance, and other information will be shared to increase access to available support. The questions in each section are designed to provide practical and detailed guidance that complement the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) annually updated Graduation Toolkit.

1. DEVELOP A HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND PLAN (HSBP)

1A. What guidance and resources are available on the topics of HSBP?

Guidance/Bulletins

- [Guidelines for Aligning HSBPs and Individualized Education Program \(IEP\) Transition Plans Document Suite.](#)
 - Case Study of a 10th grader using a Career & Technical Education (CTE) Course Sequence Graduation Pathway: [Document](#) | [Webinar Recording](#) | [Slides](#).
 - Case Study of an Adult Student using the Washington Access to Instruction and Measurement (WA-AIM) Graduation Pathway: [Document](#) | [Webinar Recording](#) | [Slides](#).

Webinars/Professional Development

- HSBP 101: Increasing Engagement with High School and Beyond Planning [Webinar Recording](#) | [Slides](#).
- HSBP 201: Aligning HSBP and IEP Transition Plans [Webinar Recording](#) | [Slides](#).
- Washington Student Achievement Council Webinar: Supporting Students' Transition: Aligning HSBP's and IEP Transition Plans [Webinar Recording](#).

Webpages

- [OSPI High School and Beyond Plan](#)
- [SBE High School and Beyond Plan](#)
- [OSPI \(Special Education\) Secondary Transition](#)

Other Resources

- The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's (OSPI) [HSBP YouTube Playlist](#) includes trainings co-delivered by OSPI and SchoolLinks staff and other video-based resources.
- [Writing Effective Transition Plans, a self-paced training by the Center for Change in Transition Services \(CCTS\)](#), includes a wealth of information on this topic. Module 9 of this course is specific to HSBP alignment and walks through the HSBP/IEP Transition Plan alignment of Kaleb ([The case study of an adult student using the WA-AIM graduation pathway who has significant disabilities](#)).
- [HSBP downloadable and writable template for class of 2024 and beyond](#) (February 2024).

- [Class of 2027 Graduation Toolkit](#), includes detailed information on HSBP development and required components.
- [My Next Move](#), is a search engine that helps students find and explore careers based on keywords (e.g., 'customer service' or 'helping others') that describe their dream job.
- [Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\) 180-51-220](#) for HSBPs.

1B. Does the HSBP process need to be the same for all students? Is there an alternative HSBP for students with an IEP?

Per [WAC 180-51-220](#) (4), "For a student with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), the student's IEP and HSBPs must align. Students with an IEP transition plan, which begins during the school year in which they turn 16, may use their transition plan to support their HSBP, but not as a replacement. The process for developing and updating the student's HSBP must be similar to and conducted with similar school personnel as for all other students."

It would be against the intention of [WAC 180-51-220](#) and the best interest of students, and inconsistent with the legislative intent articulated in [Second Substitute Senate Bill \(2SSB\) 5969](#), to have a separate HSBP process for students who receive special education services. This process should not be exclusively led by special education staff who likely do not have the same expertise as the staff supporting high school and beyond planning for all students.

The HSBP is a general education graduation requirement for all students that can be customized to support students' needs and goals. There is no alternative to the HSBP nor any way to waive or decrease the required core components for the HSBP. By fall 2026, districts must provide all students seeking a diploma from a public school district or charter, tribal or direct funded technical high school with access to Washington's universal online platform, SchoolLinks. They should also customize and differentiate the process to be inclusive of all students in meeting their needs and supporting them in their postsecondary goal setting and planning.

Unlike the IEP Transition Plan, which is adult-generated, the HSBP is a student-driven, student-oriented process with self-exploration activities that support students in planning and preparing for their post-secondary goals. The student can participate in this process in various ways, even if they cannot use all features of the SchoolLinks online platform or process the tasks independently. For example, can the student answer questions about their interests and goals by selecting pictures to engage in the process? The T-folio developed by the CCTS has a variety of lessons that could be used and differentiated with pictures, videos, and other supports.

What a HSBP looks like for two students based on their strengths, preferences, interests, post-secondary goals, and preparation needs will vary. You will notice this student customization in the two HSBP and IEP Transition Plan Case Studies found in Appendix B of [Guidelines for Aligning High School and Beyond Plans and IEP Transition Plans](#). See question 1A in "Develop a IEO" for case study resources.

1C. What is the district obligation for providing access to and supporting completion of the HSBP when contracting for the operation of a program?

The Local Education Agency (LEA) retains full responsibility for providing programs of basic education, which includes supporting students to meet graduation requirements and providing all student support needs. They also retain legal responsibility for compliance with all state and federal laws for all of their programs, including programs provided under contractual agreement, via a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or as part of a consortium. Most services are delivered at the school level.

The district is also responsible for their contractor and their services and should have systems in place to provide necessary oversight to ensure compliance with state and district expectations. Students are assigned to a primary school as a way to indicate where these supports are taking place. The school marked as "Is Primary = Yes" in CEDARS for each student is responsible for monitoring student support services in alignment with district policies and procedures.

1D. Do the CTE course equivalencies need to be documented in the HSBP?

Per [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 28A.230.097](#), "The high school or school district shall also issue and record course completion certificates demonstrating that the career and technical courses were completed as needed for industry certification, college credit, or pre-apprenticeship, as applicable. The certificate shall be part of the student's HSBP." Per [Revised Code of Washington \(RCW\) 28A.230.097](#), "The high school or school district shall also issue and record course completion certificates demonstrating that the career and technical courses were completed as needed for industry certification, college credit, or pre-apprenticeship, as applicable. The certificate shall be part of the student's HSBP."

Districts should use the platform or document feature that is the most accessible to students to document this certificate information. Students should upload their certificates to their portfolio in SchoolLinks. This ensures continued access upon exiting school since they receive lifetime access to their HSBP in SchoolLinks. Or they may save a file to a USB, including a copy of their certificate in a physical folder, etc. Two optional OSPI created CTE course equivalency certificate templates are available:

- A [Local Course Equivalency Certificate Template](#) is to be used for CTE course equivalencies that are approved at the local level.
- A [state Course Equivalency Certificate Template](#) is to be used for CTE course equivalencies that are aligned to a state-approved framework.

To learn more, see the Statewide Approved Course Equivalencies list posted on the [statewide Course Equivalencies webpage](#).

1E. Does the SchoolLinks HSBP platform include differentiated lesson plans or instructional materials that provide pictures to support students who may need substantial adaptation to engage in the HSBP process?

In preparation for the Fall 2026 Launch of the new HSBP platform, OSPI is working with the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession, statewide partners, and a variety of current HSBP implementers to develop statewide instructional materials to support staff and student use of the platform and completion of required HSBP activities. The materials provided include a customizable teacher lesson plan that can be adapted to meet specific instructional needs. The ability to differentiate and provide options for completing the required components should be a priority for districts, and OSPI will continue to work with SchoolLinks to provide more SchoolLinks-aligned instructional materials and resources to support this critical work as the transition moves forward.

For districts seeking additional resources to support differentiation with the HSBP development process, the T-Folio is a free transition portfolio tool developed by CCTS that could supplement a district's HSBP development process for students who may need additional support to engage and make meaningful processes in the standard online platform and/or tool. This resource has many tools for students who may require support accessing the required components differently.

Additionally, collaboration may be needed with special education staff and/or Educational Staff Associates who are well-versed in supporting educators with differentiating content to support student engagement and progress in activities. Individualization is required when determining what prompts a student may need to succeed in each task. Providing a set of resources with embedded prompts (for example, words and pictures) can be a great Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and differentiation strategy for all students to build from.

The [HSBP and Aligned IEP for an Adult Student using the WA-AIM state Assessment as a Graduation Pathway case study](#) has some examples of some inventories and activities that are more picture-based. These examples demonstrate how required HSBP components can be completed through alternative formats while maintaining fidelity to graduation requirements. A special educator could support with adapting this tool to fit the student's abilities, especially when building their résumé, as needed. And some students will likely need direct staff support to transfer adapted materials into the HSBP, possibly utilizing the portfolio section to upload aligned activities done outside of SchoolLinks, or to complete existing SchoolLinks activities in alignment with the students' responses to other inventories and activities.

Figure 1: Strengths of self-assessment activity

10/2019

Strengths Assessment 1

Directions: Look at the list of strengths below. Circle all the strengths you think apply to you!

List of Strengths:

Friendly	Honest	Creative
Positive attitude	Likes working	Good hygiene
Flexible	Following directions	Polite
Patient	On time	Confident
Good listener	Quick learner	Organized

Source: HSBP and Aligned IEP for an Adult Student using the WA-AIM state Assessment as a Graduation Pathway, November 2020.

The activity on page 17 of this case study includes an example of how special educators and English Language Advocates can support the differentiation of interest inventories and other HSBP activities. Also, depending on a student's support needs, activities could include individual tactile pictures that are cut out, a worksheet with pictures, or interactive questions as part of a technology device, like an iPad.

Figure 2: Example with symbolic or simple pictures

Where do you want to live?

with my parents with my sister with my brother with my friends apartment group home my home

What do you want to do?

take classes go on a trip get married have a family have a job get paid for working hang out with friends spend time with family

go to the movies go for walks be in a band dance sports be outside see a game go camping

go shopping go swimming

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Source: HSBP and Aligned IEP for an Adult Student using the WA-AIM state Assessment as a Graduation Pathway, November 2020.

Figure 3: Example with real photos

Setting Goals Worksheet

Name: Kaleb George 12-7-19

1. My specific goal for employment is:

 Get a paid job in an office	 Get a paid job in a grocery store	 Get another type of paid job	 Practice typing my resume	 Practice job skills before I apply for a job
--	--	---	---	---

2. My specific goal for education is:

 Go to a college to take math and reading classes	 Take a baking class	 Take singing classes	 Take a swimming class	 Take another type of class
---	--	---	---	---

3. I would like to meet my goals in:

1 week	1 month	1 year	Other
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Source: HSBP and Aligned IEP for an Adult Student using the WA-AIM state Assessment as a Graduation Pathway, November 2020.

1F. How can we support all students to access a career interest inventory?

The age-appropriate transition assessments, part of a student's IEP Transition Plan for all students aged 16 and older, are an IEP team decision based on the student's needs and goals. The intention is that the HSBP and IEP Transition plans are aligned, coordinated, and able to build off each other, consistent with WAC 180-51-220 and the intent of 2SSB 5969, but what is required for each plan may not be the same.

The HSBP begins in 7th grade with the completion of the "Find Your Path" career and interest inventory which happens when the student first logs in and completes the Onboarding activity in SchoolLinks. Within the SchoolLinks online HSBP platform, the three career interest inventories students will take help assess a student's mindset, personality, interests, skills, etc. Similarly, the IEP transition assessment must address the student's strengths, preferences, interests, and needs. The acronym "SPIN" can serve as a helpful prompt for IEP teams, Multilingual (ML) or English Language Development (ELD) teachers, and other staff conducting this work.

Completing a career interest inventory in 7th grade as part of the HSBP process is intended to give students career interest and education information that can inform their course selection for 8th grade. Other HSBP required inventories taken in 8th and 10th grade provide students with an opportunity to further explore how their interests and skills align with different careers, and to

change their intended career goal and corresponding course choices as needed.

Some students may benefit from a shortened or simplified career survey, such as the “My Next Move” search engine referenced at the beginning of this section, which can support students’ career exploration based on key search words of what is important to them. Regardless of what career and interest inventory is used for a student, it must be designed to help them make targeted career choices based on their skills and interests. Staff should support the ‘translation’ of any non-SchoolLinks inventory into the appropriate activity within the platform to maximize its customization to that student’s responses.

1G. How are the requirements for the age-appropriate transition assessment for the IEP Transition Plan alike and different from the requirements for the career and interest inventory components of the HSBP?

The “Find Your Path,” “Would You Rather,” and “Top Skills” career interest inventories can be referenced and used in the IEP Transition Plan age-appropriate transition assessment, which begins no later than age 16. However, it is possible that the student’s interests and goals have changed since doing those activities, and completion of the transition assessment may help further clarify future course decisions in preparation for the student’s post-secondary goals.

Sources of career and interest inventories and transition assessment information may be from formal measures (such as interest or aptitude tests) or informal measures (such as student or family interviews, observations of the student, etc.). This information may also be found in other places, such as the student’s current evaluation report, other sections of the IEP (such as the present levels), or the student’s profile in their HSBP.

- More information about age-appropriate transition assessments is found on the [Special Education Transition Services webpage](#)
- You see an example of an age-appropriate transition assessment illuminated on page 24 of [Case Study of an Adult Student using the WA-AIM Graduation Pathway](#)

2. GRADUATION PATHWAYS

2A. What guidance and resources are available on the topics of graduation pathways for all students?

Guidance/Bulletins

- The [Class of 2027 Graduation Toolkit](#) includes detailed information on each state-approved Graduation Pathway option, including requirements specific to each graduating class.

Webinars/Professional Development

- Specifically for Open Doors Youth Reengagement programs, OSPI facilitated a [Graduation 101: Requirements, Waivers and Pathways webinar](#) that includes information on Graduation Pathways in an alternative setting.
- [GATE Webinar: Designing Accessible Graduation Pathways for All Students](#) provides details about a variety of ways to satisfy graduation requirements and earn a diploma. Content includes course equivalencies, credit flexibility for CTE courses and comparable content course substitutions.
- The [OSPI-WSAC Webinar: Performance-based Pathway Option, Empowering Student Ownership & Creativity](#) webinar takes a deeper look at the Performance-based Pathway option with examples of both embedded and extracurricular projects that are aligned with the pathway options requirements.

Webpages

- OSPI's [Graduation Pathways webpage](#) includes basic information about the options and contact information for staff who can provide technical assistance related to the graduation pathways database, in which staff must reflect students' completion of their Graduation Pathway.
- The SBE's [Graduation Pathways webpage](#) describes each pathway. It provides information on scores needed to meet standards on test-based pathways, including the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) score, which is updated by the Board by September 1 annually.

Other Resources

- [The Class of 2027 Graduation Pathways Quick Reference](#) includes basic requirements for all Graduation Pathways
- [WAC 180-51-230](#) Graduation Pathway Options

Performance-based pathway option

- Additional information about this new pathway option, including scoring rubrics and other resources to support staff facilitation, is posted on the SBE [Performance-based Pathway webpage](#).

2B. How are new graduation pathway options added?

The addition of new graduation pathways falls under the purview of the Washington state Legislature. The SBE was authorized to study graduation pathways and make recommendations to the Legislature for modification of current pathways or additional pathways if needed. For questions on the process used to inform the addition of new pathways, contact sbe@k12.wa.us. Washington's current graduation requirements, including graduation pathway options, are under review through the SBE's FutureReady initiative; more information is available on the [FutureReady](#)

[website.](#)

2C. What are the necessary steps to build and support a CTE Sequence Graduation Pathway?

A district should develop CTE Sequence Graduation Pathways from the CTE courses and Programs of Study offered in the district that reflect the career and educational goals of the student body and the labor market demand. Resources for developing CTE Programs of Study can be found in the [CTE Programs of Study](#) document. Program of Study examples and templates are available on the [CTE Program of Study and Career Clusters webpage](#).

A CTE Sequence Graduation Pathway can include multiple related occupations and post-secondary options. Students using this graduation pathway to meet graduation requirements should have HSBP goals that directly align with the careers available within the Career Pathway.

Students with disabilities pursuing a CTE Sequence Graduation Pathway to meet graduation requirements should also have alignment between their transition goals and HSBP goals that reflect the Career Pathway of their CTE Sequence Graduation Pathway. Information regarding Career Pathways that align with specific Career Clusters is available on the [Career Clusters and Pathways webpage](#). Currently, OSPI is doing longer-term planning work to align Washington CTE courses with the modernized National Career Clusters Framework. This includes reviewing some state-specific CIP codes that do not have direct national matches and exploring possible alignment options. No action is required from districts, and there are no changes to CTE graduation pathway requirements right now.

Steps to developing a CTE course sequence into a CTE Sequence Graduation Pathway should include the following:

- Identify 2.0 credits of CTE courses within a particular career program area leading to a specific career or cross-cutting career clusters with application approval by OSPI for local offer.
- Within the CTE course sequence, it is imperative that one course incorporates college credit (through CTE Dual Credit articulation, Advanced Placement, or taking an approved vocational course in a Workforce or Professional/Technical program through Running Start) and/or provides a pathway to attain an Industry Recognized Credential, either in the high school or Skill Center course, or through further postsecondary education or training.
- The sequence should be technically intensive and rigorous, leading to workforce entry, registered apprenticeship, or related postsecondary education. Core Plus programs that result in a Core Plus Credential also meet these requirements.
 - If the CTE courses in the sequence are within the same CTE Program Area (Agriculture, Business & Marketing, Family & Consumer Sciences, Health Sciences, Skilled & Technical Sciences, or STEM), the CTE Sequence Graduation Pathway can be approved in accordance with the district's policy for approval.
 - If the CTE courses in the sequence are in two different CTE Program Areas, the

district will first need to achieve local approval of the pathway (local school board or designee or local CTE advisory committee) and then apply to OSPI for approval of the CTE Sequence Graduation Pathway through the Graduation Alternatives application in the Education Data System.

- Career Choices (limited to 1.0 credit), Applied Math, or Careers in Education are courses that may align with any of the CTE Programs. When these courses are used as the additional CTE Program Area within the CTE course sequence, additional approval from OSPI is not required.

The CTE Sequence Graduation Pathway can also be met by taking courses through a community or technical college. Posted on OSPI's CTE webpage for [Classification of Instructional Programs \(CIP\) Codes](#) is a link to a Workforce CIP Codes document that includes a reference list of State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) approved college Workforce CIP codes and corresponding courses that can be taken through Running Start or an Open Doors program. Schools must use this approved CIP code list to review and approve student access to the college-based vocational courses that can meet the CTE Sequence Graduation Pathway requirements. School counselors should work with their CTE Director and the college's Running Start Coordinator to confirm students have signed up for a course on this list if they are choosing to use it as a CTE Sequence Graduation Pathway.

2D. What is the district obligation for graduation pathways when contracting for the operation of a school or program?

The district is ultimately responsible for what and how graduation pathways are accessible in contracted programs, in addition to the required reporting of student demographics by graduation pathway. If a district chooses to contract for instruction, they should have routine communication with any contractors about what options are accessible, to whom, and how to fill any identified gaps.

The LEA retains full responsibility for providing programs of basic education, which includes supporting students to meet graduation requirements and providing all student support needs. They also retain legal responsibility for compliance with all state and federal laws for all of their programs, including programs provided under contractual agreement, via a memorandum of understanding (MOU) or as part of a consortium.

This extends to offering graduation pathways to students served in schools/programs where the district contracts for instruction and other services. The district is ultimately responsible for what and how graduation pathways are accessible in contracted programs, in addition to the required reporting of student demographics by graduation pathway. If a district chooses to contract for instruction, they should have routine communication with any contractors about what options are accessible, to whom, and how to fill any identified gaps.

The district is also responsible for their contractor and their services and should have systems in place to provide necessary oversight to ensure compliance with state and district expectations.

Students are assigned to a primary school as a way to indicate where these supports are taking place. The school marked as "IsPrimary = Yes" in CEDARS for each student is responsible for monitoring student support services in alignment with district policies and procedures.

2E. What graduation pathways are available for students with significant cognitive disabilities?

Students with IEPs can access any options available to all students to meet the graduation pathway requirement and demonstrate preparation for their post-secondary goals. The WA-AIM is a graduation pathway option for some students with significant cognitive challenges, as determined by the IEP team.

Alternative programs (such as transition services or work-based learning programs) cannot be used to satisfy or replace the graduation pathway requirement, even if the IEP team determines these programs are needed for a student's plan. If determined as needed, these programs would be in addition to the graduation pathway requirement and would not replace it.

2F. Does participation in the WA-AIM assessment through the engagement rubric fulfill the graduation pathway requirement?

Yes, obtaining a [cut score](#) on the [WA-AIM](#) is a graduation pathway option for students if the WA-AIM is determined to be the appropriate assessment and graduation pathway option by an IEP team (a student's graduation pathway should align with their post-secondary goals as identified in their IEP transition plan and HSBP). The WA-AIM is designed for approximately 1% of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities and must not be used as the default pathway for students with disabilities who are not able to achieve the cut score specified by the SBE for the Smarter Balanced Assessment in math and/or English language arts (ELA).

IMPORTANT NOTE: The [Guidelines for Statewide Accountability Assessments](#) document, especially the flow chart on page 14 of that document, is a helpful resource to support IEP teams in determining if the WA-AIM is the appropriate assessment option for meeting a student's graduation pathway requirement.

The engagement rubric for the WA-AIM will continue to be used with all tested grade levels and cohorts as part of federal and state accountability testing.

Figure 4: Guidance on the engagement rubric and awareness waivers

Class of 2021 and Earlier	Class of 2022 and Beyond
The use of an engagement rubric automatically resulted in an Awareness Waiver (WAC 392-501-705) waiving the assessment requirement of the Certificate of Individual Achievement.	• The awareness waiver is discontinued. • The engagement rubric will continue to be used with all tested grade levels and cohorts as part of the federal and state accountability testing. • Students participating in the WA-AIM through the engagement rubric may need additional support to satisfy the graduation pathway requirement. • Meeting the graduation cut scores through the standard administration of the WA-AIM will continue to serve as a potential pathway option.

Source: Special Education Monthly Update, March 2021

3. MEET STATE AND LOCAL SUBJECT AREA REQUIREMENTS

3A. What guidance and resources are available on the topics of required courses and credits for all students?

The Washington SBE defines high school credit in WAC 180-51-050 as “(a) Successful completion, as defined by written district policy, of courses taught to the state’s learning standards. If there are no state-adopted learning standards for a subject, the local governing board, or its designee, shall determine learning standards for the successful completion of that subject; or (b) Satisfactory demonstration by a student of proficiency/competency/mastery, as defined by written district policy, of the state’s learning standards,” in “grades nine through twelve or the equivalent of a four-year high school program, or as otherwise provided in RCW 28A.230.090(4).”

- The SBE website provides additional resources and topic-based FAQs with details on required subject areas and components required.
- The SBE [Graduation Requirements webpage](#) lists all the specific course and credit requirements for each graduation cohort.
- The SBE’s [High School Credits FAQ webpage](#) includes information that can provide flexibility for students in meeting specific course and credit requirements.
- The [Washington state School Directors’ Association \(WSSDA\) Featured Policies webpage](#) posts model policies and procedures for mastery-based crediting (see the “2000 Series” section on the webpage).
 - **IMPORTANT NOTE:** Districts must have a policy in place to grant mastery-based credits (per [WAC 180-51-050](#) and [180-51-051](#)).
- The SBE’s infographic on credit requirements is a great visual of what students need to

complete.

- The SBE's [statewide rules related to granting mastery-based credit](#) also support flexibility for students in meeting specific course and credit requirements.

The following OSPI guidance and resources are available to support district implementation of graduation requirements:

Guidance/Bulletins

- The [Class of 2027 Graduation Toolkit](#) includes detailed information on each of the required courses and the number of credits needed for graduation, as well as available flexibility with meeting specific course requirements.
- [OSPI's On-Time Grade Level Progression guidance](#) for granting partial credit.
- [OSPI's Appendix A: High School Newcomer Enrollment](#) of the [Washington state Multilingual Learners: Policies and Practices Guide](#) has been recently updated to include suggestions and resources that support staff with evaluating records and determining course placement for refugees and students coming from other countries.

Webinars/Professional Development

- [Supporting Newcomers & Refugees Webinar Recording](#) and [Slides \(PDF\)](#)

Other Resources

- [WAC 180-51-210](#): state subject and credit requirements for high school graduation.
- [WAC 180-51-115](#): Procedures for granting high school graduation credits for students with special educational needs.

3B. Can schools within a school district have different credit requirements?

There is no WAC or RCW that precludes a district from having a policy that allows different schools to have different credit requirements. The district's policy must articulate any school-to-school differences in graduation requirements. However, each school's credit requirements must include at least the minimum required by the SBE.

3C. What additional flexibility do school teams have in supporting students to complete core subject credit requirements?

The following guidance is available to help local systems understand what flexibility exists when supporting students to complete core subject credit requirements:

- Districts make local determinations as to what courses meet which graduation requirements ([WAC 180-51-025](#)). Districts also determine locally how much credit to award for courses based on state learning standards. Districts may establish local learning standards for subjects that do not have state learning standards (WAC 180-51-050).
- Academic learning standards apply to all courses, and the required credits for graduation apply to all students. The required courses and credits are specified by the graduation cohort, with some flexibility based on a student's post-secondary goals. The graduation requirements are determined by the year the student enters 9th grade and remain the same regardless of whether the student graduates in four years or takes less or more time.
- Instruction for all courses is expected to utilize principles of differentiation and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to support students with varying needs to engage and make progress in mastering or demonstrating proficiency with content and learning standards.
- SBE has a helpful [graduation-by-cohort](#) that unpacks graduation requirements by graduation cohort. This includes further details about what counts for a credit/subject area, what flexibility exists, and what requirements exist for those courses. More information can be found in the FAQ for each subject area. The FAQ, for example, contains a wealth of information on the requirements for each of the three social studies credits.
- Students with IEP's must be provided with accommodations needed to progress in the general curriculum towards meeting state and local graduation requirements. IEP teams are not able to modify graduation requirements for students receiving special education services. To support students with disabilities in meeting graduation requirements, IEP teams may utilize:
 - Continued Educational Support up to the age of 22: See the Class of 2027 Graduation Toolkit page 26 to learn more.
 - Comparable Content Course Substitutions, in limited circumstances due to a student's disability-related needs. This allows for a graduation credit and subject area to be substituted with comparable content course work for the credit being granted. See more on this in question 3D below.
- Districts can offer comparable content course substitutions to support students receiving special education services in obtaining graduation credits and subject area requirements. All decisions related to course substitutions meeting graduation credit requirements for students receiving special education services must align with [rules for granting graduation credits](#). See more on this in question 3D below.
- Mastery-Based Credits are another more flexible method of awarding credit. Each district offering mastery-based crediting must have a written policy for awarding mastery-based credit:
 - Mastery Based crediting relates to assessments of knowledge and skills, often learned outside of the classroom, that align with the course content and state or local learning standards. Local policies must specify the methods allowable for a student to demonstrate mastery and qualify for mastery-based credit.

- SBE rules for mastery-based crediting (WAC 180-51-051) describe the procedure for granting mastery-based credit. When districts adopt a written policy for granting mastery-based credit, they should also adopt associated procedures that provide additional local details on their process for mastery-based credit (beyond what is specific in the sample [WSSDA model policies](#) and procedures).

3D. What are flexible and rigorous ways students can obtain required credits for graduation? How can Comparable Content Course Substitutions be used when determined to be needed by an IEP team?

As a starting place, schools and districts are expected to ensure all offered courses are accessible for students by utilizing principles such as differentiation and UDL to support students with various needs to engage and progress in the content and learning standards. As a reminder, flexibility in how students demonstrate mastery of learning standards can happen within any course and does not require a separate course to be developed. This flexibility can also be an effective option to provide meaningful and exciting ways for all students to engage in required learning standards. For example:

- An English language arts (ELA) class may have students engaging in the same required reading material in a variety of formats (condensed text, graphic novel, or video) and then support the learners to progress in the learning standards together.
- A Graphics Novel 1 course could be co-taught by general and special educators to support students in learning grade-level ELA learning standards.

For students who are also receiving special education services, state laws in [RCW 28A.155.045](#) and rules in [WAC 180-51-115](#) acknowledge the critical role of the IEP team in determining the most appropriate high school credit substitution and assessment options for a student.

"A student with an IEP must be provided with the 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 IEP team course of study and aligned to the student's HSBP."

The intent behind WAC 180-51-115 is that when course substitution is determined to be necessary, IEP teams must only substitute courses that are similar in scope and content, and course substitutions should only occur in response to the unique needs that can arise from a student's disability. The grade-level academic learning standards apply to all students. Much like students who take the WA-AIM alternate assessment, it is the performance expectation that changes, not the content of the course. The instructors can reduce the breadth, depth, and/or complexity of performance of the grade-level standard, not whether the student has access to the content.

Two examples of comparable content course substitutions that could provide flexible, engaging,

and rigorous credit options for all students are:

- A Construction Math course that offers geometry credit as students will demonstrate the geometry learning standards.
- A Graphics Novel 1 course that offers ELA credit as students will demonstrate the ELA learning standards.

With the shift to increased local data use and practices outlined in [House Bill \(HB\) 1599 \(2019\)](#), it is recommended that special education teachers, administrators, and school counselors work together as a district team to determine requirements around course substitution practices for a high school diploma. The current special education WAC and federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act charge districts with providing Free and Appropriate Public Education to students "designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living." This expectation must continue to guide decisions locally.

To learn more about comparable content course substitutions, please review [Special Education Guidance on WAC 180-51-115](#) on page 8. To learn more about subject area credit practices requirements, please review the SBE Graduation Requirements webpage, which details credit requirements by graduation cohort with a FAQ by content area.

IMPORTANT NOTE: WAC 180-51-115 was revised in 2019–20 (effective January 13, 2020). Prior to this revision, under limited circumstances, credit and subject area graduation requirements could be waived for students with IEPs. The revised rule allows the flexibility noted above but no longer permits a waiver. As of **July 1, 2020**, all decisions about course substitutions for graduation credit requirements for students receiving special education services must align with the revised rules in WAC 180-51-115.

3E. If a student takes three years of the same math course, such as “modified algebra,” does this meet the required three credits of math for graduation?

No, taking the same math course for multiple years would not satisfy the graduation requirement for math. All students must complete 1.0 credit each of Algebra 1 and Geometry or equivalent course(s), such as an Integrated Math course or CTE equivalency. The third math credit must align with the student’s postsecondary goals, as identified in their HSBP.

The SBE [Math FAQ webpage](#) may help understand the math subject area requirements (question 12 directly addresses this) and may clarify flexibility in course offerings.

3F. How do students earn English credits in an English learners program?

ELA requirements are met through grade-level, standards-based courses. ELD courses do not generate ELA credit if they do not meet grade-level ELA standards. ELD courses generate elective credits.

Eligible Multilingual (ML)/English learners participating in sheltered or content-based ELA courses are learning grade-level, standards-based ELA content while developing their English language skills. These courses should be transcribed using the appropriate ELA course code and count towards the ELA graduation requirement and may be designated as a College Academic Distribution Requirement (CADR) course for admission to Washington's public baccalaureate institutions.

For eligible students in a Supportive Mainstream model, ELD services are most frequently offered as an ELD class that is in addition to their ELA class. These courses use the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment ELD standards and do not fulfill ELA graduation requirements. These courses should be coded using either 01008 (English as a Second Language) or 01992 (English Proficiency Development).

3G. How can schools best determine credits met and credits needed when official transcripts are missing or incomplete?

Many recently arrived high school students are unable to provide official transcripts. There is no law stating that a district cannot accept unofficial documents. However, districts should ensure that unofficial documents are verified as authentic and accurately reflect the student's academic history before their use. Districts should also state clearly in their policies and procedures if and how unofficial documents will be used.

If only unofficial, unverified transcripts are available, or if circumstances such as forced migration make it impossible for records to be provided, districts should consider adopting and implementing a mastery-based crediting (also known as competency-based) policy to reduce barriers to graduation. This policy should apply to all students.

3H. How can schools best determine course placement for students when transcripts and student records are missing or incomplete?

New student schedules are based on prior academic experience and graduation requirements balanced by student interests and strengths. When records are unavailable, graduation year placement can be made in the age-appropriate grade level. If improper placement alignment is identified upon receiving formal records, locally determined district procedures for grade-level adjustment should be followed.

For core academic content, placement tests often rely on technical drawings and predictable formatting to increase accessibility. When possible, placement tests can also be made available in the student's primary language to eliminate linguistic barriers. For placement purposes only, formal written tests or informal conversations to gauge proficiency and problem-solving processes can be used.

If students are eligible ML/English learners, placement in the appropriate ML education model and designated ELD is part of a student's language development plan and must be determined by a certificated ELD teacher or language services case manager. See the [ML Education Policies and Practices Guide](#) for more information.

3I. What laws explain “excused from participation” in Physical Education (PE)?

[RCW 28A.230.050](#): *Physical education in high schools*

All high schools of the state shall emphasize the work of physical education and carry into effect all physical education requirements established by the rule of the superintendent of public instruction: Provided, that individual students may be excused from participating in physical education otherwise required under this section on account of physical disability, employment, or religious belief, or because of participation in directed athletics or military science and tactics or for other good cause.

[WAC 180-51-210](#): *State subject and credit requirements for high school graduation.*

Two health and physical education credits (.5 credit health; 1.5 credits physical education). Students may be excused from the participation requirement of physical education under RCW 28A.230.050. Such excused students shall be required to demonstrate competency/mastery in the knowledge portion of physical education in a district approved competency assessment that is aligned to Physical Education learning standards, in accordance with written district policy.

3J. How is a student excused from participating in PE?

Students excused from participation for religious belief, physical disability, or another “non-physical” good cause reason can be excused from participation in PE in alignment with district policy. These students shall be required to demonstrate competency/mastery in the knowledge portion of PE in a district-approved competency assessment.

Student transcripts must be updated to reflect demonstration of competency/mastery in the knowledge portion of PE, and credits, when allowed by district policy, using applicable designator/s like L for local competency tests or Z for non-instructional courses. Learn more about course indicators in the [High School Transcript FAQ](#) which is regularly revised and updated versions posted on OSPI's [High School Transcripts webpage](#).

When district policy allows, students excused from participation due to sports participation, military science, or “physically demanding” employment can meet the fitness portion of the physical education requirement and also earn course credit. Sports participation could include Washington Interscholastic Activities Association sports, club sports (ultimate frisbee), or competitive sports outside the school. One “season” of a sport could be used for excusal from participation for up to .5 credits. As noted above, these students are also required to demonstrate competency/mastery in the knowledge portion of PE in a district-approved competency assessment.

“Other good cause” should not be used to excuse students seeking to avoid PE classes. Schools

and districts should offer flexible PE classes to meet a diverse range of student interests. Districts should have a clear, written policy to clarify the basis for permitting students to be excused from PE and transcribing such excusals, including what constitutes “other good cause.” Schools/districts may want to reexamine policies such as requiring students to change clothes to participate in PE, etc. Best practice recommends that every high school student take a minimum .5 credit PE course in 9th or 10th grade.

3K. What is meant by “shall be required to demonstrate competency/mastery in the knowledge portion of physical education”?

Districts can utilize OSPI-developed classroom-based [Health and Physical Education assessments](#) or locally approved assessments for students excused from PE to demonstrate competency in knowledge of physical education learning standards. For examples of locally developed assessments, consider seeking access to the Highline School District’s assessment.

3L. How can schools and staff support access and progress in PE for all students?

Physical education (PE) services, specially designed, if necessary, must be made available to every student receiving free appropriate public education (FAPE) ([WAC 392-172A-02030](#)). School districts and PE teachers should make every effort to offer PE instruction that is universally designed to be accessible for all students to make progress in the Physical Education K–12 Learning Standards. Learn more about inclusive PE instruction in Q4 and Q6 of the [Updated Guidance on Adapted Physical Education](#).

Adapted physical education (APE) is specifically designed instruction (SDI) in PE that is designed on an individual basis to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability. APE is a special education service and is therefore outlined in a student's IEP based on the results of the student's special education evaluation. If a student's IEP identifies an annual goal related to PE, APE is one method of providing SDI to support the student in reaching that goal. For many students APE services will be provided within the general physical education course, some students be determined to need those services provided within a special education setting. Learn more about APE in the Updated Guidance on Adapted Physical Education.

The practice of excusing students from PE due to disability, while permitted under RCW 28A.230.040, should only be considered after other alternatives have been fully explored. See question 3J to learn more about how a student is excused from participating in physical education.

3M. Can the .5 health credit required for graduation be waived or excused?

No. Completing a health education course or statewide course equivalency (Family Health, 190003) and mastery of health education learning standards is required for graduation, and participation

cannot be excused or waived.

3N. What are graduation planning considerations specifically for highly mobile student populations?

In accordance with [RCW 28A.320.192](#), school districts must take specific actions to promote the on-time grade level progression and graduation of highly mobile students, including students experiencing homelessness, students in foster care, and persons who are designated as at-risk youth or a child in need of services, and students who are in or have been released from an institutional education facility.

School districts, for the qualifying students, must:

- Waive specific courses required for graduation if similar coursework has been satisfactorily completed in another school district or must provide reasonable justification for the denial. Should a waiver not be granted to a student who would qualify to graduate from the sending school district, the receiving school district must provide an alternative means of acquiring required coursework so that graduation may occur on time.
- Consolidate partial credit, unresolved, or incomplete coursework and provide opportunities for credit accrual in a manner that eliminates academic and nonacademic barriers for the student.
- Grant partial credit for coursework completed before the date of the student's withdrawal or transfer to the student's current school.
- Grant diplomas to students who have enrolled in three or more school districts as a high school student if state, but not local, graduation requirements have been met.

4. HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPTS

4A. What guidance and resources are available on the topics of interpreting transcripts?

Guidance/Bulletins

- OSPI's [High School Transcript FAQ](#)
- OSPI's [Appendix A: High School Newcomer Enrollment](#) of the [Washington state Multilingual Learners: Policies and Practices Guide](#).
- OSPI's [On-Time Grade-Level Progression](#) guidance includes requirements and recommendations for providing partial credit.
- OSPI's ["Pink Book" of Homeschool Guidance](#)

Webpages

- The OSPI's [High School Transcripts webpage](#)
- SBE's [Mastery-based Learning webpage](#)

Other Resources

- The [Office for Civil Rights](#) can provide guidance on report cards and transcripts for students with disabilities attending public elementary and secondary schools.

4B. How should a CTE statewide equivalency credit look on a transcript?

If a CTE course is utilized for full or partial credit towards an equivalent academic core course, the equivalent course must be recorded on the transcript with the CTE course's Course ID, and the corresponding academic course's Course Title and state Course Code. If the original CTE course had a Course Designation Code of T – CTE Dual Credit, that code cannot be submitted with the equivalent course. However, any additional Course Designation Code(s) applicable to the equivalent academic course should be included.

Understanding how your Student Information System works and the options you have in operating course properties will significantly help in creating an accurate transcription process that works for your district and your students. How a CTE Course that is approved for Equivalency is displayed on a student's transcript is dependent upon how the earned credit is applied (e.g., applied to graduation requirements as earned, split between CTE and Equivalency credit, and applied in full to the Equivalency credit). [RCW 28A.230.097](#) describes how a CTE Equivalency Credit must be displayed on a transcript including academic state course code and course name.

Additional information can be found in the OSPI High School Transcript User Guide, found on the [OSPI High School Transcripts](#) web page.

4C. How is a CTE statewide course equivalency credit applied to a student's graduation credit requirements?

School counselors and students will work together to determine whether the credit earned from a CTE equivalency course should be applied to the CTE credit requirement or to the core academic area for which the equivalency exists.

Legislative update: [Senate Bill \(SB\) 5617 \(2023\)](#) (Facilitating course equivalency agreements between skill centers and school districts) requires that approved local or state equivalency courses at any core, branch, or satellite skill center must be offered for academic credit to all students from all districts participating in courses at those sites.

IMPORTANT NOTE: A record of CTE equivalency course completion certificates is a required part of a student's HSBP ([RCW 28A.230.097](#)). See question 1D in "Develop an HSBP" for more

information.

Figure 5: CTE equivalency course offered at a skill center example scenario

Fire Sciences is a 540-hour state equivalency for lab science and physical education
RCW 28A.230.097 states that equivalent credit must be offered for academic credit (lab science and PE credit) • Course is transcribed as 1.0 lab science credit (0.5 credit per semester) • Course is transcribed as 1.0 PE credit (0.5 credit per semester) • Course is transcribed as 1.0 CTE course (0.5 credit per semester) • Student elects to take a course for academic credit and CTE credit • Course is transcribed as academic credit (as above) or overridden with CTE course title and credit determination • Student elects to take the course as an elective course • Course is transcribed as academic credit (as above) and overridden with CTE course title and credit determination Please note: Transcription is locally determined

Source: Skills Center Equivalency Credit, January 2023

4D. If a course is modified to meet a student's specific needs, does it appear differently on a transcript?

Modified courses may **not** have a title, asterisk, or any other designation identifying the course as "modified." Unless there are separate course codes and titles that differentiate between the two courses, there is no way to designate a modified course on a transcript. According to the [High School Transcript FAQ](#), certain allowable Course Designation Codes can be added to a transcript, and a modified course is not one of them.

Figure 6: Allowable Course Designations

What are the Course Designation Codes that can be used on the transcript?			
Answer: Below are allowable Course Designation key values. Please note that O = Online is not a valid value on the high school transcript but is reported to The Comprehensive Education Data and Research System (CEDARS).			
A = Advanced	I = Intl Baccalaureate	Q = Quantitative	Z = Non-instructional
B = CADR	K = Cambridge Intl	R = Running Start	
C = College in the HS	L = Local Comp Test	S = Science Lab	

H = Honors Option

N = National Comp
Test

T = CTE Dual Credit
(formerly Tech Prep)

Source: High School Transcript FAQ, July 2020.

If the course meets the requirements of the Course Designation Code, then the appropriate code must be used regardless of whether the courses were modified. Courses listed on a transcript must identify the course the student was enrolled in. It may not identify any differentiation in courses (such as content-based core instructional courses for ML/English learners) or modifications or accommodations within the course for a specific student(s) (such as comparable content course substitutions). For example, if an Advanced Placement or Honors course has a modified curriculum, it can **still** receive one of the codes above. Additionally, the above codes are the **only** codes that may be used.

4E. How can the GED result in transcribed credits?

Students awarded credit per local or state policy for earning a component of the GED, or earning their GED, would have the credits submitted as non-instructional with a state course code in the subject area of the credit and the corresponding course name. For example, use math, ELA, etc., to identify the subject area, a course designation code of Z - non-instructional, and the amount of credit attempted/earned. Awarding of credit(s) related to the high school equivalency certificate (GED) is allowable in specific conditions, outlined below:

Students in or released from institutional education: House Bill 1295 directly states the requirements for awarding credit for students who are in and/ or released from institutional education.

These requirements include:

- School districts must provide students in or released from an institutional education facility with access to world language proficiency tests, American sign language proficiency tests, and general education development tests. Access to the tests may not be conditioned or otherwise dependent upon a student's request.
- School districts must award at least one high school credit to students upon meeting the standard established by the SBE on a world language or American sign language proficiency test or a general education development test. Additional credits may be awarded by the district if a student has completed a course or courses of study to prepare for the test.
- If the school district has a local policy for awarding mastery-based credit on state or local assessments, the school district must apply this policy for students in or released from an institutional education facility.

For more information on, please review OSPI's [GED, World Language, and ASL Bulletin](#).

Mastery-based crediting policy and GED: For students for whom HB 1295 does not pertain, a mastery-based school board policy must be in place in order to award mastery-based credit. These

policies could be applied to passing the GED subject area tests and other high school level assessments.

Open Doors GED credits: The Open Doors Youth Reengagement [WAC 392.700](#) specifies that up to one (1) subject area credit will be awarded when a student passes a subject area test of the GED, of which there are four: science, math, social studies, and English language arts. Additional credits may be awarded for GED preparation in which students have engaged in during Open Doors. In Open Doors Youth Reengagement programs, high school credit is awarded for course work related to a high school equivalency certificate preparation, which is the GED in Washington state. More information can be found in [WAC 392-700-137](#).

5. LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES

5A. Who should be provided with language access services?

Steps to meet language needs should be taken to ensure effective communication with individuals with:

- Limited English proficiency: These individuals have limited ability to speak, read, or write in English. They may be fluent in one or several other languages which they prefer for communication (written, spoken, and/or signed).
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing: These individuals have a wide range of proficiency in communication methods including spoken or written English, lip reading, American Sign Language, or other signed languages.
- Blind/Visually Impaired: Individuals with limited to no visual ability require tools and accommodation, such as large or contrasting text, to access information provided in written or visual formats.

Districts should utilize the information, tools, and guidance provided by their language access liaison or coordinators ([RCW 28A.183.040](#)), the OSPI [Language Access webpage](#), the OSPI Interpretation and Translation webpage, and the annual bulletin ([Bulletin: 2024-25 Language Access Requirements](#)).

Examples of communication aids and services include but are not limited to:

- American Sign Language interpreters
- Video remote interpreting
- Large print materials
- Captioning
- Digital materials

- Easy access to language access associated materials

Web-based applications or software (e.g., Google Translate) **do not qualify** as services. These programs do not guarantee quality or accuracy.

5B. Who is responsible for identifying and budgeting for language access services?

The district, not the individual in need of services, should take responsibility for initiating free language access services and taking the appropriate steps to provide access to services in a timely manner and without avoidable delay. ([Title II of the ADA](#), [Title VI Regulations](#), [Chapter 28A.642 RCW](#), [RCW 49.60.215](#), [Chapter 392-190 WAC](#), [WAC 162-28-040](#), Lau v. Nichols, 414 U.S. 563 (1974))

A district's Language Access Plan can serve as a resource for how a district tracks language access services, uses that information to evaluate and improve services, and determines budget allocation each fiscal year. Districts were required to adopt a Language Access Plan beginning with the 2023–24 school year. ([RCW 28A.183.040](#))

6. EXTENDED SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS NEEDING MORE TIME TO GRADUATE

6A. What guidance and resources are available on the topic of extended graduation supports for students?

Guidance/Bulletins

- OSPI's [On-Time Grade-Level Progression](#) guidance that includes requirements and recommendations for providing partial credit
- SBE [High School Credits FAQ webpage](#)

Webpages

- OSPI's [Open Doors Youth Reengagement webpage](#)
- OSPI's [Learning Alternatives webpage](#)
- [Washington State Skill Center Association](#)

Other Resources

- [Running Start FAQ](#)

6B. Can a student who has earned a GED continue to work toward a high school diploma and get special educational support and/or participate in a skill center?

A GED is not considered a regular high school diploma. Students under 22 who have earned a GED are still eligible to earn a high school diploma and access education through their school district. Also, students enrolled in an Open Doors Youth Reengagement program may obtain a GED and stay enrolled or re-enroll until they have earned a diploma, degree, or aged out.

If a student has withdrawn to take the GED, they would need to re-enroll in their local school and begin to work towards meeting the graduation requirements for their graduation cohort year to earn a high school diploma. Per [WAC 392-172A-02000](#), a student who has a GED would also be able to continue receiving special education services from the public school district if determined to be eligible—at least until they either receive a high school diploma or reach the age of 22 (see Section C of WAC 392-172A-02000 and the note on page 24).

Skills center participation would be an option if it aligns with the student's graduation plan and the student meets the admission requirements. If students with an IEP or 504 Plan require modifications or accommodations, the skill center is responsible for providing these services in collaboration with the student's home school district. A student's IEP team may also determine that certain transition services are needed as part of a student IEP Transition Plan, and this could include participation in a skill center.

For a student who has a disability and is over the age of 22, [high school transition](#) and employment support services can be provided by the [Division of Vocational Rehabilitation | DSHS - Washington](#).

6C. May a second-year senior enroll in the Running Start Program?

Yes, adult students who are continuing to get instructional support and/or special education services up to the age of 22 may enroll and have continued eligibility in the Running Start Program *if they have been previously enrolled* as a junior or a senior, but may only take those specific courses needed to meet the school district, charter school or tribal compact school graduation requirements. Additionally, a student enrolled in Running Start for more than one senior school year is limited to 63 total college credits for all their senior years per WAC 392-169-055. An adult student is understood as being a student who has not met high school graduation requirements by the end of the student's 12th grade academic year.

- [Running Start FAQ](#)
 - Please see question number 50: May a second-year senior enroll in the Running Start program?

6D. May a third- or fourth-year senior enroll in the Running Start Program?

Yes, under the following conditions:

- a. The student is eligible to participate in Running Start pursuant to WAC 392-169-020.
- b. The student previously participated in Running Start.
- c. The student is under the age of 22.
- d. The student has not received the credits required to earn a high school diploma from their school district.
- e. The student has not exceeded the 63-credit limitation for all senior years combined.
- f. The student is enrolling for only the courses required to complete their high school graduation requirements.

Please see the [Running Start FAQ](#) for more information.

6E. Are schools required to hold back a graduation requirement for a student with an IEP to continue to work on graduation requirements and get IEP services and support as an adult student through the age of 22?

No, schools do not need to hold back a credit or another graduation requirement, as 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 the student's graduation plan and date based on what is in the student's best interest for continuing their secondary education.

Students who have not yet met their high school graduation requirements nor earned a high school diploma after four years are eligible for free public education through the school year the student turns 22. This includes students through the school year the student turns 22 who have earned a high school equivalency certificate.

Note: In April 2025, [Substitute Senate Bill 5253](#) passed and provides that students with disabilities are eligible for a free appropriate public education (FAPE) from age 3 through the school year in which the student turns 22 years of age. OSPI will be engaging in rulemaking to update state regulations. OSPI will also be working to update guidance documents that reference the age of eligibility. See [Questions and Answers: Providing Special Education Services Until Age 22](#) for the most up-to-date information. This Q&A will be updated as more information becomes available.

[WAC 392-172A-02000](#) (2)(b) says: "(2) A student who is determined eligible for special education services shall remain eligible until [...] (b) The student has met high school graduation requirements established by the school district pursuant to rules of the SBE, **and** the student has graduated from high school with a regular high school diploma" (emphasis added). The rule distinguishes between meeting graduation requirements and graduating with a diploma precisely because it is up to an IEP team to determine a student's graduation plan, including transition services and the graduation date.

Additionally, 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 through the school year the student turns 22 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. 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.

For more information to support IEP teams to make individualized decisions about a student's graduation data, plan, and transition supports, please review the [Tips from Special Education Division: Secondary Transition Services and Supports](#).

6F. Can a student who arrives in the United States between the ages of 18–22 still enroll in a Washington high school?

Yes. In fact, denying or delaying enrollment of immigrant students is against state rules. Newly arrived students who are 14–18 years old should be placed in the grade that provides continuity with their prior schooling or at the age-appropriate grade if this will be their first high school experience. Students who are ages 19–22 at their time of arrival and have not completed their high school diploma may enroll in a traditional high school and may alternately request to participate in an Open Doors or other flexible learning opportunity if seeking to accommodate outside responsibilities they may have while continuing their education until graduation or until the end of the school year they turn 22 (RCW 28A.150.220).

In instances where a student has earned a high school diploma from another country but requests registration in a Washington high school the district will need to determine if the student's certificate/diploma meets the state and local graduation requirements. If local requirements have not been met, and the student has not yet turned 22, they can be enrolled.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Graduation Toolkit FAQ was originally developed in 2023 with contributions from OSPI staff representing the program areas listed below and the SBE. Each year, OSPI program staff update the FAQ to reflect relevant policy or budget changes. If new guidance is developed with expertise from program areas not currently listed, those additional program areas will be acknowledged in this section. The time and expertise that staff and partners contributed to the development of this resource are greatly appreciated.

Career and Technical Education

Dual Language

Elementary Education

Graduation and Pathway Preparation

Institutional Education

Learning Options

Multilingual Education

Special Education

Student Information

REVISION LOG

Any **substantive** changes are noted below.

Page(s) Revised	Section	Description	Date
8–13	1B, 1E, 1F, 1G	Updated to reflect universal platform changes	6/5/2026
14–15	2B	Updated to add SBE FutureReady initiative information	6/5/2026
15–16	2C	Updated to add information regarding work to align WA CTE with the modernized National Career Clusters Framework	6/5/2026
27–28	4B	Updated transcription information for accuracy and clarity	6/5/2026
All	Entire document	Updated entire document format.	11/12/2025
16	2D	New section	6/1/2025
20	3B	New section	6/1/2025
21–23	3D	Response updated for accuracy and clarity	6/1/2025
25–26	3J	Updated for accuracy and clarity	6/1/2025
26	3L	Updated for accuracy and clarity	6/1/2025
30–31	4E	New section	6/1/2025
32	5A	Updated to align with current requirements	6/1/2025
32–33	5B	Updated the question and content to align with current requirements	6/1/2025
35	6D	New section	6/1/2025
36	6E	Updated to align with changes made during the 2025–26 legislative session	6/1/2025
17	2E	First point under “developing a CTE Course Sequence” has been updated	9/1/2024
24–26	3H–3L	- Physical Education questions nested under question 3. 3L updated to reflect transcript information.	9/1/2024
28	4B	Updated for clarity.	9/1/2024
34–35	6A–6B	Updated the age from 21 to 22 and added resources regarding the court decision.	9/1/2024
All	Entire document	Updated entire document format.	9/1/2024

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