

H.S. Graduation Requirements Task Force
March 13, 2007
Minutes

In attendance: Sherrie Brown, Steve Clarke, Bobbie Jaffe, Julie Kratzig, Gigi Morganti, Michelle Oulette, Todd Smith, Jennie Styer, Phyllis Textor, Alan Doud, Ralph Hayden, Maria Griggs, Lynn Torpey, Sharon Voth

I. Information was shared with the group:

- Jennie Styer shared data about Technology Connections. The data showed information about student attitudes about the value of Tech Connections.
- Todd Smith shared information about Senate Bill 5714, which is asking that students receive two years of World Language (Chinese and Spanish). Although it was not clear if had been approved, the bill made it clear that there is increased pressure to provide World Languages for students and may become a legislated requirement.

II. Math Requirements

- Maria Griggs presented a schematic showing a variety of paths for students in mathematics. The schema was helpful in discussing a variety of paths students can take in math.
- After lengthy discussion, the group agreed to the following math graduation requirement:
 1. Students must earn three (3) credits in mathematics through Algebra II and pass the WASL to graduate.
 2. **Students who do not pass the WASL are required to take math through their senior year or through Algebra II and must pass the WASL to graduate. (Amended 3-15-07).**

III. World Language

Sonya Morrison, Department Chairperson from Sehome High School, and Sharon Voth, Department Chairperson from Squalicum High School, joined the group for this conversation. After lengthy discussion, the group voted by majority to require two (2) credits in World Language for graduation from BSD. The two years must be in the same language e.g., two years of German or French or Spanish. Recommendations were also made about alternative ways to earn World Language credit. The suggested alternatives will be shared with the Curriculum Department.

Alternatives/recommendations include:

- Earning a credit of World Language in middle school.
- Earning a credit by demonstrating proficiency (National American Council of Teaching World Language Standards).
- A process is needed that would allow individual students with unique circumstances to appeal their situation to the building principal e.g., transfer students who matriculate into the BSD from a district without a world language requirement.
- There needs to be alternate ways for students to earn credit if they have proficiency in a language that is not offered in the Bellingham School District e.g., Punjabi.

IV. Other Requirement Considerations

- Science – The group decided to keep the current 2.0 graduation requirement in science.
- Personal Finance – Jennie Styer shared a recommendation from a teacher at Sehome that all students be required to take a personal finance course. The group did not want to add this

to the graduation requirements, but were supportive of the class fulfilling one of the occupational education credits.

V. “Big Picture” Schedule Scenarios (schedule scenarios are attached):
Sherrie showed the group four schedule scenarios that included all of the tentative graduation recommendations. A discussion followed. After a review of the schedules, Sherrie did a final check to see if the group still stood by their tentative recommendations. The group agreed that they would stay with their recommendations.

VI. Implementation Timelines

The group talked about phase-in recommendations for implementation of the new requirements and agreed to the following:

- English—requirements begin with this year’s (2006-07) seventh grade class—the class of 2012
- Math—requirements begin with this year’s (2006-07) fifth grade class—the class of 2014
- World Language—requirements begin with this year’s fourth grade class—the class of 2015
- Tech Connections—no longer a requirement beginning with this year’s sixth grade class—the class of 2013

Dr. Kinsley will review this timeline and may make possible adjustments before it is presented to the school board.

VII. Next Steps

Dr. Kinsley discussed next steps and the board approval process with the task force. The new requirements will be presented to the school board at the first meeting in April. Members of the task force are encouraged to attend the meeting. Some members may be asked to join in the presentation.

Dr. Kinsley and Sherrie thanked the task force members for their participation.