



## FutureReady: Modernizing Washington's High School Diploma for a Changing World

December 18, 2025 AI Summary

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### Future Ready: Modernizing Washington's High School Diploma for a Changing World

On December 18, 2025, League of Education Voters hosted a **Lunchtime LEVinar** featuring leaders from the Washington State Board of Education and community partners to discuss **FutureReady**, a statewide initiative to modernize high school graduation requirements. This effort asks a fundamental question: *Is Washington's high school diploma preparing students for success in a rapidly changing world?*

#### Why This Matters

Education is a tool for justice, yet current systems often perpetuate racial and disability inequities. As CEO Arik Korman noted in his opening remarks, “We must build schools and systems that honor the humanity in every student.” The State Board’s work reflects this urgency:

- **75% of future jobs will require a post-secondary credential**, but only **51% of Washington seniors enrolled in college within a year of graduating**.
- **32% of 10th and 12th graders** say their schoolwork feels disconnected from their goals (2023 Healthy Youth Survey).

These statistics underscore why graduation requirements must evolve to ensure students graduate with both academic knowledge and real-world skills.

#### Current Graduation Framework

Washington’s system includes three major components:

1. **High School and Beyond Plan** – Starts in 7th grade, guiding course selection and tracking experiences.

2. **24-credit requirement** – 17 core credits (English, math, science, social studies, health/fitness, arts, CTE) and 7 flexible credits.
3. **Graduation pathways** – Introduced in 2020 to replace exit exams with multiple options, including AP/IB courses, dual credit, CTE sequences, and the new **performance-based pathway** adopted in 2023, which allows students to demonstrate learning through hands-on projects aligned with their goals.

Despite these options, gaps remain:

- Limited access to **life skills courses** like financial literacy and civics.
- Rigid structures that restrict flexibility and creativity.
- Unequal opportunities for **work-based learning**, especially in rural communities.

### **FutureReady: A Comprehensive Overhaul**

Rather than incremental tweaks, FutureReady is a **multi-year, community-driven process** to reimagine graduation requirements. Key features include:

- **Profile of a Graduate** – A vision emphasizing critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, empathy, and adaptability alongside academic mastery.
- **Authentic engagement** – A 30-member task force representing students, families, educators, employers, and community organizations, plus community liaisons ensuring historically underserved voices are heard.
- **Subcommittees** – Focused on implementation logistics and subject areas like financial education, technology/media literacy, and math.

The initiative will culminate in a legislative proposal for the **2027 session**, with phased implementation starting no earlier than the **Class of 2031**.

### **Voices from the LEVinar**

Student representative **Abby Wu** highlighted the student perspective:

*“Some students feel frustrated by having to earn credits and meet testing requirements in the same subjects. They want access to classes that teach real-life skills—financial literacy, civics—while making requirements easier to understand.”*

Community liaison **Nicol Walsh** added:

*“Parents often struggle to navigate complex graduation rules. For students with disabilities, the system can feel inequitable and rigid. FutureReady aims to simplify and center equity.”*

State Board member **Jen Chong Jewell** emphasized the broader vision:  
*“Even if you don’t have a child in school, this matters. We want young people ready for their future and able to contribute to their communities.”*

### **Key Themes Emerging**

- **Flexibility and personalization** – Multiple ways to demonstrate learning, including project-based and applied experiences.
- **Real-world relevance** – Integrating financial education, digital literacy, and civic engagement.
- **Equity and access** – Addressing systemic barriers for students with disabilities, multilingual learners, and rural communities.
- **Future skills** – Preparing students for an AI-driven economy through computer science and media literacy.

### **Next Steps and How to Engage**

The task force is now in the **recommendation development phase**, refining ideas and testing draft proposals. By March 2026, conceptual recommendations will be finalized. Public engagement opportunities include:

- Signing up for the [\*\*FutureReady newsletter\*\*](#).
- Participating in listening sessions and surveys.
- Advocating with local school boards for meaningful changes.

As Abby Wu concluded:

*“We’re intentionally putting students first and working to ensure graduation requirements truly prepare us for life after high school.”*