



Mike DeWine, Governor  
Paolo DeMaria, Superintendent of Public Instruction

TO: Members of the State Board of Education  
FROM: Paolo DeMaria, State Superintendent  
DATE: March 12, 2019  
SUBJECT: **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A LONG-TERM PROPOSAL FOR DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS - REVISED**

I am pleased to provide to you the Department's recommendations for a long-term proposal for diploma requirements as required by Section 5 of Sub. H.B. 491 (132<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly). These recommendations serve as an important step in the ongoing work of developing and implementing a meaningful, challenging and flexible system of graduation requirements for the state. I am thankful for all the individuals and organizations who contributed their experiences and expertise over the last two years to get to this point of the process. These contributions have resulted in recommendations for Ohio's high school graduation requirements that provide students the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and are able to do in a manner that is less reliant on standardized testing and more encompassing of the variety of ways students can demonstrate their academic, technical and professional skills and knowledge.

#### LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT

Section 5 of Sub. H.B. 491 (132<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly) directed that "*the Department of Education, in consultation with the business community, shall make recommendations, as confirmed by resolution of the State Board of Education, to the General Assembly for revisions to the requirements for a diploma from a public or chartered nonpublic high school under section 3313.618 of the Revised Code. The recommendations shall include a long-term proposal for diploma requirements that reduces reliance on state testing, encourages local innovation, and supports student readiness for a career, college, and life. The recommendations also shall include a transition plan to allow time for implementation of the new requirements." **The deadline for these recommendations is April 1, 2019.***

#### CONSULTATION WITH THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Two meetings were held to consult with representatives of Ohio's major business associations regarding Ohio's graduation requirements. These meetings enabled business representatives to learn more about the ***Recommendations for a Proposed Approach to High School Graduation Requirements in Ohio***, which was approved by the State Board of Education by resolution at its November 2018 meeting. I provided to representatives of the business community a description of the current graduation pathways, their benefits and challenges, as well as an introduction to the Board-approved proposed approach to long-term graduation requirements, including the principles, themes and tensions that drove the design.

In the course of these discussions, several areas of agreement were identified:

- Students should have options for demonstrating knowledge and skills that are not standardized tests.

- Graduation requirements are an important component of the state’s equity agenda.
- Identifying students “not on track” late in middle school or early in high school is important to ensuring students are able to achieve success.
- Deliberate student planning plays an important part in helping students envision their future and what it takes to get there.
- We must continue to emphasize career advising, work-based learning and industry-recognized credentials.
- Leverage, engage and continue to build Business Advisory Councils in each district to foster a meaningful connection between the education and business communities.

Additionally, meaningful suggestions were made to help strengthen the proposed plan primarily through processes and strategies to assess the quality of implementation. These included:

- Ensure rigor in the use of non-standardized demonstrations of learning.
- Establish parameters for minimum mathematics and English requirements.
- Establish a timeline to ensure the long-term proposal can commence with the Class of 2021.
- Ensure collection of data sufficient to analyze the manner in which various alternatives are being utilized.
- Be careful, relative to the complexity of the approach, to not create a requirement that cannot be successfully implemented.
- Focus attention on identifying early signs of students not on track to graduate and aggressively promote strategies to get students back on track.

The business community also clearly represented that, while the Culminating Student Experience is an attractive opportunity for student learning and demonstration, it should not be part of the graduation requirements system. The business community seriously questions the ability of the state to implement this part of the proposal with consistency and integrity.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following are my recommendations for Board action. Ohio’s state-level business associations informed the development of these recommendations; however, **in no way should it be represented that the business community has specifically approved or endorsed these recommendations.**

I recommend the Board adopt the following, which would be **in addition to the Board’s resolution on Graduation Requirements adopted at the Board’s November 2018 meeting:**

### **QUALITY ASSURANCE MECHANISMS**

To ensure integrity and reduce bias or subjectivity in the process of evaluating non-standardized demonstrations of learning, the State Board of Education shall establish appropriate training requirements and quality-control mechanisms. These shall be respectful of the professionalism of teachers.

### **MATHEMATICS AND ENGLISH EXPECTATIONS**

The level of minimum mathematics and English ability shall be established by the State Board of Education in consultation with the business community and reflected in samples of student mathematics and English demonstrations.

### **DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING**

The Department will establish the appropriate coding structure within the Education Management Information System (EMIS) to identify the manner by which students satisfy the mathematics and English requirements under the long-term proposal.

### **STRONGLY ENCOURAGE WORK-BASED LEARNING AND CREDENTIALS**

In developing the guidance for non-standardized demonstrations and the anchor experience for the Culminating Student Experience, the Department will encourage students' participation in work-based learning and the earning of industry credentials.

### **EARLY WARNING AND INTERVENTION**

The Department will specify and develop guidance for districts and schools to identify students who may not be on-track to graduate. The Department will also identify best practices in intervening to support students in meeting graduation requirements.

### **TRANSITION AND IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE**

The Department shall develop an implementation timeline that allows for the long-term diploma requirements to go into effect for the Class of 2022 with a simplified approach to the Culminating Student Experience. The requirements shall be fully implemented for the Class of 2023. To support the transition, it is recommended that the graduation options that are available to the class of 2020 be extended to the class of 2021. **The timeline shown in Appendix A is illustrative only.** The actual timeline would be more detailed and specific, and dependent on the final features of the long-term requirements.

## **CONCLUSION**

I am excited by these recommendations and for the opportunities that the proposed graduation requirements will provide to students and educators. I fully believe that they meet the requirements of Section 5 of Sub. H.B. 491 and the requirement that the proposal *“reduces reliance on state testing, encourages local innovation, and supports student readiness for a career, college, and life.”* The long-term proposal is anchored in *Each Child, Our Future*, Ohio's Strategic Plan for Education, specifically aligning to and supporting the priorities outlined in Strategy 10. By implementing these recommendations, we will ensure each child is *challenged, prepared, and empowered* to pursue his or her chosen post-high school path.

## **APPENDIX A: TRANSITION PLAN AND TIMELINE FOR ILLUSTRATIVE PURPOSES ONLY**

### **OVERVIEW**

The illustrative timeline below is sufficient to meet the requirement for initial implementation of the long-term proposal for the Class of 2022. However, the Culminating Student Experience for the Class of 2022 would be a “lite” version, as the training requirements related to appropriate scoring could not be completed effectively. Consequently, school districts would have more flexibility for the Class of 2022 with regard to the scoring of non-standardized demonstrations. The Class of 2023 would be subject to a more diligent scoring process based on more training and other quality assurance mechanisms outlined in the Superintendent’s memorandum to the State Board of Education dated March 12, 2019.

### **ISSUING CLEAR GUIDANCE**

To ensure consistent and effective implementation of the graduation requirements, the Department must be ready to issue clear rules, guidance, tools and supports that address each component of the plan. Following are key areas where the Department, by action of the State Board of Education, will provide specific guidance to students, schools, districts, parents and families:

- Developing guides for schools and districts that communicate and clarify graduation requirements for the Classes of 2021 and beyond.
- Issuing similar clarifying materials for students, parents and families.
- Identifying and approving, by action of the State Board of Education, additional assessment options and required scores for each component of the requirements (i.e. GPA, WorkKeys, ASVAB, Accuplacer, ALEKS etc.).
- Developing the Culminating Student Experience criteria, evaluation process and rubrics for the evaluation of mathematics and English language arts demonstrations and student presentations.
- Developing quality assurance mechanisms and processes.
- Creating state online English and mathematics courses as appropriate.
- Developing training and professional learning opportunities for administrators, school counselors and teachers.
- Developing specifications for data reporting requirements and systems.

### **PROPOSED TIMELINE**

Following is an illustrative timeline for advancing the work.

#### **Phase 1: Planning and Development**

***From the date of legislative adoption*** The State Board adopts the technical guidance and policies that will guide changes in graduation requirements (*pending legislation*).

- The Department develops and communicates technical guidance and policies for all changes in graduation requirements; this includes producing appropriate materials for schools, districts, students and families.
- If necessary, the Department proposes draft policies to the State Board for determining additional assessment options for graduation requirements for the Classes of 2021 and beyond. Additional assessment options could include GPA, ASVAB, WorkKeys, Accuplacer, ALEKS, etc.
- The Department develops guidance, rubrics and samples for the Culminating Student Experience.
- The Department develops and releases guidance and rubrics for scoring English language arts and mathematics demonstrations for the Culminating Student Experience.
- The Department identifies the level of mathematics and English reflected in WebXams, as appropriate.

- The Department secures the necessary services to develop the identified quality assurance mechanisms that support the Culminating Student Experience.
- The Department establishes a process to identify school districts that will pilot the Culminating Student Experience for the Class of 2021.
- The department initiates the process to develop the Early Warning and Intervention Protocol.

### **Phase 2: Initial Implementation**

- The Department supports school districts with implementation of the Proposed Graduation Requirements.
- The Department establishes a training program for teachers who will evaluate student demonstrations of learning for the Culminating Student Experience.
  - The training includes activities designed to calibrate teacher scoring based on rubrics by examining examples of student work.
- The Department establishes protocols and procedures for second scoring of a random sample of student demonstrations of learning by qualified peers.
- The Department establishes feedback mechanisms to monitor the success of implementation and receive comments that will inform future iterations.
- The Department coordinates with Educational Service Centers (ESCs) to provide trainings to student demonstration evaluators.
- The Department engages ESCs to establish and communicate protocols and procedures for periodic reviews of district or school scoring practices.
- The Department establishes the appropriate coding structure within the Education Management Information System (EMIS).
- The Department provides training to EMIS professionals regarding new data reporting requirements.
- The Department develops an online mathematics course and an online English language arts course (Draft and issue RFP and select vendor(s)).
- The Department completes the development of the Early Warning and Intervention Protocol.

### **Phase 3: Full Implementation**

- The department monitors all aspects of implementation and makes adjustments and course corrections as needed.

### **Phase 4: On-Going Activity and Improvement**

#### ***Ongoing***

- The Department, in coordination with ESCs and professional organizations, develops a plan for ongoing professional development of educators and administrators that provides evidence of successful models for implementation.
- The Department continues to engage educators, administrators, representatives of the business community and higher education professionals to receive feedback and input on continuing implementation.
- The Department conducts periodic reviews of district or school scoring practices.