



Washington Office of Superintendent of
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

Graduation Pathways Snapshot, Class of 2021

2022

Authorizing Legislation: [RCW 28A.655.260](#)

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BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

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

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

- The pathways that are available to students at each school district and state-tribal education compact (STEC);
- The number of students utilizing each graduation pathway for graduation; and
- Disaggregated student participation in each pathway by race, ethnicity, gender, and income status (as defined by their eligibility for free or reduced-price meals).

In addition to completing at least one graduation pathway aligned with their postsecondary goals, students must also earn 24 credits and complete their High School and Beyond Plan to meet all statewide graduation requirements.

Graduation Pathways

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

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

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

The **military pathway** uses the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB), an assessment required for entry into any of the branches of the military. Students completing this

pathway are prepared to pursue their career goals across occupational fields through military service.

Pathway Data Collection

Reporting on graduation pathways requires compiling data from multiple data sources. The State Board of Education's annual compliance report captures self-reported information about pathway availability from each school district/STEC. This is the most complete source to understand pathway availability because it collects information on district/STEC-sponsored testing events and course offerings.

To report on the count of students using each graduation pathway for graduation, OSPI compiles data across multiple sources, including:

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

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

Graduation Pathways During the 2020–21 School Year

School districts and STECs continued to experience significant obstacles to graduation pathways for their students in the 2020–21 school year due to COVID complications involving remote learning, changes to course offerings, and delay of proctored exams.

Use of Waivers for the Class of 2021

In the spring of 2020, the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted rules for an emergency waiver program then permanent rules in July 2021. The purpose of this program is to allow school districts/STECs to waive certain graduation requirements on an individual student basis. The program is to prevent students from being unduly impacted by unforeseen disruptions to their education resulting from an emergency or disaster. WAC 180-111-050 specifically addresses the waiver program to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, and applies to students in the Class of 2020, 2021, and 2022.

GRADUATION PATHWAYS DATA SUMMARY

OSPI has developed a series of data dashboards with information about graduation pathways for the Class of 2021. These dashboards will be updated with information for future graduating classes.

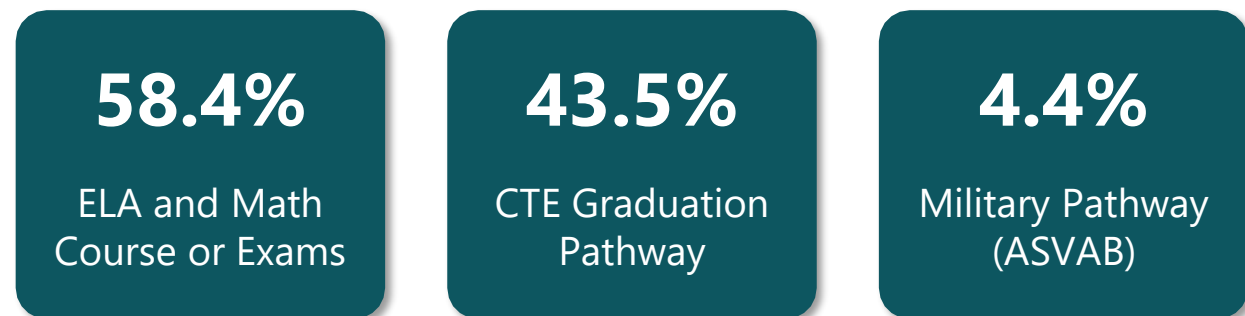
Pathway Availability

Understanding the current availability of graduation pathways is critical information for district/STEC planning, as well as for statewide policy. Using the dashboard, one can see how many students completed each available pathway at a selected district/STEC. Because of the flexibility of pathways, these counts are not unduplicated: A student may be counted as completing more than one pathway at a single district/STEC.

Number of Students Using Each Graduation Pathway

OSPI is not able to determine which specific pathway was selected in the student's High School and Beyond Plan. Therefore, the agency cannot report on the pathway students utilized to meet their graduation requirement.

The graduates in the Class of 2021 completed the graduation pathways at the following rates. The data reflect that some students completed more than one pathway.



In addition to completing graduation pathways, 0.3% of graduates in the Class of 2021 used the Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA) to meet their graduation pathway requirement. The CIA was an option available for students in the classes of 2020 and 2021 who are identified for special education services. House Bill 1599 (2019) concludes the use of the CIA with the Class of 2021.

Over six percent (6.8%) of the graduates in the Class of 2021 applied for and used a waiver for the graduation pathway requirement.

Pathway Completion, Disaggregated

Users can explore the [OSPI Graduation Pathways Display dashboard](#) to see how different student groups completed the different graduation pathways. A snapshot of this data is below and includes all students in the Class of 2021 who have graduated as well as those who have not yet graduated.

In this initial year of graduation pathway implementation some groups including students of color, students with disabilities, students who are English Language Learners, and students identifying as Gender X are measured as accessing graduation pathways at lower rates than their peers.

Table 1: Class of 2021 Graduation Pathways, Disaggregated*

	Percent Completed ELA/Math Pathway	Percent Completed ASVAB Pathway	Percent Completed CTE Graduation Pathway	Percent No Pathway **	Number of Students in Class of 2021
All Students	58.4	4.4	43.6	22.8	84,825
American Indian/ Alaskan Native	20.6	2.5	16.3	46.7	1,224
Asian	45.8	0.6	6.7	10.2	7,011
Black/African American	28.4	0.9	17.9	32.5	3,818
Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	21.4	1.4	23.5	31.6	19,420
Native Hawaiian/ Other Pacific Islander	19.7	1.5	19.9	35.9	1,017
Two or More Races	31.7	1.9	14.5	23.1	6,315
White	33.8	2	14.2	19.3	46,020
Students with Disabilities	12.6	1.1	31.7	44.9	11,059
Low-Income	22.3	1.8	21.1	32.9	42,382
English Language Learners	15.2	0.6	27.3	44.8	7,731
Female	35.4	1.7	14.9	21.3	41,235
Male	27.2	1.7	17	24	43,265
Gender X	18.6	0.6	11.9	53	328

Source: [Graduation Pathways Dashboard](#), retrieved June 16, 2022.

*Includes all students in the Class of 2021; including those who graduated, are continuing their education, or have left school.

**Students may have not graduated or may have completed a different pathway that was not observed in the data OSPI has available.

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction will continue to monitor graduation pathway completion and, in collaboration with the State Board of Education, consider future policy recommendations to accelerate the growth of meaningful and useful graduation pathways, as well as focus on eliminating gaps in access for historically underserved student groups.

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