



**BELLEVUE
COLLEGE**



Board of Trustees

Community College District VIII

SPECIAL MEETING
April 19, 2023



**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT VIII
BELLEVUE, WASHINGTON**

A special meeting of the Board of Trustees of Community College District VIII, 3000 Landerholm Circle SE, state of Washington, will be held on Wednesday, April 19, 2023. The business session will begin at approximately 5:30 PM. This meeting will be conducted in a hybrid format. The in-person location will be B201, and the remote location will be via Zoom. A telephone line will also be available. Merisa Heu-Weller, Chair, will preside.

MEETING CALL IN DETAILS

Business Session Call-In Details: [Click to join meeting](#)

Or dial in by telephone: +1 253 215 8782 Webinar ID: 882 4920 6133

MEETING AGENDA

- 5:30 PM BUSINESS SESSION
 - I. Call to Order
 - II. Approval of Agenda for April 19, 2023
- 5:35 PM III. Public Comment
- 5:40 PM IV. Action
 - A. Resolution 304: Waiver of High School Graduation Pathway Requirements Rob Viens and Michael Reese
 - B. President's COLA Amendment Merisa Heu-Weller
- 5:50 PM The Board will convene in executive session under [RCW 42.30.110\(1\)](#) for the following purpose: (g) To review the performance of a public employee. No final action will be taken during this executive session.
- 6:10 PM Adjournment

Please note: Time and order are estimates only and are subject to change.



REGULAR MEETING AGENDA ITEM

RESOLUTION 304: WAIVER OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION PATHWAY REQUIREMENTS

INFORMATION

FIRST READ

ACTION

Description

This proposed resolution would bring Bellevue College's policies for granting high school diplomas into alignment with the practices of school districts across the state.

During the COVID pandemic, Washington high schools faced high level of learning loss and credit deficiency that threatened the graduation of large numbers of students. The Washington State Board of Education responded with emergency rules that allowed students to apply to waive some high school graduation requirements so long as they demonstrated post-secondary readiness.

These rules were later formalized and extended, and they require certain safeguards and practices from school boards and colleges accessing the waiver program. The districts need to use the waiver as a last resort in individual cases, provide equitable access to the waiver, and document how students accessing the waiver demonstrate post-secondary readiness. The waiver program has been in place for the Classes of 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023, and elements of it will remain for the Class of 2024. It will end after that time. **Over 90% of the school districts in Washington are currently accessing the waiver program.**

This resolution will allow Bellevue College to do the same, ensuring that our students do not face additional barriers as they transition from secondary to post-secondary education.

Key Questions

- * How have high school graduation requirements changed during the pandemic?
- * Should BC align its practices for granting diplomas with the standards of local school districts?
- * If so, what is needed by the institution?

Analysis

The graduation pathways requirement can pose a barrier to diploma-seeking students who struggle with high-stakes testing. The pathways requirement is usually met by a student earning a minimum score on

the Smarter Balanced Assessment, an achievement test given to students in the Washington K-12 system to assess academic skills. Other approaches or assessments such as the Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery, SAT, or ACT may also be used. For the Classes of 2020-2023, the State Board of Education's Graduation Requirement Emergency Waiver program has allowed students alternate ways of demonstrating post-secondary readiness. The vast majority of Washington school districts are accessing this waiver program when needed.

This issue has surfaced at BC only recently because we have relatively small numbers of students earning diplomas under the "traditional" rules used by high schools. Historically, the overwhelming majority of diplomas issued by BC have been under RCW 28B.50.535.2, which allows any student completing an Associate Degree to also request a high school diploma; there is no graduation pathway requirement or Smarter Balanced Assessment mandated under this approach. However, the passage of new legislation, coupled with BC's recent creation of the High School+ program, means that BC now has small numbers of students seeking to compete their diplomas under the State Board of Education rules used in school districts.

Some school districts are using the waiver program to allow students to graduate with fewer credits, but the staff of BC's Basic & Transitional Studies is not looking to lower the credit threshold for students to earn high school diplomas. However, they would like to have provisions that allow us to consider waiving the graduation pathway requirements that mandate the Smart Balanced Assessment or similar examinations. This change would ensure that we have the same rules as local school district and ensure that our students do not face extra barriers as they move from high school to college.

Background/Supplemental Information

Information about the Graduation Requirements Emergency Waiver program may be found on the [website of the Washington State Board of Education](#).

Accessing the waiver program requires the College to put in place certain safeguards, and it requires a resolution from the Board of Trustees. The Washington State School Districts Association has created a [model resolution](#) for school boards to do this, and our staff has modified that model resolution for use in the community college context. The AAG has not yet completed the review of the resolution, so it appears in draft format below.

Recommendation/Outcomes

That the Board of Trustees of Community College District VIII approves Resolution No. 304: Waiver of High School Graduation Pathway Requirements.

Prepared by: Darrell Haynes, Michael Reese, Heidi Songstad, and Robert Viens

Bellevue College
Community College District VIII
Waiver of High School Graduation Pathway Requirements
April 2023

RESOLUTION No.

A RESOLUTION of the Board of Trustees of Bellevue College of Community College District VIII allowing students seeking a high school diploma to access a waiver from the graduation pathway requirements, as authorized by the Washington State Board of Education.

WHEREAS, RCW 28A.230.090 authorizes the State Board of Education to set graduation requirements and authorizes local districts to decide whether a student has met the graduation requirements.

WHEREAS, RCW 28B.50.535 allows community and technical colleges to determine whether students have met high school graduation requirements and to grant high school diplomas.

WHEREAS, sections 2 through 3, chapter 7, Laws of 2021 (EHB 1121) authorized the State Board of Education to administer a new and ongoing emergency waiver program. The purpose of the emergency waiver program is to provide an equitable mechanism that prevents students from being unduly impacted by unforeseen disruptions to coursework and assessments resulting from an emergency as defined in RCW 38.52.010 or as declared by an authorized federal official. The State Board of Education has adopted emergency rules that respond to the gubernatorial declaration of emergency of February 29, 2020. The emergency rules allow school boards and colleges granting high school diplomas to seek waivers for both subject area credit and pathway graduation requirements for eligible students on an individual student basis after completing all the emergency waiver program requirements.

WHEREAS, WAC 180-111 created permanent rules for this waiver program to allow school districts, including community and technical colleges granting high school diplomas, to waive certain graduation requirements on an individual student basis.

WHEREAS, the vast majority of school districts in the State of Washington have applied for and been granted access to this waiver program.

WHEREAS, the Board does not wish to modify credit requirements but acknowledges that the COVID pandemic has posed barriers for high school students seeking to meet the graduation pathway requirements.

WHEREAS, the Board wishes to ensure that the College comply with Chapter 180-111 WAC for students seeking high school diplomas who may be eligible for a waiver of the graduation pathway requirements under the emergency waiver program.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board hereby authorizes the President or designee to implement an emergency waiver program consistent with all requirements of WAC 180-111. Information about the waiver program will appear on the College website. Applications for the waiver

may be initiated by individual students or by family members or College staff on behalf of students. Application materials and instructions will appear on the College website. The waiver application will gather information about the steps the student has taken to fulfill graduation pathway requirements. Before formally considering a waiver application, College staff will make a good faith effort, as defined in WAC 180-111-020, to help individual students meet pathway graduation requirements through other options without accessing the emergency waiver. College staff will also consult with the individual student about what is being waived for the individual student, potential benefits and limitations that could result from receiving the waiver, including impacts on other postsecondary plans, the option for the individual student to decline the waiver and for the student to be provided with the opportunity to complete graduation requirements through continued enrollment beyond the planned graduation date.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the College will create a committee to consider waiver applications. The committee will consist of the faculty chair of the High School+ program, the staff navigator of the High School+ program, and any other staff, faculty, or administrators appointed by Academic Affairs. The committee will consider all requests for waivers within 14 calendar days of receipt. The committee will consider whether students have demonstrated postsecondary preparation, as defined in WAC 180-111-020. If the committee so recommends, the College will grant emergency waivers to eligible students who desire the waiver. The committee will maintain a record of requirements waived as part of the individual student record and will report to the State Board of Education as specified in WAC 180-111-040(4).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the College will create review and appeals processes that meet the requirements of the WAC 180-111-040(b) and (c). If the committee recommends against granting a waiver to a particular student, that student's application will be considered by a panel consisting of the Associate Dean of Basic & Transitional Studies and a faculty Counselor with expertise in trauma-informed instruction. The faculty Counselor will be selected by the Office of Academic Affairs, and the Office of Academic Affairs may add additional staff, faculty, or administrators with relevant expertise to the review panel. This panel will make a recommendation on the waiver application within 14 calendar days of the initial committee's action. If the panel recommends against granting the waiver, the student may request an appeal. Appeals will be heard by the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs within 14 days of receipt. Decisions of the Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs are final.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the College will ensure equity in administering the emergency waiver. As required by WAC 180-111-040(3), the College will include culturally responsive ways to communicate with students about the waiver and the process to request, appeal, or decline the waiver. Students and families will be able to request help from College staff in completing the application, and they will be able to request translation and/or interpretation services. The College will review disaggregated waiver data and take appropriate actions to ensure equitable administration if disproportionality is found, including supports under WAC 180-111-020(4) to help students meet requirements before the conclusion of the school year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the College will remain compliant with all laws, policies, and State Board of Education guidance regarding the waiver program. If WAC 180-111 is revised, the College will change its procedures to remain in compliance. If the eligibility rules and/or deadlines for the waiver program are adjusted, the College will consider waiver applications from all eligible students.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that execution of this Resolution is conclusive evidence of the Board's approval of this action and of the authority granted herein. The Board warrants that it has, and at the time of this action had, full power and lawful authority to adopt this instrument.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED:

Merisa Heu-Weller, Chair
Board of Trustees
Bellevue College District VIII