

Utah State Board of Education

Graduation & Grading Task Force Recommendations

Request for Public Input

Task Force - Background

March 2013

USOE Deputy Superintendent Brenda Hales, Mary Kay Kirkland (Box Elder SD) and Linda Mariotti (Granite SD), conducted a webinar on “Increasing High School Rigor and Ensuring College and Career Readiness.” The webinar reviewed the current identified gaps to graduation in Utah, concerns with current grading practices, and identified possible solutions to the gaps, including three possible graduation gateways to college and career readiness.

May – September 2013

The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) requested that a Graduation and Grading Task Force be convened USOE to further discuss the information presented in the March webinar and to provide specific recommendations to the USBE. The Utah State Office of education organized a 17-person Task Force that included staff and representatives from rural and urban local education agencies (LEA), the PTA, the USBE, the Utah System of Higher Education, and the Utah State Legislature. The Task Force was supported by USOE staff from Teaching and Learning, Special Education Services, Career and Technical Education (CTE), Adult Education, and Federal Programs.

Task Force Membership

Name	Role	Agency/Organization
Sonia Woodbury	Charter Director	City Academy
Cheryl Cox	Local School Board Member	Garfield School District
Kristie Cooley	Local School Board Member	Logan School District
LeAnn Wood	PTA	Davis PTA
Sara Jones	Teacher Organization	Utah Education Association
Jason Skidmore	Local CTE Director	Jordan School District
Dixie Allen	State Board of Education Member	Utah State Board of Education
Steve Hirase	Local Superintendent	Murray School District
Shane Erickson	Local Superintendent	Piute School District
Mary Kay Kirkland	Local Curriculum Director	Box Elder School District
Linda Mariotti	Local Deputy Superintendent	Granite School District
Kenna Rodgers	Local Regular Ed Teacher	Salt Lake School District
Sheryl Lundwall	Local Special Ed Teacher	Tooele School District
Charlene Lui	CMAC	Granite School District
Carol Spackman Moss	House of Representatives	Utah State Legislature
Rob Couraud	Local Comprehensive Guidance	Murray School District
Melissa Miller Kincart	Higher Education Representative	Utah System of Higher Education

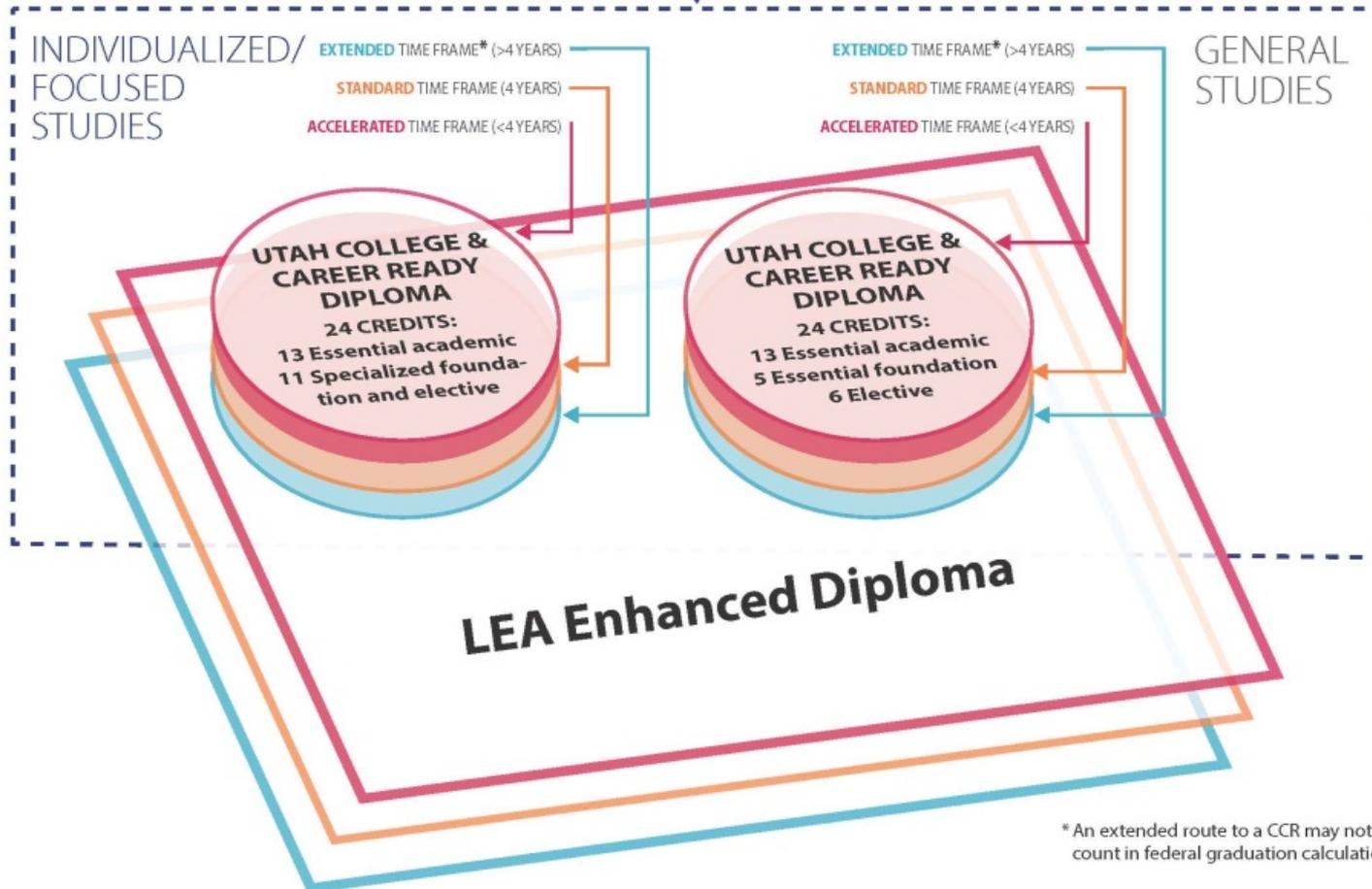
Graduation and Grading Task Force

Guiding Principles

- *Take into account individual student competency and progress*
- *Ensure that the Utah graduation diploma reflects meaningful College, Career, and Life Readiness*
- *Consider Multiple Pathways (academic or vocational) that are honored and adjusted*
- *Acknowledge that resources will be required for LEA implementation*
- *Help to mitigate barriers to access for students*
- *Address individual student needs and challenges*
- *Allow autonomy for local decision-making and control*

UTAH GRADUATION PATHWAYS

UTAH SEOP PROCESS 7th–12th Grade



Recommendation #1

Pathways to Diploma

Two state pathways to graduation with a regular high school diploma:

General Studies Diploma

(24 credits)

- 13 essential credits
- 5 essential foundation credits
- 6 elective credits.

Individualized/Focused Studies Diploma

(24 credits)

- 13 essential credits
- 11 elective credits

This option requires additional state-level decisions regarding the amount of desired available flexibility for the 11 elective credits; determine which, if any, of the 11 elective credits should require exposure to specific coursework (i.e., PE, art, etc.); and still be flexible enough to demonstrate the student's intent to work towards a specific area of focus. It must be part of a College and Career Readiness (CCR) plan and link to post high-school options.

Timeline Options

Both state diploma pathways (General Studies and Individual Studies) would have timeline options for:

- extended time (greater than 4 years)
- standard time (4 years)
- accelerated time (less than 4 years)

There is an understanding that an extended timeline may not count in federal cohort graduation calculations, but should be included in state graduation calculations. There should be compelling reasons for using the alternate timelines, either accelerated or extended options, directly linked to legitimate student needs.

Input – Recommendation #1

Question A

Will the recommendation to have two pathways (General Studies and Individualized/Focused) better meet the future needs of students?

Question B

What challenges will need to be addressed in order to enable LEAs to implement the two pathways?

Recommendation #2

Competency-Based Grades

- The Board should provide LEAs with guidance and recommendations for LEA policy regarding moving towards the consistent use of subject matter competency-based grading practices and away from the standard grading system that allows students to improve their grades without a demonstration of competency.
- The Board should ensure that a student's citizenship grade be separate from their proficiency grade. The citizenship grade should hold students accountable for both positive and negative behaviors and consider possibilities for reflecting service, leadership, and non-academic skills. It should remain an LEA-level decision to determine if they will use a citizenship grade for graduation.

Input – Recommendation #2

Question C

Will the recommendation to move toward competency-based grading systems better meet the future needs of students?

Question D

What challenges will need to be addressed in order to enable LEAs to implement new competency-based grading systems?

Recommendation #3

Credits Towards Graduation

- Increase emphasis on the SEOP process for defined course selection. Flexibility on required courses should be addressed through the SEOP process on foundation skills/credits (e.g., require three to five credits rather than the five currently required for PE/Health, Art, CTE, and Financial Literacy), which allows more flexibility with electives (e.g., permits six to eight elective credits rather than the six currently allowed).

Recommended Credits

DRAFT Proposal (March 2013)

General Studies Track

13 Credits:

- 4 English
- 3 Mathematics
- 3 Science
- 3 Social Studies
 - .5 Another Social Studies Topic

5 Credits:

- 2 PE/Health
- 1.5 Art (Possible .5 Humanities)
- 1 CTE
- .5 Financial Literacy
(Civic/Consumer/Life Skills)

6 Electives

Total 24 Credits

Revised Proposal (August 2013)

Individualized/Focused Track driven by SEOP

13 Essential Credits:

- 4 English
- 3 Mathematics
- 3 Science
- 3 Social Studies
 - .5 Another Social Studies Topic

11 Foundation Credits include:

- 3-5 Credits from:
 - PE/Health (recommended 2 credits)
 - Art (Possible .5 credits Humanities)
(recommended 1.5 credits)
 - CTE (recommended 1 credit)
 - Financial Literacy (recommended .5 credits)
(Civic/Consumer/Life Skills)
- 6-8 Elective Credits from:
 - Additional classes based on student SEOP
 - Balanced coursework leading to an outcome

Total 24 Credits

Input – Recommendation #3

Question E

Will the proposed credit recommendations better meet the future needs of students?

Question F

What challenges will need to be addressed in order to enable LEAs to align course offerings with recommended graduation credits?

General Considerations for the Utah State Board of Education

As the Utah State Board of Education considers changes to Utah's high school graduation requirements, the USBE will need to address the following issues:

- The need for adequate time for LEAs to put new provisions in place for middle school students that will be under the new graduation requirements by the time they reach 12th grade
- The USOE would need to conduct a comprehensive review of existing state law and state board policies and take steps to make needed revisions/amendments to align all new requirements (and eliminate conflicts)
- With any new requirements, the state will need to provide adequate resources to LEAs to implement new requirements (e.g. additional funding to address appropriate student: counselor ratios)

Input – General Considerations

Question G

What additional input would you provide to the Utah State Board of Education in considering graduation and grading requirements?