



Washington Office of Superintendent of  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

# Graduation Pathways Snapshot, Class of 2020

*2021*

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

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# BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In 2019, the Legislature established different graduation pathways options as part of statewide high school graduation requirements through House Bill 1599. Graduation pathways focus on providing evidence that a student is ready for their next step after high school, whether that be in 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:

- Which pathways are available to students at each school district.
- The number of students utilizing each graduation pathway for graduation.
- 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 likely support their goal.

**Career and technical education (CTE) graduation pathways** are a sequence of rigorous, related CTE courses that include dual credit options and/or industry recognized credentials. Students completing a CTE pathway may plan to enter into 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. This is the most complete source to understand pathway availability because it collects information on district-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 and International Baccalaureate exam-based pathways identified using files from ACT and IB, respectively.
- ASVAB scores provided by school districts or through a newly implemented student-level data collection.

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 Pathway Implementation During the 2019–20 School Year

School districts experienced significant obstacles to full implementation of graduation pathways for their students in the 2019–20 school year.

The State Board of Education [issued rules](#) in November 2019, outlining the options students can utilize to meet the graduation pathways requirement. This left little time for districts to analyze student data and advise students in the Class of 2020 as they selected pathways aligned to their High School and Beyond Plan. Pathways requiring students to

complete one or more courses were dependent on the already-finalized academic catalog for the 2019–20 school year.

The COVID-19 pandemic further complicated the Class of 2020's ability to complete their graduation pathways. Exam-based options were either completely eliminated or put in limbo as testing companies worked to create workarounds to in-person proctored exams.

## **Use of Waivers for the Class of 2020**

The combination of the impacts of the pandemic and the short timeline for school districts to provide equitable access to graduation pathways left many students in the Class of 2020 without an option for completing a graduation pathway. Fortunately, the Legislature provided an option for the Class of 2020 under Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 28A.655.065 to have the graduation pathway requirement waived if certain conditions were met.

Under this law, students had to meet all other graduation requirements (credits and completion of the High School and Beyond Plan) and demonstrate "the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the high school graduation standard and that the student has the skills necessary to successfully achieve the college or career goals established in their high school and beyond plan." Information on the requirements for students in the Class of 2020 to access this waiver can be found on the [OSPI website](#).

# GRADUATION PATHWAYS DATA SUMMARY

OSPI has developed a series of data dashboards with information about graduation pathways for the Class of 2020. These dashboards will be updated with information for future graduating classes.

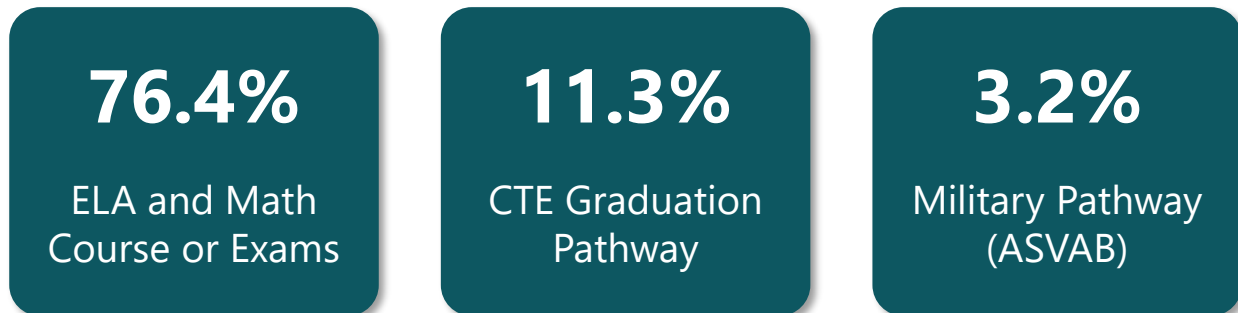
## Pathway Availability at Individual School Districts

Understanding the current availability of graduation pathways is critical information for district planning, as well as for statewide policy. Using the dashboard, one can see how many students completed each available pathway at a selected district. 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.

## 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 2020 completed the graduation pathways at the following rates. The data reflects that some students completed more than one pathway.



In addition to completing graduation pathways, 3.4% of graduates in the Class of 2020 used the Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA) to meet their graduation pathway requirement. The CIA is a graduation pathway option available for students in the classes of 2020 and 2021 who are identified for special education services. House Bill 1599 (2019) phases out the use of the CIA after the Class of 2021.

Over nine percent (9.6%) of the graduates in the Class of 2020 applied for and used a waiver for the graduation pathway requirement. There were some additional graduates who had been granted the waiver and who completed a graduation pathway. It is likely that the

newness of the pathway options and the disruption of the pandemic led districts to cover their bases for students, resulting in this duplication.

## Pathway Completion, Disaggregated

Users can explore the [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 2020 who have graduated as well as those who have not yet graduated. In this initial year of graduation pathway implementation, it is clear that student groups who are persistently the furthest from educational justice are accessing graduation pathways at lower rates than their peers.

**Table 1: Class of 2020 Graduation Pathways, Disaggregated\***

	% Completed ELA/Math Pathway	% Completed ASVAB Pathway	% Completed CTE Graduation Pathway	% Completed CIA	% No Pathway
All Students	66.5	2.9	9.8	3.4	25.6
American Indian/Alaskan Native	43.1	3.6	6.7	6.3	45.4
Asian	85.7	1.2	10.2	1.0	11.8
Black/African American	52.8	1.8	6.8	4.3	39.4
Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	51.1	3	10.3	3.7	38.8
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	51.8	2.5	8.5	1.7	42.1
Two or More Races	69.1	3.1	9.7	3.7	23.2
White	71.6	3.1	10.0	3.4	20.6
Students with Disabilities	22.6	1.5	10.9	26.9	41.5
Low-Income	51.9	3.4	9.2	4.5	37.8
English Language Learners	31.3	1.4	8.9	4.9	57.4
Female	69.4	2.4	9.0	2.5	24.0
Male	63.8	3.4	10.7	4.2	26.9

**Source:** [Graduation Pathways Dashboard](#), retrieved January 19, 2021.

\*Includes all students in the Class of 2020; including those who graduated, are continuing their education, or have left school.

## NEXT STEPS

The COVID-19 pandemic has continued to disrupt the education of students through the 2020–21 school year and will likely have impacts on student learning and success for the next several years. Graduation pathway completion for the Class of 2021 has been complicated by remote learning, changes to course offerings, and delay of proctored exams. 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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