

Implementation of Career- and College-Ready Requirements for High School Graduation in Washington

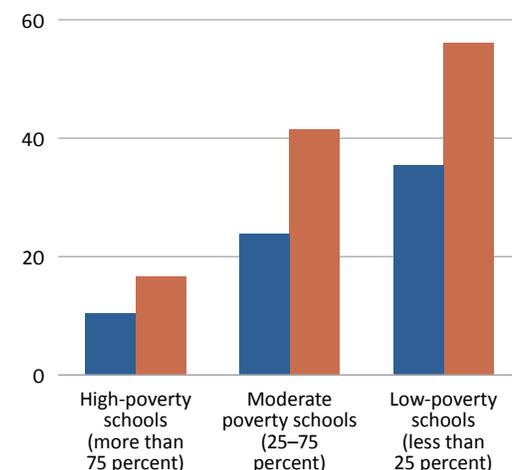
In 2014 the Washington state legislature approved career- and college-ready (CCR) requirements for high school graduation that better align with admissions standards at the state’s public universities than previous requirements did and that aim to equip students with the skills to pursue the career of their choice. The requirements took effect for the class of 2019, though some districts implemented them earlier and others received a waiver to delay implementation until the class of 2021. State and local education leaders in Washington asked the Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest to study current trends in implementation of the requirements. Using data from the Washington State Board of Education and the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, this study explored progress in implementing the CCR graduation requirements from 2018 to 2019, identified student groups in the class of 2018 that met the requirements and student groups that did not, and examined changes in student academic outcomes before and after past district-level increases in credit requirements for high school graduation in Washington.

Key findings

- *The percentage of districts that implemented all the CCR requirements for high school graduation increased from 9 percent for the class of 2018 to 56 percent for the class of 2019. Schools in districts that implemented all the requirements for the class of 2018 were smaller, had fewer students per teacher, and had more class periods per day than did schools in districts that did not implement all the requirements.*
- *About 27 percent of 2018 high school graduates statewide met all the CCR graduation requirements. Gaps in meeting the requirements suggest that barriers exist for students who are eligible for the national school lunch program and students who attend schools in which more than 75 percent of students are eligible, current English learner students, students of color, and students with low scores on grade 8 state assessments (see figure).*
- *Districts that had increased total, science, fine arts, or world languages credit requirements for high school graduation at any time between 2012/13 and 2017/18 saw few changes in student academic outcomes. State assessment scores and on-time graduation rates varied little from year to year for most student groups, despite increases in graduation requirements.*

Percentage of 2018 graduates who met the career- and college-ready requirements for high school graduation

- Districts that implemented all the career- and college-ready requirements for the class of 2018
- Districts that implemented all the career- and college-ready requirements except the fine arts requirement or the world languages requirement, or both for the class of 2018



Percentage of students in school eligible for the national school lunch program

Source: Authors’ analysis of 2017/18 data from the Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.