

TASK FORCE REPORT



Graduation Requirements Task Force

SEPTEMBER 16, 2021 MEETING SUMMARY

Interim Chair: Jarred Fuhrman, Principal, Basehor-Linwood High School

Task Force members were asked to collect survey responses from at least two current students and/or recent graduates. Melanie Haas, Kansas State Board of Education, sorted the data and reported on information gathered from approximately 200 young adults. Questions centered on challenges to meeting current graduation requirements, perspectives on classes that should or should not be required and potential additional class offerings. Mrs. Haas summarized the findings, highlighting dominant responses. For instance, students overwhelmingly favored the addition of courses teaching life skills. Personal finance stood out as a class students indicated should be required, while physical education was viewed as a class that should not be required. Charts illustrating aggregate student responses will be posted on the Graduation webpage on KSDE's website.

Commissioner of Education Randy Watson encouraged the Task Force to consider this data not only as it relates to the addition or deletion of courses, but also as it applies to competency-based education.

Members transitioned into their sub-committee groups for the next hour. Sub-committees were created to specifically address the charges given to the Task Force to examine high school graduation requirements under three lenses:

- Courses or subjects to be added or deleted (if any), led by Christie Meyer, Principal at Eisenhower High School, Goddard.
- Mastery of Skills and Competencies / alternative methods of obtaining credit, led by Ed Raines, Principal at Washburn Rural High School.
- Value-added diplomas, such as inclusion of industry-recognized certificates, led by Kelly Nusser, Principal at Lyons High School.

Sub-committee leaders reported back to the entire group.

- Christie Meyer – Flexibility was a reoccurring theme during discussions. Aligning conversations with the competencies sub-committee would be beneficial as they continue to examine options.
- Ed Raines – Guests from the Education Commission of the States shared how other states define competency-based education. They also started looking at seat time possibilities.
- Kelly Nusser – Importance of real-world experience was emphasized. Determining how that will look for students is a focus of discussions.

Dr. Watson thanked the group for their commitment to this work as they tackle the big picture first and begin to narrow ideas and formulate recommendations.