

Due to Statewide School Closures, Washington State High School Seniors will have Certain Graduation Requirements Waived

By Jesse Chang

Due to the extended school closure issued by Governor Jay Inslee, that lasts until June 19th, students have been attending Skyline High School online for long distance learning since April 20th. With the sudden school closure for the remainder of the school year, many students, especially graduating seniors have been concerned whether they'll receive the amount of credits needed to graduate.

On April 8th, the Washington State Board of Education (SBE) approved several emergency rules that granted school districts in the state to apply greater freedom in awarding high school diplomas to graduating high school seniors for the Class of 2020. Schools approved by the SBE can waive certain graduation requirements on an individual basis. These rules apply to everything from elective classes and even subjects such as math and Language Arts and are effective immediately, lasting until July 31st, 2020.

There are certain requirements a school must meet for a waiver to be granted for any given student, however. According to an article published by the Seattle Times, schools have to "first exhaust every option they have to help students complete required credits."

The *Seattle Times* also specified that, while high school seniors do get requirements waived allowing for graduation, the "the waiver excuses students from coursework but doesn't grant credit." So while some students can graduate high school with a diploma through this waiver, it does not mean they have all the necessary credits for enrolling in a college. Since many seniors have already decided on a college and have been accepted into the school, this is a serious problem. The SBE recognizes this and have been looking into solutions, with one possible solution being to require seniors to take remedial courses. Randy Spaulding, the executive director for the Washington Board of Education said that "solutions will likely be different across the state's colleges and universities."

Some universities like the University of California (UC) and Oregon State University (OSU) have implemented much lower requirements of admission for incoming freshman, according to a news update by the *Center for American Progress*. Oregon State University for example, lowered the required scores for the SAT/ACT and extended the acceptance deadline to until June 1st of 2020. The University of California currently is offering more time for students to meet deadlines for transcripts, financial depositing, and registering for housing and classes. The university also temporarily suspended letter grade requirements since many high schools, including schools in the Issaquah School District, have moved to pass/fail grade systems.

At the time of writing, there is still uncertainty regarding school operation in the coming school year this September. Washington state education officials have developed various options

for hopefully resuming schools. As reported by the *Seattle Times*, education officials believe that simply attempting to uphold the status quo is “not a viable approach.”

Some options the education department came up with included options to reopen schools for normal operation, differing forms of remote learning, and rotating students in different buildings.

The *Seattle Times*, however, did report that schools will most likely be “among the last public spaces to reopen, given how difficult it might be to follow social distancing.”



Oregon State University lowers score requirements for the SAT and ACT

Photo Courtesy of Salesforce.org



Governor Jay Inslee extending the state at home order for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year

Photo Courtesy of Seattle Times