



Dear Friends and Members of ArtsEd Washington,

I'm just back from my very first visit to Disneyland, and the words echoing in my head are, "Dreams really do come true." We heard it everywhere! But you know, it was Disneyland, that's their line, and now I'm back at work. But maybe some of that magic crept into my suitcase....

...Because nothing could have prepared me for the excitement and delight I felt last week when **the State Board of Education proposed new high school graduation requirements that include two credits in the arts!**

With Eric Liu as Board Lead, our State Board presented Core 24, a proposal for high school learning that will "open doors" for Washington's graduates. This proposal outlines a new state requirement of 24 credits for graduation, up from the current state minimum of 19. It is the Board's intention that this will be fully state funded, to remove the vagaries and inequities of local funding policies.

All students will take Core 24's strong foundation of core subjects, including two required credits of arts. Beyond this, the plan provides flexibility for each student to choose the right path for his or her future. Review the proposal here: <http://www.sbe.wa.gov/documents/SBEdraftCore24.pdf>

Charged by the legislature to examine the purpose of the high school diploma, the Board embarked on a comprehensive review of the graduation requirements with two goals in mind: to dramatically improve student performance, and "to provide all Washington students the opportunity to succeed in post-secondary education, the 21st century world of work, and citizenship." Their work builds on the Washington Learns report of 2006 – remember the goal to restore creativity to the classroom, which you helped ArtsEd Washington secure?

Passage of this proposal would bring Washington State level with the median national graduation requirements in English, Math, Social Studies, and Science; and would *exceed* any other state's requirements in the arts. See how we compare nationally: <http://www.aep-arts.org/database/>

This requirement will have a major impact on the provision of arts learning at every grade level. Learning and mastery at benchmark 3 cannot be achieved without the comprehensive and sequential foundation that students are given in every other core subject. It will impact the work currently underway by the State Basic Education Funding Task Force – work that ArtsEd Washington is carefully monitoring. It's an opportunity like no other!

But first, it has to be passed by the State Board. **And that's where you come in.**

Attend one of the Board's Community Meetings in Yakima, Spokane and Seattle (venue details <http://www.sbe.wa.gov/Outreach2008.html>) and give voice to your strong support of this proposal. If you cannot attend but want to show your support of the proposal, please email sbe@k12.wa.us

Washington State's constitution sets as its paramount duty, the education of our young people. As community members, we share responsibility for that. Not just as regards our own children, but also in looking out for other people's children. Believe the State Board of Education when they say that their vision is centered on **the success of all students** and preparing them to thrive in a competitive global economy and in life.

Now, help them to approve the Core 24 by showing your support. Dreams are wonderful. Let's make the Core 24 a reality!

Una McAlinden, Executive Director