# INCREASING HIGH SCHOOL RIGOR AND ENSURING COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

March 2013

Board Journey

- Board study sessions
- Promises to Keep
- Feedback from parents, business community, superintendents, principals, students
- What does it mean to be College and Career Ready
  - 66% goal
  - Utah Core Standards
  - 21st Century Skills
- Need for increased rigor for College and Career Readiness
- Achieve, ACT
- Increased emphasis on using technology as a learning tool
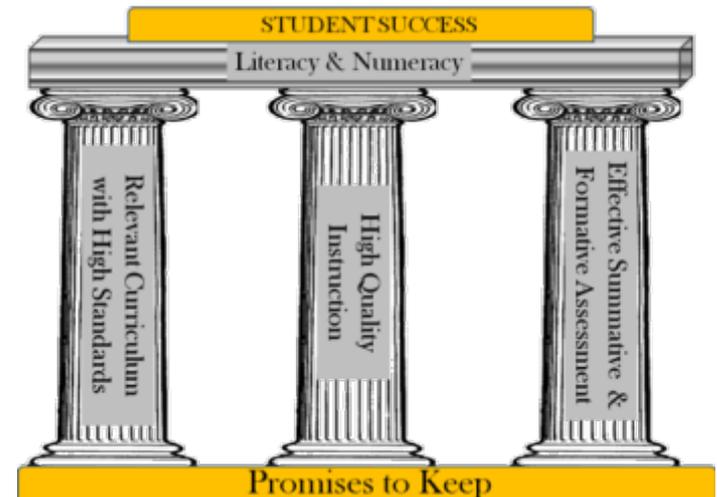
Discussion Points

1) Student centered (Individualized Learning Plans)
2) Significance of high quality instruction
3) Increased applied learning experiences
4) Acceleration strategies
5) Funding mechanisms as a lever for increasing rigor

Gaps That Have Been Identified:

- The current route to graduation offers some flexibility.
  - Competency tests
  - Credit extensions through Electronic High School
  - Concurrent enrollment, AP, IB
  - Early graduation through the use of electives

- Some students need more flexibility to focus on a well-defined post-secondary goal.

Gaps That Have Been Identified:

- Students and parents have limited assistance selecting high school courses that lead to clear career or college pathways

- Students need more structured guidance and support in planning:
  - realistic post-secondary occupational goals;
  - schedules that include rigorous academic courses including the senior year;
  - schedules that include courses aligned to post-secondary aspirations
  - schedules that could culminate in a 1 year certificate or a 2 year Associates Degree.

Gaps That Have Been Identified:

- Some High School graduation requirements that were rigorous and relevant in the last decade may not be what is needed in this decade.
  - Students need to demonstrate computer literacy earlier than 10th grade.
  - Feedback from educators and students indicates that the Social Studies courses need to be strengthened and General Financial Literacy needs to be updated or revisited.
  - Students who are not proficient in Mathematics and English need more opportunities for remediation and also need time to take classes that address career aspirations.
- Courses that are required for graduation should be updated to reflect what is most critical for students to learn.

Gaps That Have Been Identified

- Students who are struggling may not have sufficient opportunities for both remediation and specialized course work.
    - Current requirements may prevent students from taking both remedial and applied learning experiences

- Students need more opportunities for remediation and also need more time to take classes that address career aspirations.

Gaps That Have Been Identified

- Students who are gifted may not have sufficient opportunities for both acceleration and required course work.
  - Current practices may prevent students from taking both required courses and accelerated course work.

- Students who are gifted need more opportunities for acceleration and also need more time to take classes that address career aspirations.

Gaps That Have Been Identified

- Current grading and report card practices may not reflect the actual competency or academic growth of a student.

  - Use of averaging of assignment or test scores may or may not result in an accurate grade.

  - Use of non-academic extra credit assignments may inflate a grade.

  - Use of attendance or citizenship points to obtain an academic grade may inflate or deflate a student's true performance.

- Academic Grades should reflect academic performance and progress toward proficiency.

- Citizenship Grades should be separate, required for graduation and assess life skill topics such as participation, attendance, punctuality, work completion, behavior and working in groups.

Possible Solutions

1) Developing Graduation Requirements that facilitate Student-centered Individualized Learning Plans and focus on what students today need to know and do.

2) Using funding mechanisms as a lever for increasing rigor.

3) Increasing opportunities for applied learning experiences.

4) Emphasizing and empowering LEAs to use acceleration strategies.

5) Providing high quality grading and reporting practices as a required component of high quality instruction.

Current Route to Graduation

- 13 Credits:
  - 4 English
  - 3 Math
  - 3 Science
  - 3 Social Studies

- 5 Credits:
  - 2 PE/Health
  - 1.5 Art
  - 1 CTE
  - .5 Computer Literacy

- 6 Credits:
  - Approved electives

THREE POSSIBLE GRADUATION GATEWAYS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

Require 24 State Level Credits

13

Essential credits with strictly defined competency opportunities

"Early"

11 Credits
5 defined
6 elective
Defined credits with state and/or district identified competency opportunities, a clearly defined SEOP with post secondary plans, and no need for remediation.

Graduate early

"Standard"

11 Credits
5 defined
6 elective

Graduate with class

"Specialized"

11 Credits
Completely flexible based on well-defined SEOP and post-secondary plan.

Graduate with class

College/Career Readiness

Identify Essential Credits

Present

13 Credits:
- 4 English
- 3 Math
- 3 Science
- 3 Social Studies
  - .5 Financial Literacy

5 Credits:
- 2 PE/Health
- 1.5 Art
- 1 CTE
- .5 Computer Technology

6 Electives

Proposed

13 Essential Credits:
- 4 English
- 3 Math
- 3 Science
- 3 Social Studies
  - .5 Another Social Studies Topic

5 Credits:
- 2 PE/Health
- 1.5 Art (Possible .5 Humanities)
- 1 CTE
- .5 Financial Literacy (Civic/Consumer/Life Skills)

6 Electives

.5 Financial Literacy (Civic/Consumer/Life Skills)

- Bookend to 6th/7th grade CTE intro course
- Civic engagement
- Financial literacy and management
- Financial preparedness for post secondary
- Social media skills
- Introduction to the world of work

New Middle School Level Digital Literacy Course:

- Emphasis on Digital Literacy
- Placed more appropriately in Middle School
- In addition digital literacy standards integrated through all curricular areas and all grades (K-12)
- Consider Computer Science as a discipline

Consider Funding as a lever for increasing high school rigor

- Open up flexibility, but keep emphasis on career and college readiness

- Fund through ADM only one PE credit per year/per student enrolled

- Discontinue funding through ADM for student aides

- Discontinue funding for team sport classes through ADM

Increase Applied Learning Experiences

- More applied and career learning opportunities
- More integration between CTE courses and academic courses
- Integration at the elementary level
- Project and problem based learning
- Encourage portfolios and/or capstone projects as evidence of integrated learning

Empower Acceleration Strategies

- Enhanced within the core standards
- Districts have been piloting
  - Compacting
  - Double Periods
  - Replacing

- Should be an intrinsic element of High Quality/Differentiated Instruction

Empower Acceleration Strategies

- Enhanced within the core standards
- Districts have been piloting
  - Compacting
  - Double Periods
  - Replacing with a more difficult class

- Should be an intrinsic element of High Quality/Differentiated Instruction

Former Core

Top-Achieving Countries Composite Math Curriculum Standards

New Core Standards

High Quality Grading and Reporting Practices : A New Lever for High Quality Instruction

**Academic grades based on proficiency on standards**

- Grading and report card practices must reflect the actual competency or academic growth of a student.
- Proficiency at the end of a term or unit should be the major consideration not just the average of assignment or test scores.
- Extra credit points should serve instructional purposes
- Opportunities extended to retake or improve the score on an assignment or do make-up work
- No use of attendance or citizenship points to obtain an academic grade.

Citizenship Competency Grade (Graduation Requirement)

- Attendance record and engagement
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Effective communication
- Recognition of appropriate situational dress standards
- Work ethic
- Digital responsibility

Seals for academic competencies (not limited to. . .)

- Foreign language (dual immersion)
- Technology skills
- Service learning
- Integrated academic areas projects
- Extracurricular/employment experience
- Post secondary plan
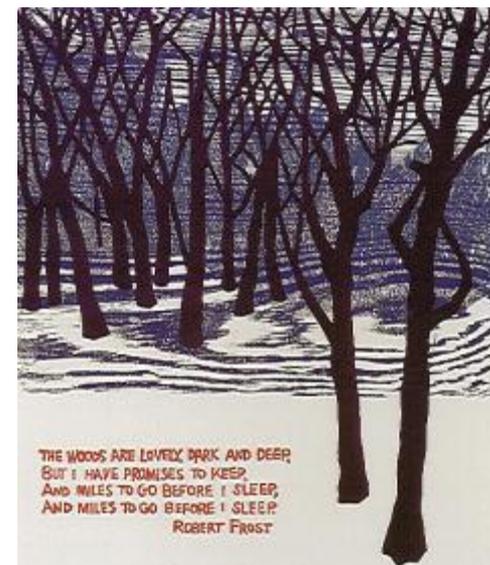- Health and fitness
- Leadership
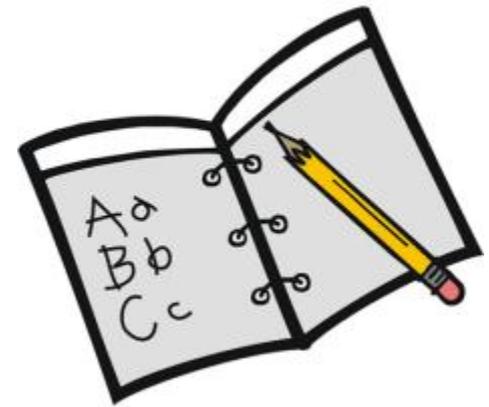
Recommendations:

- **Clarify graduation gateways**
- **Clearly define early graduation within Board Rule**
- **Address graduation credits**
  - Computer technology more appropriate at an earlier grade level
  - Develop a new financial literacy course
  - Increase social studies credit requirement
  - Seals of competency
- **Explore grading and reporting rules/guidelines**
  - Timelines
  - Stakeholder work group for secondary implementation plan
  - Citizenship Grade Details
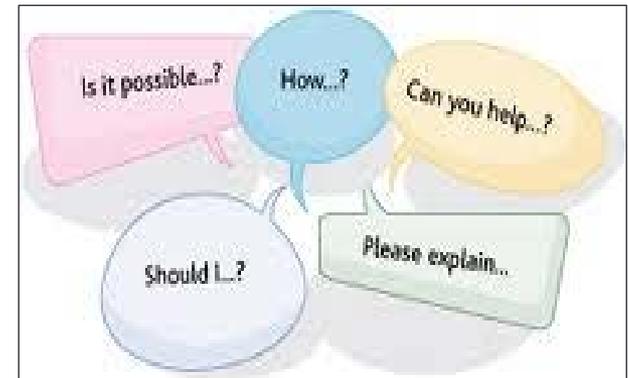
Recommendations:

- **Address middle level requirements and rigor**

- **Strengthen College, Career and Citizenship planning**
  - Mentors for students starting at 6th grade

- **Appoint a work group on post-secondary high school offerings**
  - Concurrent Enrollment
  - Certifications
  - Degrees

- **Examine graduation rates**
  - Look at successful programs and make recommendations for state level policy
  - Examine recommendations coming from the dropout prevention workgroup

THE WOODS ARE LOVELY, DARK AND DEEP,
BUT I HAVE PROMISES TO KEEP,
AND MILES TO GO BEFORE I SLEEP,
AND MILES TO GO BEFORE I SLEEP.
ROBERT FROST

Questions?