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July 9, 2008

Washington State Board of Education
P.O. Box 47206
600 Washington Street SE, Room 253
Olympia, WA 98504-7206

Dear Chair Ryan and Members of the SBE:

Partnership for Learning, an independent statewide nonprofit that advocates for a stronger public education system, applauds your work to strengthen Washington's high school diploma. We urge you to adopt the CORE 24 graduation requirement package and deliver on our state's commitment to preparing our students for success in the future.

As you know, Washington state's high school graduation requirements have not been updated since 1985—not since a gallon of gas cost \$1.09, a movie was \$2.75 and a new car cost \$9,000.

Though our economy has continued to evolve dramatically, graduation requirements have not. Thirty-nine states require more math and 35 states require more science from their students. And, Washington ranks among the bottom ten states in the number of credits it requires for graduation.

A number of school districts in our state recognize the need to better prepare their students and have stepped up with local resources to fund and require more math and science—and more than 19 credits for graduation. Those districts that have not, and/or lack the resources, however, will continue to graduate many students who are ineligible for college entrance or trade jobs.

Our students are being shortchanged. And that's not fair.

Now more than ever, our students need to be adequately prepared to compete in a world that demands education and training after high school. Your CORE 24 recommendation would ensure that all students receive the skills they need for college, work and life.

We understand there will be concerns and challenges in implementing CORE 24. We stand ready to assist in addressing those issues, because we believe that the status quo cannot continue. Let's enact the correct policy and catch Washington students up to the rest of the nation.

For questions or comments about our advocacy and communication efforts please contact me at 206-957-2604. Thank you for your important work on behalf of our students and families.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Ehl". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Larry Ehl
Executive Director, Partnership for Learning