

TO: Indiana Commission for Higher Education

c/o Josh Garrison, Senior Associate Commissioner and Chief of Staff

FROM: Tony Hahn, VP Government & Legal Affairs, Vincennes University

Dr. Lori Pence, Associate Provost of K-12 Programs and Partnerships, Vincennes University

DATE: July 10, 2024

RE: Comments on proposed changes to Indiana High School Diploma

Delivered via Email

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the Indiana high school diploma requirements. The following comments are based on LSA Document #24-200, published in the Indiana Register.

Vincennes University (VU) serves an important role in the Indiana higher education system as an open admissions university offering quality education leading to valuable credentials and degrees that prepare graduates for employment and successful transfer to other educational opportunities. While we are not selective with our admissions, we do put much effort into enrolling the students in the most appropriate level of coursework upon entering VU. The University does this through a three (3) step process to ensure the incoming student can be successful on campus. Once we receive their high school transcript we measure their college readiness by evaluating the student on our internal readiness measures; including grade point average, academic honors diploma, already earning college credit, taking college level courses in high school, or meeting a certain score on SAT, ACT, or Accuplacer. We then specifically look at their Math and English preparedness as this is the strongest indicator of academic success in higher education. We look at rigor of high school Math and English courses, scores on Math and English SAT or ACT, and Accuplacer quantitative reasoning and reading proficiency scores. This review process ensures the students are enrolled in the appropriate level coursework and has reduced the need for remediation as they begin their post-secondary education.

With that as a backdrop for our approach to preparing students for success, we express the following thoughts about the proposed changes to the high school diploma requirements:

1. Core 40 equivalency. The Core 40 diploma contains Math and English requirements that set a baseline standard of mastery for a student to begin college level coursework upon completing high school. Core 40 requires 8 credits in English/Language Arts (including a balance of literature, composition and speech) and the Mathematics requirement is 6 credits (including Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry or a combination of Integrated Math I, II, III) with the additional requirement that a student take a math or quantitative reasoning course each year of high school. We think it important that the GPS and GPS Plus requirements meet at least the same credit requirement, rigor, and annual quantitative reasoning coursework requirement of Core 40 in Math and English. Ensuring a comparable baseline competency of Math and English will prevent the wide scale return of remedial coursework which adds expense and increases time to completion.
2. Flexibility. We think it important that regardless of diploma type or seal achieved, the foundational knowledge mastery should prepare them for, at least, entry level higher education coursework. The high

school graduate should not be precluded from a higher education opportunity because of a track chosen early in their secondary experience.

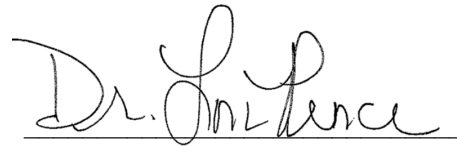
3. Objective learning assessments. As a leader in Career and Technical Education (CTE) and apprenticeship style learning, we appreciate the emphasis on CTE and experiential learning. We support the stated definition of work-based learning, which requires a structured learning component and a final assessment of skill or learning. It is important as the student moves between educational and career opportunities that the skills learned are portable and outcomes are consistent and understandable by the higher education institution. The consistency of outcomes is especially important as the experiences will be given credits/grades and those will affect GPA, which is often a critical component of competitive, merit-based scholarships

Developing a diploma that prepares students for careers and a livelihood in the 21st century, while offering the flexibility to stay on track as interests and opportunities evolve, is no easy task. We applaud the effort to include new opportunities for credit, but we must not lose sight of the need for rigor and baseline mastery to ensure that every high school graduate, regardless of ZIP code, socio- economic status, high school size, or family situation has an opportunity to succeed at Vincennes University. We look forward to continued conversations and progress on this important project.

Sincerely,



Tony Hahn
VP-Government & Legal Affairs
Vincennes University



Dr. Lori Pence
Associate Provost of K-12 Programs and Partnerships
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