

## Policy Memorandum

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### Topic:

#### Graduation Pathways

WA State **House Bill 1599** is a graduation pathways bill for high school students in the state of Washington. Its purpose is to “promote career and college readiness through modified high school graduation requirements.”<sup>1</sup> The legislature concluded that individual students do not share common paths for education or career, and that there should be “a system that allows each student to work with his or her teachers, parents or guardians, and counselors to identify the best ways to demonstrate appropriate readiness in furtherance of the student's career and college goals.”<sup>2</sup>

### Scope:

House Bill 1599 is a great step towards student-centric education. It is highly beneficial to students who aren't interested in Higher education, and less so for those who are. Students are asked to choose pathways their freshman year, of which there is very little fluidity to switch later on. Students choose careers for a variety of reasons, and as freshman, most pick pathways based on what seems easiest and viable at that moment. Students already in college struggle with picking majors to study, even Adults struggle to find it difficult to identify a career. If we are setting up a system that is student-focused, then we should think about perhaps being more creative and functional in the approach.

### Recommendation:

Add a one-year **Pathway Identification Program** free of charge to prepare for path after high school. Students will be eligible to enroll their junior year of high school but will have the option to choose when to admit, as a junior, senior or after HS graduation before enrolling in a higher ed institution. Program will consist of a series of job shadows and exposure to different working environments, even internships depending on class of the student.

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<sup>1</sup> [House Bill 1599](#)

<sup>2</sup> <https://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1599-S2.SL.pdf#page=1>