



*Highline Public Schools Board Action Report*

**DATE:** February 3, 2023

**FROM:** Dr. Ivan Duran, Superintendent

**LEAD STAFF:** Jeff Petty, Principal, Highline Big Picture

**For Introduction:** February 15, 2023      **For Action:** March 1, 2023

**I. TITLE** Renewal of Highline Big Picture SBE Waiver from Credit-Based Graduation

Select one:     New Item     Renewed Item     Annual Item     Revised Item

**II. WHY BOARD ACTION IS NECESSARY**

In 2008, Highline Big Picture obtained a Washington State Board of Education (SBE) waiver from credit-based graduation requirements in order to support its unique structures and practices such as advisory all day every day, extensive internship experience for all students, no grades, etc. This waiver requires renewal every four years and has been successfully renewed three times. Local board action is necessary to further the renewal proposal to the State Board of Education (SBE) at one of its forthcoming meetings. Big Picture hopes to have the SBE act on its renewal at its April 12-13 meeting.

**III. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Highline Big Picture was founded in 2005 with an initial cohort of 34 9th graders, several repeating ninth grade for the second or third time and each with multiple risk factors for graduation. Big Picture now serves students in grades 6-12 and has its highest enrollment ever at around 240 students. It continues to provide a unique resource within the district, including supporting many students with prior experience of school disengagement and failure. Renewing this waiver is essential to maintaining Big Picture's interdisciplinary and project-based approach that centers advisory as the primary structure of the school and supports extensive off-campus learning through internships with community-based mentors. Attachments include the completed SBE waiver renewal application, to be forwarded to the SBE pending approval of the local resolution.

**IV. RECOMMENDED MOTION**

I move that the Highline School Board approve Resolution No. 16-23 in support of Highline Big Picture's waiver from credit-based graduation requirements.

**V. FISCAL IMPACT/REVENUE SOURCE**

This action entails no fiscal impact.

The revenue source for this motion is N/A.

Expenditure:     One-time     Annual

**VI. APPLICABLE POLICY(S)**

This action is in compliance with the following:  
N/A

**VII. ALTERNATIVES**

The impact of no action on this issue would be failure of renewal of Big Picture's SBE credit waiver, which would

precipitate a wholesale restructuring of Big Picture's educational approach.

**VIII. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

Community Engagement Required:  Yes  No

**IX. ATTACHMENTS**

- Highline Big Picture application to SBE for waiver renewal, Resolution 16-23

## Application for renewal of waiver from credit-based graduation requirements

Highline Big Picture - February 2023

**Please describe how all students are meeting the state learning standards in each required subject area to a level of depth and breadth consistent with the credit-based graduation requirements.**

Highline Big Picture founders originally sought the credit waiver in order to structure the school around strong multi-year relationships that are essential to helping students, especially those previously disengaged from school and/or with prior school failure, identify and explore their interests. We take a strengths-based approach and immerse students in real-world settings in order to cultivate interests that then manifest academically through project work. Every high school student is expected to pursue an internship every Tuesday and Thursday, starting in 9th grade. Our connection to state standards comes through our five groups of competencies: communication, quantitative reasoning, empirical reasoning, social reasoning, and personal qualities. These reflect various anchor standards across subject areas. Each Big Picture student develops a unique learning plan, in collaboration with their advisor and with input from their family. Three times each year, students present an exhibition, during which they are assessed in, among other criteria, the extent to which they have demonstrated growth in these five competences. Exhibition panelists include family members, peers, the student's advisor, other school staff, and when possible external mentors, e.g. from the student's internship. Expectations for leveling up from one grade to the next include competency growth as well as additional level-up expectations intended to support academic growth. State assessments are one proxy for students meeting learning standards. As has been the case for several years, Big Picture's scores on state assessments are higher than district averages, despite our disproportionate number of students with disabilities and who have experienced prior school failure. Another proxy would be post high school preparedness, and some of this data is shared below.

**Please describe how you ensure that all required offerings are made available to students.**

While each student's learning plan is unique, our graduation expectations are the same for all students. Our advisory-centric design, with no classes or bell schedule, means there are no course schedule conflicts or prerequisites limiting any student's course of study.

**Please reflect on how your students are meeting standards in required subject areas and meeting minimum College Academic Distribution Requirements (CADRs).**

In addition to evidence provided by state assessments, our graduates' post high school success is another indicator that Big Picture students are meeting standards and minimum CADRs. Post high school planning continues to be a significant aspect of the curriculum for Big Picture students, with the post high school plan being one of three major graduation requirements occupying a significant portion of the senior year. As more of our graduates are performing successfully in various colleges, admissions officers are increasingly receptive to our narrative transcripts. Big Picture's class of 2022 included twenty-seven seniors. As of April of 2022, they had submitted 116 applications and received 82 acceptances and \$2,756,716 in grants and scholarships. This is an *average* of over \$100k per student.

**Briefly summarize the comments received at the public meeting or meetings regarding the waiver of credit-based graduation requirements for this school.**

To be updated after the Highline Public Schools Board meeting in February.

**Please upload an electronic document(s) providing information regarding the programs and activities implemented as a result of the current waiver, including evidence of whether deeper learning for students has occurred.**

Attached document provides some highlights since the previous waiver renewal.

**Please provide a brief explanation of how you ensure that students in the school still have access to Advanced Placement or other postsecondary options programs such College in the High School, Running Start, and Dual Credit.**

Consistent with prior practice, Highline Big Picture students continue to have access to and take advantage of Running Start. In the current school year, roughly one third of juniors and seniors will be enrolled in Running Start classes, with most taking one or two classes and two students with full course loads.

## Supplemental document - Highline Big Picture

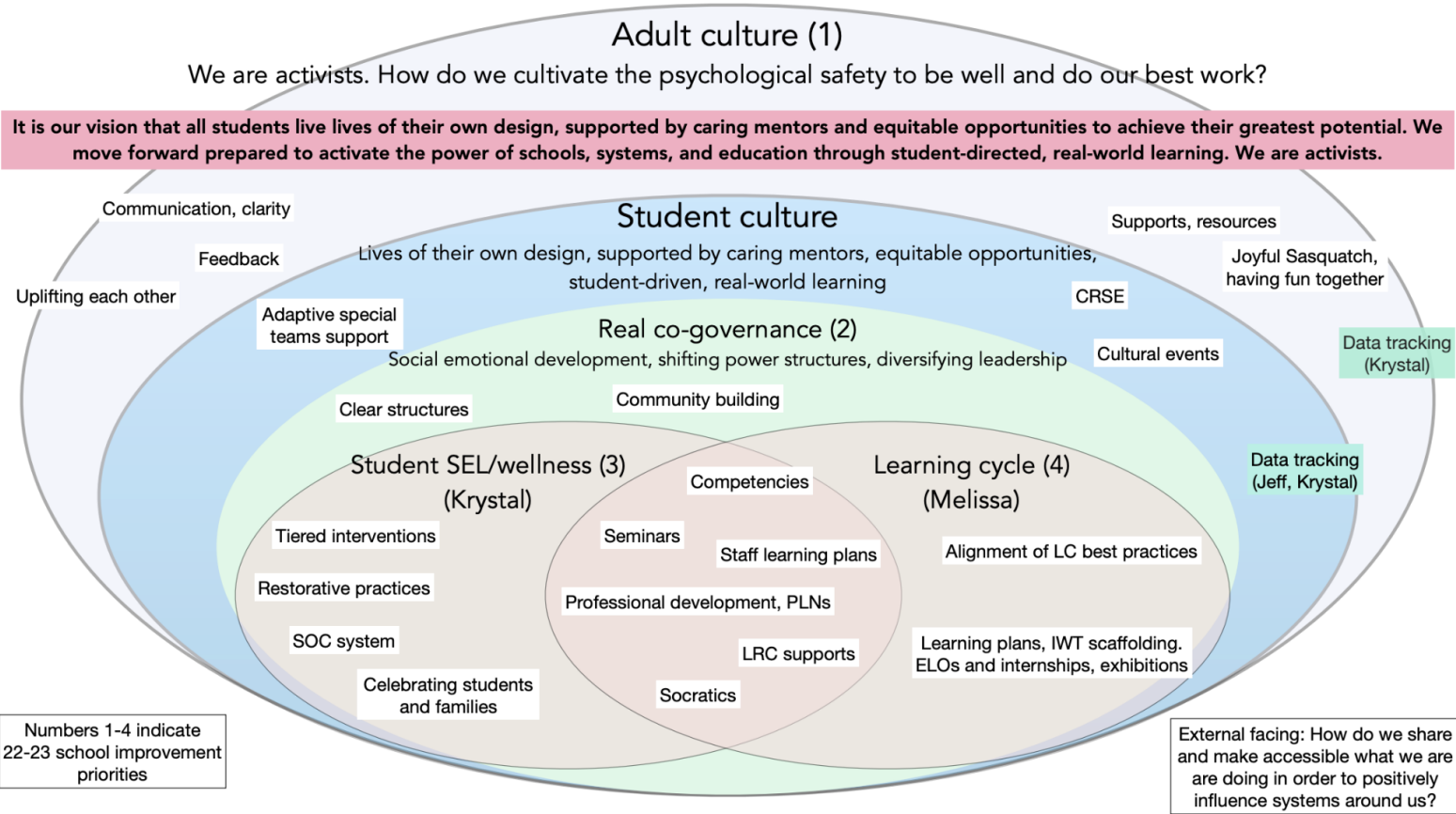
Application for renewal of waiver from credit-based graduation requirements - February 2023

This document includes recent highlights related to Highline Big Picture’s programs and activities implemented as a result of the current waiver, including evidence of whether deeper learning for students has occurred. Also included are indicators of Big Picture’s focus on equity and Culturally Responsive Sustaining Education (CRSE), our rationale for obtaining and renewing the waiver.

1. Current enrollment is the highest in school’s history, with waitlists at multiple grade levels
2. Several years ago Highline Big Picture was added to a lottery admissions process for some Highline schools drawing students from across the district. In 2020 we identified a concerning trend in enrollment data for our 6th graders. For the past two years we have targeted recruitment to fifth grade classrooms in Highline’s elementary schools with the highest percentage of low income families.

Incoming 6th grade data - Big Picture											
ENROLLING Fall 2020				APPLYING for Fall 2021				APPLYING for Fall 2022			
	18-19 FRL data							FRL 20-21			
Marvista	4			Marvista	9			33.2 Marvista	4		
N Hill	6			N Hill	6			35.1 N Hill	2		
Val View	0			Val View	0			42.7 Val View	0		
Greg Hts	9			Greg Hts	9			44.9 Greg Hts	9		
Shorewood	3			Shorewood	9			48.8 Shorewood	3		
Des Moines	4	<60%FRL	26 76%	Des Moines	9	42	53%	49.9 Des Moines	4	22	24%
Mount View	1	>70%FRL		Mount View	3			52.7 Mount View	1		
Southern Hts	0			Southern Hts	0			63.3 Southern Hts	0		
Midway	0		1 3%	Midway	0	3	4%	61 Midway	5	6	6%
Cedarhurst	1	>80%FRL		Cedarhurst	4			71 Cedarhurst	10		
Hazel Valley	2			Hazel Valley	5			60.9 Hazel Valley	5		
Parkside	0			Parkside	5			64.9 Parkside	6		
Hilltop	0			Hilltop	2			65.9 Hilltop	4		
Bev Park	0			Bev Park	0			63.3 Bev Park	3		
Bow lake	0			Bow lake	1			69.4 Bow lake	3		
McMicken	0			McMicken	3			74.5 McMicken	11		
Seahurst	1			Seahurst	3			58.4 Seahurst	2		
White Ctr Hts	1			White Ctr Hts	3			61.8 White Ctr Hts	8		
Madrona	1		6 18%	Madrona	1	27	34%	68.7 Madrona	9	61	66%
				unknown	2						
charter	1		3%	N/A	2			Rainier Prep	1		
				Kent Mtn View (~30%FRL)	1			Three Tree Montessori	1		
				Arbor Hts (SPS, ~ 17% FRL)	1			Bridge School Cooperative	1		
				Tukwila Academy prep	1			Westline International School	1		
<b>TOTAL</b> (enrolled)	34			<b>TOTAL</b> (applied to lottery)	79			<b>Total</b>	93		

- 3. In the 2020-21 school year we made this recruitment video, which is mostly students sharing about various aspects of the school. [Recruitment video](#)
- 4. In 2021-22, we produced a video to thank internship mentors. This also gives a good sense of the range of internship opportunities. [Internship mentor appreciation video](#)
- 5. For the 2022-23 school year we overhauled SEL/CRSE staffing and supports. We now have a full time school social worker, a middle school SEL specialist, and a grant-funded Student Advocacy Specialist. These shifts are in response to various equity concerns raised by students and staff as well as a clear need for increased social and emotional learning supports following the pandemic.
- 6. Mastery Based Learning Collaborative grant. In 2021-22, Highline Big Picture became part of Washington’s new Mastery Based Learning Collaborative. The graphic below represents current school improvement priorities, including strengthening alignment of learning cycle practices and elevating SEL supports for staff, students, and families.



**HIGHLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 401**

**RESOLUTION NO. 16-23**

A RESOLUTION requesting a waiver from the state high school graduation requirements for Highline Big Picture School in Highline Public Schools.

WHEREAS, Highline Public Schools is a duly organized political subdivision of the State of Washington; and

WHEREAS, WAC 180-51-210 outlines the minimum subject areas for high school graduation credits for students in the class of 2021 and beyond; and

WHEREAS, WAC 180-18-055 outlines a process for alternative high school graduation requirements; and

WHEREAS, the Highline School District Board of Directors has established a vision for college and career preparation for all high school students in the context of rigorous standards; and

WHEREAS, the Highline School District Board of Directors believes that students require a variety of approaches to meet that vision, and therefore innovation is critical; and

WHEREAS, the Highline School District Board of Directors has a bold goal of every student being prepared for the future they choose; and

WHEREAS, that goal will be best served by allowing schools like Highline Big Picture the freedom to innovate while being held to high standards;

NOW, THEREFORE:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Directors of Highline School District No. 401, King County, Washington, approves the application of Highline Big Picture School to the State Board of Education requesting renewal of its waiver from the requirements of WAC 180-51-210 (2) through (5), (7), and (8).

ADOPTED this 1st day of March, 2023.

HIGHLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 401

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Board of Directors

I, Ivan Duran, Secretary to the Board of Directors of Highline School District No. 401, do hereby certify that the above is a true and accurate copy of Resolution No. 16-23 for the use and purpose intended.

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Ivan Duran, Ed.D.  
Secretary to the Board