

The board recognizes the importance of setting rigorous graduation requirements to help ensure that students are receiving an education that will prepare them to be career and college ready and productive members of society.

In order to graduate from high school, students must meet the following requirements:

1. successful completion of all course unit requirements mandated by the State Board of Education (see Section A);
2. successful completion of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (“CPR”) instruction; and
3. successful completion of all other requirements mandated by the board, as provided in this policy.

The principal shall ensure that students and parents are aware of all graduation requirements. Guidance program staff shall assist students in selecting their high school courses to ensure that students are taking all of the required units and selecting electives consistent with their post-graduation plans. For students who have transferred to the school system during high school or who, for other reasons, have completed course work outside of the school system, the principal shall determine what course work will be applied as credit toward graduation. The principal shall consider the requirements of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (G.S. 115C-407.5) and the requirements of subsection C.3 of this policy in determining the graduation requirements for children of military families.

A. COURSE UNITS REQUIRED

All students must fulfill the course unit requirements of the Future-Ready Core Course of Study, unless they are approved for the Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study. The tables in subsections A.1 and A.2, below, list the course unit requirements for the Future-Ready Core Course of Study applicable to students who entered ninth grade for the first time during the 2013-2014 school year or thereafter. Students who entered the ninth grade for the first time before the 2013-2014 school year should consult their guidance counselors to determine applicable course unit requirements for graduation.

In accordance with policy 3101, Dual Enrollment, and State Board of Education requirements, students may earn high school credit for college courses completed. In addition, students may earn credit for certain high school courses in the Future-Ready Core Course of Study completed while in middle school, as authorized by the State Board of Education. Students also have the opportunity to meet course unit requirements without completing the regular period of classroom instruction by demonstrating mastery of the course material in accordance with policy 3420, Student Promotion and Accountability, and State Board of Education requirements.

All awards of high school course credit must be consistent with State Board of Education requirements. Any inconsistency between board policy and State Board graduation requirements will be resolved by following the State Board requirements. While the board endeavors to keep its policy up to date with current State Board of Education graduation requirements, students should verify current requirements with their guidance counselors when planning course schedules or making other decisions based on graduation requirements.

1. Future-Ready Core Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2015-2016 and Thereafter

Courses Required*	State Requirements	Additional Local Requirements
English	4 sequential (English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	4 (NC Math 1, 2, and 3, and a fourth math course aligned with the student's post-high school plans.)** (A principal may exempt a student from this math sequence. Exempt students will be required to pass NC Math 1 and 2 and two other application-based math courses or selected CTE courses, as identified on the NC DPI math options chart.)***	
Science	3 (a physical science course, Biology, and earth/environmental science)	
Social Studies	4 (including American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics; American History Parts I and II; and World History)****	
Health/P.E.	1	
Electives	6 (2 electives must be any combination of Career and Technical Education, Arts Education, or World Language; 4 must be from one of the following: Career and Technical Education, J.R.O.T.C., Arts Education, or any other subject area or cross-disciplinary course. A four-course concentration is recommended.)*****	CHHS: 0 THS/PHS/ HEC: 6
Total Credits	22	CHHS: 22 THS/PHS/ HEC*****: 28

* Certain International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced Placement (AP) courses will satisfy specific graduation requirements. See SBE Policy GRAD-008.

** Students entering ninth grade for the first time prior to the 2014-15 school year have alternate math course options. See SBE Policy GRAD-004.

*** Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete four mathematics courses, including a fourth math course with Math 3 as a prerequisite. The math options chart is available at <http://maccss.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/file/view/Math%20Options%20Chart%209.5.2014.pdf/522504358/Math%20Options%20Chart%209.5.2014.pdf>.

**** American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics must follow the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) in its entirety and may not be satisfied by an AP/IB course, dual enrollment, or any other course that does not fully address the NCSCOS.

***** Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete two years of a second language.

***** HEC students will also complete community college courses to fulfill the requirements of an associate degree.

2. Future-Ready Core Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2013-2014 or 2014-2015

Courses Required*	State Requirements	Additional Local Requirements
English	4 sequential (English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	4 (NC Math 1, 2, and 3, and a fourth math course aligned with the student's post-high school plans.)** (A principal may exempt a student from this math sequence. Exempt students will be required to pass NC Math 1 and 2 and two other application-based math courses or selected CTE courses, as identified on the NC DPI math options chart.)***	
Science	3 (a physical science course, Biology, and earth/environmental science)	
Social Studies	4 (including American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics; American History Parts I and II; and World History)****	
Health/P.E.	1	
Electives	6 (2 electives must be any combination of Career and Technical Education, Arts Education, or World Language; 4 must be from one of the following: Career and Technical Education, J.R.O.T.C., Arts Education, or any other subject area or cross-disciplinary course. A four-course concentration is recommended.)*****	CHHS: 0 THS: 2 PHS/HEC: 6
Total Credits	22	CHHS: 22 THS: 24 PHS: 28 HEC: 28*****

* Certain International Baccalaureate (IB) and Advanced Placement (AP) courses will satisfy specific graduation requirements. See SBE Policy GRAD-008.

** Students entering ninth grade for the first time prior to the 2014-15 school year have alternate math course options. See SBE Policy GRAD-004.

*** Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete four mathematics courses, including a fourth math course with Math 3 as a prerequisite. The math options chart is available at <http://maccess.ncdpi.wikispaces.net/file/view/Math%20Options%20Chart%209.5.2014.pdf/522504358/Math%20Options%20Chart%209.5.2014.pdf>.

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***** Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete two years of a second language.

***** HEC students will also complete community college courses to fulfill the requirements of an associate degree.

3. Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study Credits Required (only available to certain students with disabilities who have an IEP)

Courses Required	State Requirements	Additional Local Requirements
English	4 (including English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	3 (including Introduction to Math, Math 1, and Financial Management)	
Science	2 (including Applied Science and Biology)	
Social Studies	2 (including American History I and II)	
Health/P.E.	1	
Career/Technical	4 (Vocational Education electives)	
Occupational Preparation	6 (including Occupational Preparation I, II, III, and IV, which require 150 hours of school-based training, 225 hours of community-based training, and 225 hours of paid employment*)	
Electives	0	
Other Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of IEP objectives • Career Portfolio 	
Total Credits	22	

* Paid employment is the expectation; however, when paid employment is not available, 225 hours of unpaid vocational training, unpaid internship experience, paid employment at community rehabilitation facilities, and volunteer and/or community service hours may substitute for 225 hours of paid employment.

B. HIGH SCHOOL FINAL EXAMS AND END-OF-COURSE TESTING

High school students must take all end-of-course (EOC) tests, NC Final Exams, and Career and Technical Education State Assessments (CTE Post-Assessments) required by the State Board of Education and pursuant to policy 3410, Testing and Assessment Program.

C. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The board adopts the following policies with regard to graduation.

1. Honor Graduates

Honor graduates may be designated by principals on the basis of criteria established by the superintendent. Recognition of honor graduates may be included in graduation programs.

2. Students with Disabilities

Graduation requirements must be applied to students with disabilities to the extent required by state and federal law and State Board policy.

3. Children of Military Families

In order to facilitate the on-time graduation of children of military families, the

board adopts the following policy provisions for students to whom the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children applies.

a. Waiver Requirements

Specific course work required for graduation will be waived if similar course work has been satisfactorily completed in another school system. If a waiver is not granted, school administrators shall provide the student with reasonable justification for the denial. If a waiver is not granted to a student who would qualify to graduate from the sending school, the superintendent or designee shall provide the student with an alternative means of acquiring the required course work so that the student may graduate on time.

b. Testing Requirements for Graduation

The superintendent shall accept the following in lieu of any local testing requirements for graduation: (1) the end-of-course exams required for graduation from the sending state; (2) national norm-referenced achievement tests; or (3) alternative testing. If these alternatives are not feasible for a student who has transferred in his or her senior year, subsection c below will apply.

c. Transfers During Senior Year

If a child of a military family who has transferred at the beginning of or during his or her senior year is ineligible to graduate from the school system after all of the alternatives listed above have been considered and the student meets the graduation requirements at his or her sending school, then school officials from the school system shall collaborate with the sending school system to ensure that the student will receive a diploma from the sending board of education.

4. Early Graduation

Graduation prior to that of one's class may be permitted at the discretion of the principal on the basis of criteria approved by the superintendent. At a minimum, the criteria must require the student to successfully complete all state and local graduation requirements as outlined in this policy.

5. Graduation Certificates

Graduation certificates will be awarded to eligible students in accordance with the standards set forth in State Board policy.

6. Diploma

A diploma will be awarded to all students who satisfy all state and local graduation requirements as outlined in this policy.

7. Diploma Endorsements

Students have the opportunity to earn one or more of the following diploma endorsements identifying a particular area of focused study based on criteria established by the State Board of Education: (1) Career Endorsement, (2) College Endorsement (two options), (3) North Carolina Academic Scholars Endorsement, and/or (4) Global Languages Endorsement. No endorsement is required to receive a diploma.

8. Merit Sticker

A merit sticker will be awarded to all students who satisfy all state and local graduation requirements and who (1) rank in the top ten percent (10%) of their high school's graduating class and (2) achieve a score on the SAT or ACT which is higher than the previous year's national average.

9. Minimum Credit High School Diploma Program

In extreme or emergency situations, the principal may, at his or her discretion, recommend a student for participation in the Minimum Credit High School Diploma Program. Through the program, a student may graduate and receive his or her diploma upon satisfying the minimum state requirements for graduation as outlined in Section A, above (22 total credits with no additional local requirements).

The principal must complete the necessary referral form and submit it to the Minimum Credit Diploma Review Panel. The panel will be convened by the secondary supervisor, and should include (1) the assistant superintendent, (2) an administrator from a high school other than the one attended by the student, and (3) a central office supervisor. The panel will review the principal's referral consistent with criteria established by the superintendent and then make a formal recommendation to the principal, who will ultimately decide whether the student may graduate upon satisfying the minimum state requirements for graduation.

10. Other Constraints

- a. No student will be permitted to register for a course load of less than 8 courses per year at any high school, unless he or she receives special permission from the principal.
- b. No student will be permitted to enroll in more than one (1) English course during the regular school day, and a student's initial enrollment in a high school English course will not be permitted outside of the regular school day, unless an exception is otherwise authorized by the principal.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-47, -81, -174.11, -276, -288, -407.5; State Board of Education Policies CCRE-001, GRAD-004, GRAD-007, GRAD-008, GRAD-010, TEST-003

Cross References: Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Testing and Assessment Program (policy 3410), Student Promotion and Accountability (policy 3420), Citizenship and Character Education (policy 3530), Children of Military Families (policy 4050)

Adopted: April 20, 2015

Revised: November 9, 2015; December 12, 2016; May 24, 2017 (legal citations only)