

Policy Code: 3460 Graduation Requirements

The Wake County Board of Education 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. beginning in the 2014-2015 school year, successful completion of cardiopulmonary resuscitation 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, in accordance with regulations included in the associated R&P. ~~Students re-enrolling in the school system following a suspension or expulsion may receive credit toward graduation for courses successfully completed during the time of suspension or expulsion from the Wake County Public schools. If credit is granted, grades will be recorded as "Pass" (P) or "Fail" (F).~~

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

~~Beginning with students entering the ninth grade for the first time in the 2009-2010 school year, all~~ 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. Course unit requirements for the Future-Ready Core Course of Study differ depending on the year a student enters ninth grade for the first time. In accordance with State Board of Education requirements, students may earn high school credit for college courses completed.

~~In addition,~~ In accordance with policy 3101, Dual Enrollment, and State Board of Education requirements 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](#), [Policy 3422, Access to Rigor](#), and State Board of Education requirements.

In the high schools, a student shall carry a course load equal to the number of instructional periods in the school day, unless special permission is given to the student by the principal. Students approved for Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs or for dual enrollment in post-secondary schools are exempt from the course load requirement outlined in this policy.

All awards of high school course credit must be consistent with [State Board of Education requirements](#) (~~State Board Policy GCS-N-004 State Graduation 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 school counselors when planning course schedules or making other decisions based on graduation requirements.](#)

High school graduation in the Wake County Public School System requires completion of all requirements set by the State Board of Education, plus completion of local graduation requirements adopted by the Board. Among other requirements, the Wake County Board of Education requires completion of twenty-six (26) units of high school credits in order to earn a diploma. Students enrolled in certain alternative programs or early colleges, or students on a modified [graduation plan schedule](#) as approved by the principal, may earn a diploma upon completion of twenty-two (22) high school credits and the other requirements of the particular program. Graduation requirements that are school specific shall be approved by the board and made available to students and parents in the WCPSS High School Program Planning Guide.

In addition to Future Ready Core diploma requirements, the UNC Board of Governors has established minimum admission requirements (MAR) for UNC system schools. These requirements include two levels of the same world language and four units of mathematics with the fourth [unit being a level beyond Algebra II or its equivalent course with Math 3 as a prerequisite](#). MAR will be included annually in the [High School Program Planning Guide](#)

B. High School Final Exams and End-of-Course Testing

High school students must take all end-of-course (EOC) tests, other final exams, and Career and Technical Education State Assessments (CTE Post-Assessments) required by the State Board of Education.

C. Special Circumstances

The board adopts the following policies with regard to graduation.

1. Honor Graduates

In addition to the Latin honors recognized by policy 3450 Class Rankings, Honor graduates may be designated ~~by principals~~ on the basis of criteria established by the ~~principal 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 on the basis of criteria approved by the board upon recommendation by the superintendent.

5. Graduation Certificates

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

~~Graduation exercises may be held within one week of the 180th school day of each school year. The time, date, and location of graduation exercises shall be approved by the superintendent. The graduation program shall be approved by the principal.~~

~~Upon completion of course work or graduation, each student shall be given written notice that he/she is entitled to one free copy of his/her high school transcript.~~

6. Diploma Endorsements

Students have the opportunity to earn one or more of the following diploma endorsements identifying a particular area of focused study: (1) Career Endorsement, (2) College Endorsement (two options), (3) North Carolina Academic Scholars Endorsement, and/or (4) a Global Languages Endorsement. No endorsement is required to receive a diploma. Diploma endorsements will be implemented in alignment with State Board policy and will be referenced annually in the High School Program Planning Guide.

~~Legal References: G.S. 115C-47, -81, -174.11, -276, -288, -407.5; State Board of Education Policies GCS-C-003, GCS-L-007, GCS-M-001, GCS-N-004, -010~~

Legal References: G.S. 115C-12(40), -47, -81.25(c)(10)(c), -81.45(d), -81.65, -174.11, -276, -288, -407.5; 16 N.C.A.C. 6D .0309; State Board of Education Policies CCRE-001, GRAD-004, GRAD-007, GRAD-008, GRAD-010, TEST-003

Adopted: September 6, 2016

Wake County Board of Education