



Connecticut High School Graduation Requirements Unpacked

Brief 1: Introduction to the Series

In 2017 the Connecticut General Assembly took a bold step in its journey to create a graduation diploma system that prepares all students for the future of their choosing while allowing local districts, schools, and students the flexibility to create a wide variety of learning pathways. A summary of the major changes to the graduation requirements is captured in the table below. They include an increase in the number of required credits, significant emphasis on flexibility and multiple pathways, less restrictive course requirements, required students supports and remediation, and a new mastery-based diploma assessment requirement. This new law maintains the provision around mastery-based learning and graduation.

Over the course of the next several weeks, we will be publishing brief updates that dig into each of the individual areas below with resources, ideas, and considerations for implementation. These updates will help you think about these areas for opportunities in ways that build upon the work you’re already engaged in and are simple, actionable, and have the potential to profoundly impact students.

Updates and Clarifications from the Revision of the Statute

	2015 Graduation Requirements For the Classes Graduating from 2004-2022	2017 Graduation Requirements For the Class of 2023
Total Number of Credits	Complete a minimum of 20 credits	Complete a minimum of 25 credits
Specific Credit Requirements	Including not fewer than: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4 in English, ▪ 3 in social studies, including at least a 1/2 credit course on civics and American government, ▪ 3 in mathematics, ▪ not fewer than 2 in science, ▪ not fewer than 1 in physical education ▪ not fewer than 1 in the arts or vocational education 	Including not fewer than: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (A) 9 credits in the humanities, including civics and the arts; (B) 9 credits in science, technology, engineering and mathematics; (C) 1 credit in physical education and wellness; (D) one credit in health and safety education, as described in section 10-16b;



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		(E) 1 credit in world languages, subject to the provisions of subsection (g) of this section; and (F) a 1 credit mastery-based diploma assessment
Student Support + Remedial Services	Requires local and regional boards of education to “provide adequate student support and remedial services for students beginning in grade seven. Such supports and remedial services shall provide alternate means for a student to complete any of the high school graduation requirements or end of the school year examinations described in this section” for the class of 2021.	Requires local and regional boards of education to “provide adequate student support and remedial services for students beginning in grade seven. Such supports and remedial services shall provide alternate means for a student to complete any of the high school graduation requirements described in this section” for the class of 2023.
Mastery-Based Learning + Graduation	Allows districts to award credits based on a demonstration of mastery Statutory language: “For purposes of this section, a credit shall consist of not less than the equivalent of a forty-minute class period for each school day of a school year except for a credit or part of a credit toward high school graduation earned (1) at an institution accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education or regionally accredited, (2) through on-line coursework that is in accordance with a policy adopted pursuant to subsection (g) of this section, or (3) through a demonstration of mastery based on competency and performance standards, in accordance with guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education.”	Statute maintains provisions that allows districts to award credits based on a demonstration of mastery Statutory language: “For purposes of this section, a credit shall consist of not less than the equivalent of a forty-minute class period for each school day of a school year except for a credit or part of a credit toward high school graduation earned (1) at an institution accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education or regionally accredited, (2) through on-line coursework that is in accordance with a policy adopted pursuant to subsection (g) of this section, or (3) through a demonstration of mastery based on competency and performance standards, in accordance with guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education.”
Multiple Pathways	Previous statutory pathways language: “(g) Only courses taken in grades nine to twelve, inclusive, shall satisfy the graduation requirements set forth in this section, except that a local or regional	Current version keeps the section in the left-hand column and expands multiple pathways opportunities by adding the following language: “A local or regional board of education may grant a student credit (1) toward

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	<p>board of education may grant a student credit (1) toward meeting a specified course requirement upon the successful completion in grade seven or eight of any course, the primary focus of which corresponds directly to the subject matter of a specified course requirement in grades nine to twelve, inclusive; (2) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of a world language course (A) in grade six, seven or eight, (B) through on-line coursework, or (C) offered privately through a nonprofit provider, provided such student achieves a passing grade on an examination prescribed, within available appropriations, by the Commissioner of Education and such credits do not exceed four; (3) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon achievement of a passing grade on a subject area proficiency examination identified and approved, within available appropriations, by the Commissioner of Education, regardless of the number of hours the student spent in a public school classroom learning such subject matter; (4) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of coursework during the school year or summer months at an institution accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education or regionally accredited. One three-credit semester course, or its equivalent, at such an institution shall equal one-half credit for purposes of this section; (5) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of on-line coursework, provided the local or regional board of education has adopted a policy in accordance with this subdivision for the granting of credit for on-line coursework.</p>	<p>meeting the high school graduation requirements upon the successful demonstration of mastery of the subject matter content described in this section achieved through educational experiences and opportunities that provide flexible and multiple pathways to learning, including cross-curricular graduation requirements, career and technical education, virtual learning, work-based learning, service learning, dual enrollment and early college, courses taken in middle school, internships and student-designed independent studies, provided such demonstration of mastery is in accordance with such state-wide subject matter content standards.”</p>

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	<p>Such a policy shall ensure, at a minimum, that (A) the workload required by the on-line course is equivalent to that of a similar course taught in a traditional classroom setting, (B) the content is rigorous and aligned with curriculum guidelines approved by the State Board of Education, where appropriate, (C) the course engages students and has interactive components, which may include, but are not limited to, required interactions between students and their teachers, participation in on-line demonstrations, discussion boards or virtual labs, (D) the program of instruction for such on-line coursework is planned, ongoing and systematic, and (E) the courses are (i) taught by teachers who are certified in the state or another state and have received training on teaching in an on-line environment, or (ii) offered by institutions of higher education that are accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education or regionally accredited; or (6) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of the academic advancement program, pursuant to section 10-5c.”</p>	
<p>Student Success Plan</p>	<p>“(i)(2)(j)For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, each local and regional board of education shall create a student success plan for each student enrolled in a public school, beginning in grade six. Such student success plan shall include a student’s career and academic choices in grades six to twelve, inclusive.”</p>	<p>This requirement remains unchanged.</p>

Outline of the Series

This brief is the first in a seven-part series. It provides an introduction to the resources that will be sent to you in the coming weeks as well as an explanation of the new changes to the graduation statute. Over the coming weeks, we will be sharing similar documents that address each of the topics in the order listed below. Each of the briefs will provide a high-level overview with links and references to additional materials.

Brief 1	Introduction to the Series
Brief 2	Elements of Effective Instruction
Brief 3	Flexible and Multiple Pathways
Brief 4	Mastery-Based Learning
Brief 5	Mastery-Based Diploma Assessment
Brief 6	Local Policy
Brief 7	Community Engagement + Communications

For More Information

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