

Lower Merion School District

Policy No.: 217
Section: STUDENTS
Title: HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION
REQUIREMENTS
Date Adopted: 9/73; 7/15/02; 12/83
Date Last Revised: 3/16/26; 3/18/24; 3/3/23;
5/16/22; 9/28/15; 12/8/06 Reviewed – no changes

217 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

For graduation from high school, students must meet all subject and credit requirements established by state law including the Pennsylvania School Code, Pennsylvania State Board of Education Regulations and Pennsylvania Department of Education Standards (collectively “state law”). Students must also satisfy all policies and regulations established by the Lower Merion School District.

Minimum Credit Requirements for Graduation

Effective with the 2024-25 school year, before a diploma will be awarded by the Board of School Directors, a student must earn at least 21.5 credits as specified below. All students are required to complete a minimum of 5.25 credits per year during each year of high school.

Any requirements imposed by state law in excess of the requirements set forth below must also be met, including compliance with *Pennsylvania Pathways to Graduation*.

Required Areas of Study

The minimum (21.5 credit) high school program shall include:

English – 4.0 Credits (Four Courses Minimum)

- English 1 (Grade 9): 1.0 credit
- English 2 (Grade 10): 1.0 credit
- Grade 11 full-year English course: 1.0 credit
- Grade 12 full-year English course: 1.0 credit

Social Studies – 4.0 Credits (Four Courses Minimum)

- Global Studies 1 (Grade 9): 1.0 credit
- Global Studies 2 (Grade 10): 1.0 credit
- United States History (Grade 11): 1.0 credit
- United States Government (Grade 12): 1.0 credit

Mathematics – 3.0 Credits (Three Courses Minimum)

- Mathematics courses as designated in the high school program planning guide.

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Science – 3.0 Credits (Three Courses Minimum)

- Science courses as designated in the high school program planning guide.

Arts and Humanities – 1.0 Credit

Courses that satisfy the Arts and Humanities requirement include:

- Any course in the Art, Music, or World Language departments.
- Any additional course in the English or Social Studies departments beyond the required four credits in each content area.

For purposes of this requirement, the Arts are defined as Visual Arts, Music, Dance, Film Studies, Theater, Practical Arts, and Crafts. The Humanities are defined as subjects that embrace literature, languages, history, philosophy, or additional courses in English and Social Studies. Courses that satisfy this requirement are recommended by the high school principal and approved by the Superintendent or designee.

Health and Physical Education – 1.5 Credits Total

- Physical Education (eight semesters; one semester per year):
 - o PE 9: 0.33 credits
 - o PE 10: 0.33 credits
 - o PE 11: 0.33 credits
 - o PE 12: 0.33 credits
- Health: 0.5 credit

Personal Finance – 0.5 Credit

Beginning with the Class of 2030, all students must complete a one-half credit course in personal finance as a condition of graduation.

Senior Project – 0.5 Credit

As a condition of graduation, seniors must complete a culminating Senior Experience, as defined in the high school program planning guide.

Electives

A sufficient number of elective credits must be earned to meet the minimum total credit requirement of 21.5 credits.

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Authorized Courses and Substitutions

The English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Health, Physical Education, Arts and Humanities, and Senior Project requirements may be met by satisfactory completion of courses authorized by the Superintendent and designated in the high school program planning guide.

Students enrolled in an approved Career and Technical School Program may substitute appropriate Career and Technical School courses to satisfy graduation requirements (for example a credit in math or a credit in science). Approval for these substitutions will be granted by building level teams to the extent necessary for scheduling the student into the Career and Technical program.

Obtaining A High School Diploma in Less Than Four Years

The Board of School Directors, in an effort to increase the options available to students with regard to the receipt of a high school diploma, sets forth the following requirements for obtaining a District high school diploma in less than four years.

A high school diploma may be awarded if:

1. A student is admitted to an accredited college at the conclusion of the student’s third year of high school and successfully completes their first year of college; or,
2. A student completes all graduation requirements through attendance at regular and/or summer sessions at Lower Merion or Harriton High Schools, or at other accredited high schools.

In order to qualify for a diploma as specified above, a student must:

- A. Submit a written request to the student’s school counselor, signed by both the student and the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s), specifying the purpose of the request and outlining a tentative program for fulfilling all graduation requirements;
- B. Obtain approval from the student’s school counselor; and,
- C. Receive final approval from the building Principal.