

ORANGE COUNTY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION

AGENDA ITEM ABSTRACT

Meeting Date: May 2, 2011

AGENDA  
ITEM No. 11-05-10

ACTION: (Y/N) Y

SUBJECT: Graduation Requirements Policy # 3460 Revised- 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading Approval

INFO. CONTACT: Dr. Denise Morton/Dr. Mary Calhoun PHONE: (919) 732-8126

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Policy #3460 - Graduation Requirements - Revisions

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**PURPOSE:** To provide the Board of Education for second reading approval, the proposed revised Policy 3460-Graduation Requirements.

**BACKGROUND:** Policy #3460 – Graduation Requirements is revised to comply with the decision by the State Board of Education to end state-required performance gateways effective with the 2010-2011 school year.

This policy, along with Policy #3420 Student Promotion and Accountability (which was approved by the Board of Education on April 18, 2011) are the two policies that are modified as a result of the State Board of Education revising their accountability requirements.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** None

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Superintendent recommends that the Board of Education approve for second reading the revised Policy #3460 – Graduation Requirements.

# GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Date Reviewed/Approved:

Policy Number:  
3460

Rescinds Policy Number:

Issued: 12/6/2004, 3/6/2006, 9/18/2006,  
6/4/07, 5/5/08, 02/02/09, 09/08/09, 8/16/10

The board recognizes the importance of setting rigorous graduation requirements in order to help ensure that students are receiving an education that will prepare them for life and work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## STATE REQUIREMENTS

### Ninth Grade Class of 2006-2007

In order to graduate from a North Carolina public high school, students entering the ninth grade for the first time in 2006-07 and beyond will be required to meet new exit standards and complete all requirements in order to obtain a high school diploma. The exit standards will only apply to students following the Career Preparation, College Technical Preparation, or College University Preparation courses of study. These students will be required to pass five end-of-course (EOC) courses. The five required EOC courses are Algebra I, Biology, English I, Civics & Economics, and U.S. History. Students following the Occupational Course of Study are required to meet a different set of exit standards as outlined in State Board of Education policy GCS-N-004 (16 NCAC 6D.0503).

### Ninth Grade Class of 2009-2010

#### Future-Ready Core Curriculum Graduation Requirements (27 credits required)

Effective with the class entering the ninth grade for the first time in the 2009-10 school year (Class of 2013), the following units will be required for graduation under the Future Ready Core. These students will also be required to perform at achievement level three or above on the five End-of-Course assessments. The Occupational Course of study is available for eligible students.

SUBJECT AREA UNITS	COURSES
<p><b>4 Mathematics Units</b></p> <p>Students seeking to complete minimum application requirements for UNC universities must complete four mathematics courses, including a course of Algebra I as a pre-requisite.</p>	<p>Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II AND A 4<sup>th</sup> math course aligned with the student's post high school plans</p> <p>Exemptions In the rare instance a principal exempts a student from the Future-Ready Core mathematics sequence, except as limited by N.C.G.S. 115C-81(b), the student will be required to pass: Algebra I, Geometry plus either Applied Mathematics I and Applied Mathematics II or two application-based mathematics courses as determined by the LEA* OR Algebra I and Algebra II plus either Applied Mathematics I and Applied Mathematics II or two application-based mathematics courses as determined by the LEA</p>
<p><b>4 English Units</b></p>	<p>English I, II, III, IV OR English I, II, III, AP English</p>

<b>3 Social Studies Units</b>	World History US History Civics and Economics
<b>3 Science Units</b>	Biology An earth/environmental science A physical science
<b>1 Physical Education Unit</b>	Physical Education Health  Note: PE may not be taken as a correspondence or on-line course.
<b>Elective Units:</b>  <b>12 Units</b>  <b>The State requires at least 6 elective units.</b>  <b>*Remaining electives determined by student choice.</b>	Two electives being any combination of Career & Technical Education, Arts Education, or World Languages and four elective units in a course cluster.  Students will complete a four-course cluster focused on student interests and postsecondary goals through a rigorous, in-depth and linked study. In the Orange County Schools, clusters are available to students in the Humanities, World Languages, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), Career and Technical Education, Health and Fitness, and International Baccalaureate (IB). Note: The course clusters could also include student's community college concurrent enrollment, Learn and Earn, and university dual enrollment.**  Students seeking to complete minimum application requirements for UNC universities must complete two years of a world language.
<b>TOTAL UNITS 27</b>	

\* Exemptions to the mathematics requirement for a particular student requires a recommendation and/or request from the parent or school personnel. In that rare instance, the principal will initiate the process of review and consideration of the request through a two-tiered committee process, one at the school level (for review of student information) and one at the district level (for review and decision making) with recommendations being made to the principal for final review and a decision. (refer to page 5 of this policy for the "opt-out" exemption review process)

\*\* Students can tailor their course cluster to fit their interests and goals while building a strong academic foundation. Under the six total elective units required for graduation, four elective credits (a four course cluster) will be taken from one of the following areas of focus: Career and Technical Education, Arts Education or other designated subject areas (e.g. mathematics, science). The remaining two electives must be any combination from Career and Technical Education, Arts Education or World Languages.

For some students identified as Exceptional Children, the Occupational Course of Study will remain an option. These students should have the Occupational Course of Study identified in their Individualized Education Program.

**LOCAL BOARD REQUIREMENTS**

Students also are required to meet all graduation requirements of this board. Effective with the 2006-2007 school year a student must earn the following credits in order to graduate:

Spring 2009                    25 Credits

Spring 2010 (and beyond) 27 Credits

**High School Promotion Standards**

For students transitioning from a six period day to a block schedule, the high school promotion requirements will be: To be promoted from junior to senior (graduating class of 2008/2009) – a minimum of 16 credits.

Effective with the Freshman Class of 2006:

For classification as a sophomore, a student must have earned 6 credits.

For classification as a junior, a student must have earned 12 credits.

For classification as a senior, a student must have earned 20 credits.

**Final Examinations**

- All high school exams will count 25% of the final grade.
- Exam Exemption: Only seniors with six or fewer absences in a block course and an 'A' average will be exempt from exams. If a senior is enrolled in a yearlong course, exam exemption will only be granted for twelve or fewer absences and an 'A' average.
- No student may be exempt from a state end-of-course exam. However, students following the Occupational Course of Study are required to meet a different set of exit standards as outlined in State Board of Education policy HSP-N-004 (16 NCAC 6D.0503).

The principal is responsible for ensuring that parents and students are aware of all graduation requirements. The guidance program should assist students in planning their high school courses to help ensure that students are taking all of the required units and selecting electives consistent with their post-graduate plans. For students who have transferred to the school district during high school, or for other reasons have completed course work outside of the school district, the principal will determine what course work will be applied as credit for graduation.

**SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

The board adopts the following policies to address special circumstances regarding graduation:

**1. Honor Graduates**

- Honor graduates may be designated by the principals on the basis of criteria established by the superintendent. Recognition of honor graduates shall be included in graduation programs.
- Calculations for Valedictorian and Salutatorian Honors will be computed after final exams just prior to graduation.

**2. Early Graduation**

- The Board supports the right to meet graduation requirements in fewer than the standard four years when specific criteria are met. Allowing early graduation recognizes student differences and fosters self-motivation. Decisions related to early graduation require considerable planning and must be initiated in a timely manner. The student must meet the following criteria:

1. Written notification of intent to graduate early must be submitted to the building level principal no later than the first five (5) days of the academic year the student wishes to be awarded a diploma. Earlier notification is preferred.
2. A transcript reflecting the completion of prerequisite courses and sufficient number of earned units must be presented to the principal.
3. Parental approval.

After receiving student intent to graduate early within the first five days of the academic year, the principal will certify student eligibility and make appropriate scheduling changes if needed. Early graduation allows the student to participate in any activities related to graduation, i.e. awards programs and graduation ceremonies.

### 3. General Diploma Requirements (21 credits required)

- Students who meet specific criteria and have the approval of a school-level team, the principal and the superintendent or designee may participate in a General diploma program.
- To graduate from Orange County Schools with a General Diploma, a student must have earned a minimum of 21 units, including the following:

English I, II, III, and IV	4
Mathematics (including Algebra I and Geometry)	4
Science (Biology, 1 unit of physical science, and 1 unit of an environmental science)	3
Social Studies (U.S. History, civics and economics, and World History)	3
Health and Physical Education	1
Elective Concentration	4
Other Electives	2
Total	21

The superintendent or designee shall develop procedures to govern the administration of the General Diploma.

### 4. Graduation Certificate

The Board of Education shall award a Graduation Certificate to a student who does not earn a high school diploma and shall allow the student to participate in graduation exercises, provided:

- 1) The student has been identified as a "child with a disability" as defined by G.S. 115C-106.3(1); and the student has satisfied all state and local graduation requirements other than the proficiency standards as defined in HSP-N-000 (Student Accountability Standards); or
- 2) The student has been enrolled in the Occupational Course of Study; and the student has passed all the requirements of the Occupational Course of Study other than the 360 hours of competitive employment and the student has passed all state and local graduation requirements other than the standards for proficiency specified in HSP-N-000; or
- 3) Any other student that has satisfied all state and local graduation requirements other than the proficiency standards as defined in HSP-N-000.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-47, -81, -174.11, -276, -288; -407.5, State Board of Education Policies GCS-C-003, GCS-003, GCS-C-031, GCS-N series

**OPT-OUT EXEMPTION PROCESS**

Process for substituting recommended mathematics courses with alternative mathematics courses: (See figure on p. 6)

- 1) A written request\* is made to the building principal to ask for an alternative to the Future-Ready Core mathematics courses. This information should be received by the principal following completion or near completion of two mathematics courses (either Algebra I and Geometry or Algebra I & II), typically by the 1st semester of sophomore year.
- 2) The principal convenes a school-based committee to review the request. The committee should consist of the student's most recent mathematics teacher, a school counselor, the Assistant Principal for Curriculum, the student advisor and, if appropriate, an Exceptional Children's teacher and a parent of the student.
- 3) The school-based committee convenes to review the request and consider multiple sources of summative and formative information (standardized measures, portfolios of students work toward math proficiency, etc) which provides evidence of a student who is demonstrating unusual difficulty in mastering mathematics concepts.
- 4) The committee reviews all intervention strategies that have already been put in place prior to the substitution request to determine that, even with these strategies, the student is still struggling.
- 5) If the request is deemed to be compelling, the school-based committee makes a recommendation to a district review committee using the appropriate forms. A representative from the school-based committee will act as the student's advocate in presenting the forms and all gathered evidences to the district committee.
- 6) The school district convenes a review committee at the end of each semester to evaluate school-based committee recommendations for Mathematics course substitution made on behalf of students.
- 7) The district committee should consist of the district Math Coordinator, a high school mathematics teacher and a school administrator not based at the school of the student in question and, where appropriate, the Director of Exceptional Children.
- 8) The district committee will review the materials presented by the student's advocate and make a decision on whether the request for an alternative to the recommended Future-Ready Core mathematics courses has merit.
- 9) The decision of the district committee will be returned to the school principal who shall inform the student and the parent or guardian.
- 10) The principal will make the final decision, informed by the committee's recommendation, in order to benefit the student.

\* A written request with reasons can be made from a parent/guardian, school counselor, principal (or designee), or teacher. If the request is made from school personnel, a parent/guardian must give evidence of consent.

### Alternative Mathematics Course Request

Process for student request for Alternative Mathematics Courses to meet graduation requirements:

