

PURPOSE

This policy specifies high school programs of study that will be offered by the School District and lists specific courses that meet core, required or elective credits for students.

Definitions:

Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) Pathways - three elective units in a coherent sequence that includes rigorous content aligned with industry-related standards leading to college and work readiness in a focused area of student interest.

Core Courses – any courses identified as “c” or “r” in Rule 160-4-2-.03 List of State-Funded K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses that fulfill the unit requirements for graduation.

Elective Courses - any courses identified as “e” in Rule 160-4-2-.03 List of State-Funded K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses that a student may select beyond the core requirements to fulfill the unit requirements for graduation.

Required courses - specific courses identified as “r” in Rule 160-4-2-.03 List of State-Funded K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses that each student in a program of study will pass to graduate from high school.

Secondary School Credential - a document awarded to students at the completion of high school experience.

1. *High School Diploma* – the document awarded to students certifying that they have satisfied attendance requirements, unit requirements and the state assessment requirements as referenced in Rule-160-3-1-.07 Testing Programs – Student Assessment.
2. *High School Certificate* – the document awarded to pupils who do not complete all of the criteria for a diploma or who have not passed the state assessment requirements as referenced in Rule 160-3-1-.07 Testing Programs – Student Assessment, but who have earned 23 units.
3. *State-Defined Alternate Diploma* – the document awarded to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who were assessed using the alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards. While this diploma is standards-based and aligned with the state requirements for the regular high school diploma, it is not a regular high school diploma. Therefore, an alternate diploma does not terminate Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).
4. *Special Education Diploma* – the document awarded to students with disabilities assigned to a special education program who have not met the state assessment

Graduation Requirements

requirements referenced in Rule 160-3-1-.07 Testing Programs - Student Assessment or who have not completed all of the requirements for a high school diploma but who have nevertheless completed their Individualized Education Programs (IEP).

- (a) *Significant Cognitive Disabilities* – students with significant intellectual disabilities or intellectual disabilities concurrent with motor, sensory or emotional/behavioral disabilities who require substantial adaptations and support to access the general curriculum and require additional instruction focused on relevant life skills and participate in the Georgia Alternative Assessment (GAA) per State Board Rule 160-4-2-.48.
- (b) *Unit* – one unit of credit awarded for a minimum of 150 clock hours of instruction or 135 hours of instruction in an approved block schedule.
- (c) *Unit, Summer School* – one unit of credit awarded for a minimum of 120 clock hours of instruction.

Requirements of the School District:

The School District will provide secondary school curriculum, instructional delivery and support services through appropriate platforms that reflect the high school graduation and state assessment requirements and assist all students in developing their unique potential to function in society.

The School District will base local graduation requirements on State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-48, will submit a copy of this locally adopted Policy to the Georgia Department of Education and will place on file a letter from the State Superintendent of Schools or designee stating that the locally developed policy meets all state requirements.

The School District will maintain a Policy on post-secondary enrollment as referenced in Rule 160-4-2.34 (Post-secondary Options) and for joint enrollment and early admission programs (Board Policy IDCH).

The School District requires that students who enroll from another state meet the graduation requirements for the graduating class they enter and the state assessment requirements as referenced in Rule 160-3-1-.07 Testing Programs – Student Assessment.

Units of Credit:

- (a) All state-supported high schools will make available to all students the required areas of study.
- (b) A course will count only once for satisfying a unit of credit expect in those instances, as defined by the Georgia Department of Education, where one course can satisfy two separate credit requirements.

See the following chart.

Core Areas of Study	Units Required
(I) English/Language Arts*	4
(II) Mathematics*	4
(III) Science*	4
The 4 th science unit may be used to meet both the science and elective requirement	
(IV) Social Studies	3
(V) CTAE and/or Modern Language/Latin and/or Fine Arts	3
(VI) Health and Physical Education*	1
(VII) Electives	4
Total Units (Minimum)	23
*Required Courses and/or Core Courses	

Required/Core/Elective Credit:

Unit credit will be awarded only for courses that include concepts and skills based on the Georgia Student Performance Standards for grades 9-12 or those approved by the State Board of Education. Unit credit may be awarded for high school courses offered in the middle grades that meet 9-12 Georgia Student Performance Standards requirements. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) will specify whether core courses taken as part of an IEP will receive core unit credit.

No high school course credit may be awarded for courses in which instruction is based on the Georgia Student Performance Standards for grades K-8.

Completion of diploma requirements does not necessarily qualify students for the HOPE Scholarship Program.

Areas of Student Course Offerings:

- (I) Courses that will earn unit credit are listed in Rule 160-4-2-.03 List of State-funded K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses.
- (II) Any student may select any course listed in the course listing rule. The one exception to this provision is where the letter “r” appears with course names. These courses are required. These courses must be successfully completed and cannot be substituted with any other course. Any course identified as “c” is a core course and may be selected to count as one of the core unit requirements. A course identified as “e” is an elective course that may be selected beyond the core requirements to fulfill the unit requirements.

English/Language Arts: Four units of credit in English/Language Arts will be required of all students. A full unit of credit in American Literature/Composition and a full unit of credit in Ninth-Grade Literature and Composition will be required. All courses that may satisfy the remaining units of credit are identified with a “c.” The Writing, Conventions, and Listening, Speaking, and viewing strands of the Georgia Student Performance Standards will be taught in sequence in grades 9-12. Literature modules may be taught in any sequence in grades 10-12.

Mathematics: Four units of credit in mathematics will be required of all students, including Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II or its equivalent. Additional units needed to complete four credits in mathematics must be chosen from the list of AP/IB designated courses.

Students with disabilities: refer to the Mathematics Graduation Requirement Guidance Document from the Georgia Department of Education for the most current requirements for students with disabilities.

Science: Four units of credit in science will be required of all students, including one full unit of Biology; one unit of either Physical Science or Physics; one unit of either Chemistry, Earth Systems, Environmental Science or an AP/IB course; and one additional science unit. The fourth science unit may be used to meet both the science and elective requirements. Any AP/IB science course may be substituted for the appropriate courses listed above.

Social Sciences: Three units of credit will be required in social studies. One unit of credit will be required in United States History. One unit of credit will be required in World History. One-half unit of American Government/Civics will be required. One-half unit of Economics will be required.

CTAE/Modern Language/Latin/Fine Arts: A total of three units of credit will be required from the following areas: CTAE and/or Modern Language/Latin and/or Fine Arts. Students are encouraged to select courses in a focused area of interest.

1. *Career, Technical and Agriculture Education (CTAE) Pathways:* Students may earn three units of credit in a coherent sequence of CTAE courses through a self-selected pathway leading to college readiness and a career readiness certificate endorsed by related industries.

2. *Modern Language/Latin*: All students are encouraged to earn two units of credit in the same modern language/Latin. Students planning to enter or transfer into a University System of Georgia institution or other post-secondary institution must take two units of the same modern language/Latin. Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education (DTAE) institutions (Technical College System of Georgia) do not require modern language/Latin for admissions.
 - A. Students whose native language is not English may be considered to have met the foreign language expectation by exercising the credit in lieu of enrollment option if they are proficient in their native language. A formal examination is not necessary if other evidence of proficiency is available.
 - B. American Sign Language may be taken to fulfill the modern language requirements.
 - C. Two approved units of Computer Science may be used to satisfy the Foreign Language/American Sign Language/Computer Science Requirement for graduation and to meet admission standards at University System of Georgia institutions. However, students who use Computer Science courses to meet this requirement may not use these courses to meet the 4th year Science requirement.
3. *Fine Arts*: Electives may be selected from courses in fine arts.
4. *Health and Physical Education*: One unit of credit in health and physical education is required. Students shall combine one-half or one-third units of credit of Health (17.011), Health and Personal Fitness (36.051), or Advanced Personal Fitness (36.061) to satisfy this requirement. Three (3) units of credit in JROTC (Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps) may be used to satisfy this Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Rule requirements in rule 160-4-2-.12 and 2) the local Board of Education must approve the use of ROTC courses to satisfy the one required unit in health and physical education.

Required Procedures for Awarding Units of Credit:

A unit of credit for graduation will be awarded to students only for successful completion of state-approved courses of study based on a minimum of 150 clock-hours of instruction provided during the regular school year, 135 clock-hours of instruction in an approved block schedule during the regular school year, or a minimum of 120 clock-hours of instruction in summer school.

Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities:

1. Students with significant cognitive disabilities who entered the ninth grade for the first time prior to the 2020-21 school year may graduate and receive a regular high school diploma when the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) team determines that the student has:

- (a) completed an integrated curriculum based on the Georgia Student Performance Standards that includes instruction in Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science and Social Studies as well as career preparation, self-determination, independent living and personal care to equal a minimum of 23 units of instruction, and
 - (b) participated in the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) during middle school and high school, and
 - (c) reached the 22nd birthday OR has transitioned to an employment/education/training setting in which the supports needed are provided by an entity other than the local school district.
2. Students with significant cognitive disabilities who entered the ninth grade for the first time on or after the 2020-21 school year may graduate and receive an alternate diploma when the student's IEP team determines that the student has:
- a) completed an integrated curriculum based on the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) that includes instruction in Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science and Social Studies as well as career preparation, self-determination, independent living and personal care to equal a minimum of 23 units of instruction, and
 - b) participated in the GAA during middle school and high school, and
 - c) has transitioned to an employment/education/training setting in which the supports needed are provided by an entity other than the local school district.

Local Authorities and Responsibilities:

The School District will provide instructional, support and delivery services. These services shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) A continuous guidance component beginning with the eighth grade. The purposes of the guidance component are to familiarize students with graduation requirements, to help them identify the likely impact of individual career objectives on the program of studies they plan to follow and provide annual advisement sessions to report progress and offer alternatives in meeting graduation requirements and career objectives.
- (b) Record keeping and reporting services that document student progress toward graduation and include information for the school, parents and students.
- (c) Diagnostic and continuous evaluation services that measure individual student progress in meeting competency expectations for graduation.
- (d) Instructional programs, curriculum and course guides and remedial opportunities to assist each student in meeting graduation requirements.

- (e) Appropriate curriculum and assessment procedures for students who have been identified as having disabilities that prevent them from meeting the prescribed competency performance requirements.

REVISED: July 18, 2024