The board recognizes the importance of setting rigorous graduation requirements to help ensure that students are receiving an education that will prepare them to be 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 for graduation. The principal shall consider the requirements of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children (G.S. 115C-407.5) and the requirements of subsection D.3 of this policy in determining the graduation requirements for children of military families.

## A. COURSE UNITS REQUIRED

Each student~~s~~ must meet the course unit requirements for one of the following courses of study. Students entering the ninth grade for the first time before the 2009-2010 school year must fulfill the requirements of the Career Prep. College Tech Prep, College/University Prep or Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study. Beginning with the students entering the ninth grade for the first time in the 2009-2010 school year, students must fulfill the requirement 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 the ninth grade for the first time. In accordance with policy 3101, Dual Enrollment, and State Board of Education requirements, students may earn high school credit for college courses completed. 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, and State Board of Education

requirements.

1. Future Ready Core Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2012-2013 and After.
   Graduates must also complete this course of study as part of the 28 credits required for graduation, unless a differentiated diploma has been approved under policy 3460-R.

| Courses Required | State Requirements | Local Requirements |
|---|---|---|
| English | 4 sequential (English I, II, III and IV)* | |
| Mathematics | 4 (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II and a fourth math course aligned with the student's post-high school plans OR Integrated Math I, II, III, and a fourth math course aligned with the student's post-high school plans; OR Math I, II, and III and a fourth math course aligned with the student's post-high school plans.<br>(A principal may exempt a student from this math sequence. The exempt student will be required to pass either (1) Algebra I and either Algebra II or Geometry or (2) Integrated Math I and II. Exempt students also must pass either Alternative Math I and II or two other application-based math courses.)** | |
| Science | 3 (a physical science course, Biology, and earth/environmental science) | |
| Social Studies | 4 (including Civics & Economics, American History Parts I and II OR AP U.S. History and one additional social studies elective and World History) | |
| Health/PE | 1 | |
| Electives | 6 (2 electives must be any combination of Career and Technical Education, Arts Education or World Language; 4 must be from one of the following: Career and Technical Education, R.O.T.C., Arts Education or any other subject area or cross-disciplinary courses. A four-course concentration is recommended)*** | |
| **Total Credits** | **22** | |

* Students seeking to complete minimum application requirement for UNC universities must complete four mathematics courses, including a fourth math course with Algebra II Integrated Math III as a prerequisite.

** Students seeking to complete minimum application requirements for UNC universities must complete two years of a second language.

2. Future-Ready Core Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2009-2010, 2010-2011 or 2011-2012

| Courses Required | State Requirements | Local Requirements |
|---|---|---|
| English | 4 (including English I, II, III and IV)* | |
| Mathematics | 4 either Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II and a fourth math course aligned with the student's post-high school plans OR Integrated Math I, II and III and a fourth math course aligned with the student's post high school plans)<br>(A principal may exempt a student from this math sequence. Exempt students will be required to pass either (1) Algebra I and either Algebra II or Geometry or (2) Integrated Math I and II. Exempt students also must pass either Alternative Math I and II or two other application-based math courses** | |
| Science | 3 (a physical science course, Biology and earth/environmental science) | |
| Social Studies | 3 (Civics & Economics, U.S. History and World History) | |
| Health/PE | 1 | |
| Electives | 6 (2 electives must be any combination of Career and Technical Education, Arts Education or World Language; 4 must be from one of the following: Career and Technical Education, R.O.T.C., Arts Education or any other subject area or cross-disciplinary courses. A four-course concentration is recommended)*** | |
| **Total Credits** | **21** | |

* Effective with the tenth grade class of 2011-2012, Early College High School students alternatively may complete college level English courses designated by the State Board in lieu of English III and IV.

** Students seeking to complete minimum application requirement for UNC universities must complete four mathematics courses, including a fourth math course with Algebra II or Integrated Math III as a prerequisite.

*** Students seeking to complete minimum application requirements for UNC universities must complete two years of a second language.

3. Career Prep Course of Study Credits Required

   Graduates must also complete this course of study as part of the 28 credits required for graduation.

| Courses Required | State Requirements | Local Requirements |
|---|---|---|
| English | 4 (including English I, II, III and IV) | |
| Mathematics | 3 (including Algebra I) | |
| Science | 3 (including a physical science course, Biology and earth/environmental science) | |
| Social Studies | 3 (including Civics & Economics, U.S. History and World History) | |
| Health/PE | 1 | |
| Career/Technical | 4 (courses appropriate for career pathway, including a second-level (advanced) course, or courses for an arts education pathway or R.O.T.C.*) | |
| World Language | 0 | |
| Electives | 2 (arts recommended but not required) | |
| Other Requirements | | |
| **Total Credits** | **20** | |

*Four R.O.T.C. credits may be used

4. College Tech Prep Course of Study Credits Required

| Courses Required | State Requirements | Local Requirements |
|---|---|---|
| English | 4(including English I, II, III and IV) | |
| Mathematics | 3*-(including either Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II; Algebra I and Technical Math I and II; or Integrated Mathematics I, II and III) | |
| Science | 3 (including a physical science course, Biology, and earth/environmental science) | |
| Social Studies | 3 (including Civics & Economics, U.S. History and World History | |
| Health/PE | 1 | |
| Career/Technical | 4 (courses appropriate for career pathway including a second-level (advanced) course) | |
| World Language | 0**** | |
| Electives | 2 (arts recommended but not required) | |
| Other Requirements | | |
| **Total Credits** | **20** | |

*A student pursuing this course of study may meet the requirements of a College/University Prep course of study by completing 2 courses in the same language and one additional unit of math for which Algebra II or Integrated Math III is a prerequisite.

5. College/University Prep Course of Study Credits Required

| Courses Required | State Requirements | Local Requirements |
|---|---|---|
| English | 4 (including English I, II, III and IV) | |
| Mathematics | 4 (including either Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II and a higher-level course for which Algebra II is a prerequisite: or Integrated Mathematics I, II and III and one course beyond Integrated Math III) | |
| Science | 3 (including a physical science Biology~~,~~ and earth/environmental science) | |
| Social Studies | 3 (including Civics & Economics, U.S. History and World History) | |
| Health/PE | 1 | |
| World Language | 2 in the same language | |
| Electives | 3 (arts recommended but not required) | |
| Other Requirements | | |
| **Total Credits** | **20** | |

6. Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study Credits Required (only available to certain students with disabilities who have an IEP)

| Courses Required | State Requirement | Local Requirements |
|---|---|---|
| English | 4 (including Occupational English I, II, III, and IV) | |
| Mathematics | 3 (including OCS Introduction to Math, OCS Algebra I (Math A), and Financial Management | |
| Science | 2 (including OCS Applied Science and OCS Biology) | |
| Social Studies | 2 (including American History I and II) | |
| Health/PE | 1 | |
| Career/Technical | 4 (Vocational Education electives) | |
| World Language | 0 | |
| Occupational Preparation | 6 (including Occupational Preparation I, II, III and IV, which requires 300 hours of school-based training. 240 hours of community-based training and 360 hours of paid employment or 360 hours of any combination of unpaid vocational training, unpaid internship experience, paid employment at community rehabilitation facilities and volunteer and/or community service hours) | |
| Electives | 0 | |
| Other Requirements | • Completion of IEP objectives<br>• Career Portfolio | |
| **Total Credits** | **22** | |

## B. HIGH SCHOOL FINAL EXAMS AND END OF COURSE TESTING

High school students must take all required end-of-course (EOC) tests, NC Final Exams, and Career and Technical Education State Assessments (CTE Post-Assessments) required by the State Board of Education and pursuant to policy 3410, Testing and Assessment Program.

## C. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The board adopts the following policies with regard to graduation:

1. Honor Graduates

   Honor graduates may be designated by principals on the basis of criteria established by the 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 covered by the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

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 coursework so that graduation may occur 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 or during his or her senior year is ineligible to graduate from the school system after all 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 Certificate

   Graduation certificates will be awarded to students in compliance with the policies of the State Board of Education.

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), and/or (3) North Carolina Academic Scholars Endorsement. No endorsement is required to receive a diploma.

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

Cross References: Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Testing and Assessment Program (policy 3410), Student Promotion and Accountability (policy 3420), Citizenship and Character Education (policy 3530), Children of Military Families (policy 4050)

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Updated:

# DIFFERENTIATED DIPLOMA PATHWAY (DDP) POLICY AND PROCESS *Policy* 3460-R

The Board is committed to every student being provided the necessary tools to become productive citizens, to gain meaningful employment and to further his/her education. A Differentiated Diploma Pathway gives an option to students who are at risk of dropping out of school.

This pathway allows students with specific eligibility requirements to graduate with a North Carolina Future-Ready Core Diploma of 21 or 22 credits. Differentiated Diploma Pathway candidates would be students who demonstrate at-risk characteristics that may threaten their potential to graduate.

Expectations for All Rising Ninth Grade Students

All students will begin high school with a four-year plan to earn a 28-credit diploma. All students must meet North Carolina graduation requirements and exit standards.

Candidacy for Differentiated Diploma Pathway

A student seeking permission to pursue a Differentiated Diploma must demonstrate characteristics that put him/her at risk for not graduating from high school. The following at-risk characteristics, with evidence, will be considered as valid reasons for meeting the criteria for candidacy:

- Behind peers by one year (age, credits, achievement) with at least one of the three conditions below
    - o Chronic academic failures
    - o Chronic attendance/truancy- 11+ absences
    - o Chronic behavior problems
- Chronic substance abuse: Students who have been in treatment within the last year and have a substance abuse counselor's recommendation for differentiated diploma.
- Depression/Mental Health Issues: Must be diagnosed by qualified medical professional
- Parenting Teens with parental responsibilities
- Homelessness as defined by McKinney-Vento Act
- Transience, Run-away, Undisciplined Juveniles

- Major/severe medical issues

The student's transcript, discipline record, Personal Education Plan (PEP) and attendance record must be reviewed as part of the application and screening process. Students must have received appropriate interventions to address their risk factors for academic failure, including a PEP, prior to being considered for a Differentiated Diploma.

A student must be at least 16 years old and enrolled in high school for at least a full academic year before he/she may be considered for a Differentiated Diploma. Students cannot apply after first grading period of the second semester of the senior year. After undertaking the Differentiated Diploma Pathway, students must attend one semester and take at least two classes. A student must pass at least two classes in his/her final semester of high school.

No more than 5% of the graduating class will be considered for a differentiated diploma process. This percentage will be calculated based on the current enrollment at the time of the approved differentiated diploma. In rare circumstances, the superintendent may waive the maximum cap.

<u>Differentiated Diploma Academic Requirements (North Carolina Future-Ready Core)</u>

Students entering ninth grade in 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 must obtain the following credits in order to secure a Differentiated Diploma (21 credits):

- Four (4) credits of English
- Four (4) credits of Mathematics
- Three (3) credits of Social Studies
- Three (3) credits of Science
- One (1) credit of Health/Physical Education
- Six (6) Elective credits to include
    - o Two (2) credits from Career/Technical Education (CTE), Arts Education or World Languages
    - o Four (4) credits Concentration (recommended)

Students entering ninth grade in 2012-2013 must obtain the following credits in order to

secure a Differentiated Diploma (22 credits):

- Four (4) credits of English
- Four (4) credits of Mathematics
- Four (4) credits of Social Studies
- Three (3) credits of Science
- One (1) credit of Health/Physical Education
- Six (6) Elective credits to include
    - o Two (2) credits from Career/Technical Education (CTE), Arts Education or World Languages
    - o Four (4) credits Concentration (recommended)

At any time, students may choose to re-enter the 28-credit Future Ready Core course of study. Students who earn 21 or 22 credits and meet North Carolina State graduation requirements may participate in graduation exercises and receive a full diploma.

Referral and Decision Process for the Differentiated Diploma

School counselors, teachers, parents and administrators may refer a student for the Differentiated Diploma option provided the student meets the eligibility requirements using the “Referral for Consideration.”

Once referred, the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) (unless the student is an adult or emancipated minor) must participate in a documented meeting with the student’s school counselor to review the student’s transcript and graduation options.

If the student, his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school counselor agree the Differentiated Diploma is the best course of action, they will complete the “Student Referral and Agreement Form.”

A designated school committee will evaluate the referral form and make a recommendation to the principal. The committee will secure all necessary signatures and submit the form to the principal for approval.

The principal will approve or deny the committee’s recommendation. If the principal approves the committee’s recommendation, the principal will submit the request to the

district-level committee. The Deputy Superintendent for Operations will secure the approval/disapproval of the Superintendent.

The student, his/her parent(s)/guardian(s), the student's counselor and the principal at the student's school will be notified within five school days of the final decision. The counselor will give written notice.

Once accepted for a Differentiated Diploma Pathway, the student, his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school counselor must write a graduation plan outlining the courses needed, a schedule for completing the courses and, if appropriate, an amendment to the PEP for academic and/or behavioral support.

Adopted: