Book	District Policy
Section	I - Instructional Program
Title	Graduation Requirements: Students Entering 9th Grade in 2022 and Beyond
Code	IHF(6)
Status	Active
Legal	160-4-2.48
Cross References	JQK - Foreign Exchange Students
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The Fulton County Board of Education provides this policy in compliance with State Board of Education 160-4-2.48 and Georgia Law.

The Fulton County Board of Education, through a tiered flexibility process, has individual schools that have requested value-added flexibilities and opt-in flexibilities related to this policy. Please click here to see the list of current flexibilities. The Board of Education will enforce and adhere to all State graduation requirements as detailed in law and in State Board of Education Rules.

I. Definitions

A. Unit Credits - traditionally treated as evidence of course completion as demonstrated by a final course grade of 70 or higher on a numerical scale; or competency-based course credit as demonstrated by a pre-defined score on state-adopted or approved assessment instruments.

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.

Unit, Summer School – One unit of credit awarded for a minimum of 120 clock hours of instruction.

B. Core Courses - courses identified as "c" or "r" in the guidance to State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.20 State-Funded K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses.

C. Elective Course - a course that a student may select beyond the core requirements to fulfill the unit credit requirements for graduation. Any courses identified as "e" in the guidance to State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.20 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.

D. Pathway – a completion of a prescribed sequence of three or more courses in the areas of career, technical, and agricultural education, advanced academics, world languages, and fine arts. A list of these currently offered courses in CTAE, World Language, and Fine Arts is available on the FCS website.

E. Required Courses - a specific course identified as required ("r") as referenced in the guidance to State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.20 Requirements. A list of State-Funded K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses that each student in a program of study shall pass to graduate from high school can be found in in the State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2.48 Graduation Requirements.

F. Transfer Credit - credit earned outside the Fulton County School System that is applicable to graduation requirements. Cross Reference Board Policy IHA – Grading and Reporting System Operating Guideline IH – Acceptance of Student Course Credit and/or Grades.

II. Eligibility for Graduation

A. A student shall become eligible for graduation upon meeting the State Board of Education minimum of 23 completed units of credit in addition to the attendance requirements being met.

B. Students with significant cognitive disabilities who entered ninth grade for the first time prior to the 2020-2021 school year, please consult with FCS Policy IHF (5) for graduation requirements.

C. Students with significant cognitive disabilities, who entered ninth grade for the first time on or after the 2020-2021 school year, may graduate and receive an alternate diploma when the student's IEP team determines that the student has:

1. Completed an integrated curriculum based on the Georgia Standards of Excellence 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
2. Participated in the GAA during middle school and high school, and
3. Has transitioned to an employment/education/training setting in which the supports needed are provided by an entity other than the local school system.

III. Types of Credentials

A. High School Diploma Option A

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.

B. High School Diploma Option B

High School Diploma Option B (also known as SB2) offers qualified students an alternate path to high school graduation. Students choose to simultaneously earn a high school diploma and a college Associate Degree, or a Technical Diploma, or two (2) Technical Certificates of Credit in a specific career pathway. The Dual Enrollment Program 30 credit hour cap applies. See O.C.G.A. 20-2-149-.2 for more information.

C. High School Certificate

The document awarded to students 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.

D. Diplomas for Exceptional Education

1. Alternate Diploma

Students with significant cognitive disabilities are those 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 Alternate Assessment (GAA).

Alternate Diplomas are awarded to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who were assessed using the alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement. 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. Criteria to be eligible for this diploma referenced in Rule 160-4-2-.48 High School Graduation Requirements.

2. Special Education Diploma

Special Education Diplomas are awarded to students with disabilities assigned to a special education program who have not met the state assessment 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 IEP.

IV. Graduation Exercises

A. A student will be allowed to participate in graduation exercises after all requirements for a High School Diploma Option A, High School Diploma Option B, Alternate Diploma, or a Special Education Diploma have been met.

B. Participation for students granted a diploma pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-281.1 shall be addressed in Operating Guideline IHF.

C. Students assigned to the alternative education program for disciplinary purposes or students subject to an out of school suspension/expulsion at the time of graduation may be prevented from participating in graduation exercises if the principal determines that the student's participation could be disruptive.

D. The ceremony should reflect the honor being bestowed on the students and the demeanor of the students should reflect the formality of the occasion. The high school principal has the authority to remove or prohibit anyone from participating who may pose a disruption to the ceremony. Further, the high school principal shall have the responsibility for developing and implementing guidelines for appropriate dress and conduct of the students.

V. High School Pathway Options

A. Career Pathways

Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education (CTAE) provides students with the opportunity to select at least three sequenced courses in a career pathway.

Cross reference the Fulton County School's CTAE webpage for current programs being offered in the District.

B. Advanced Academic Pathway

a. An Advanced Academic Pathway may be followed in any of these four content areas: ELA (English/Language Arts), Mathematics, Science, or Social Studies.

b. Upon graduation, students earn an advanced academic pathway when they complete the required coursework to include at least one Advanced Placement (AP) or one International Baccalaureate (IB) or one Dual Enrollment course. An advanced academic pathway should also include at least two credits in one World Language.

C. Fine Arts Pathway

a. A Fine Arts Pathway may be followed in any of these areas of study: Dance, Music, Theatre, and Visual Arts.

b. A student has completed a Fine Arts Pathway when three courses in one area of concentration have been successfully completed. For more details, please reference the Fine Arts Department webpage.

D. World Language Pathway

a. A World Language Pathway may be followed in any of the world language areas included in the state list of approved courses.

b. Upon graduation, students earn a World Language pathway when they complete 3 units in one language. The third course may reflect an Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) or Dual Enrollment designation.

VI. Credit and Course Requirements for Students Entering 9th Grade in 2022 and Beyond

A. A complete list of required and elective courses, that at a minimum meet the State Board of Education requirements, can be found in Fulton County Schools High School Curriculum Handbook.

B. Credits and Courses Required for the High School Diploma Options:

Units Required High School Diploma Options:

1. High School Diploma Option A

Areas of Study:	Credits
I. English/Language Arts	4
II. Math	4
III. Science	4
IV. Social Studies	3
V. CTAE, Advanced Academic, Fine Arts, or World Language[1]	3
VI. Health & Physical Education	1
VII. Electives	4
TOTAL	23
Students interested in attending a University System of Georgia college/university must complete 2 years of the same world language to be admissible as a freshman.	

a. English Language Arts: Four units of credit in English Language Arts shall be required of all students. A full unit of credit in Ninth-Grade Literature and Composition and a full unit of credit in American Literature and Composition shall be required. All courses

that may satisfy the remaining units of credit are identified with a "c."

b. Mathematics: Four units of core credit in mathematics shall be required of all students, including 1) Algebra I or equivalent, 2) Geometry or equivalent, 3) Algebra II or equivalent, and 4) a unit of core math or equivalent courses. Additional core courses needed to complete four credits in mathematics must be chosen from the list of GSE/AP/IB/dual enrollment designated courses.

- The mathematics requirements above apply to each student with a disability, consistent with his or her Individualized Education Program. Students with Disabilities who earn credit in GSE Algebra I and the associated mathematics support course, and GSE Geometry and the associated mathematics support course, may upon determination through the Individualized Education Program Team meet mathematics diploma requirements by completing GSE Algebra II for a total of 3 mathematics core credits. Successful completion of 3 core units of mathematics may not meet the mathematics admission requirements for entrance into a University System of Georgia institution or other post-secondary institution without additional coursework.

- Students with disabilities who were identified prior to enrollment in high school and have a disability affecting mathematics achievement may follow an alternative course sequence to meet the mathematics course requirements of the graduation rule 160-4-2-.48. The alternate course sequence includes dispensation from completing Advanced Algebra or Algebra II and would allow a student with disabilities earning core credit in Coordinate Algebra or Algebra I and Analytic Geometry or Geometry, along with two other mathematics courses, to satisfy the minimum mathematics requirements for high school graduation. The student must successfully earn course credit, in accordance with this rule for at least two other state-approved mathematics courses, which may include, but are not limited to, Mathematics Support courses. For further detail, please see Guidelines for Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.15 Awarding Units of Credit section 2(e).

c. Science - Four units of credit in science shall be required of all students, including 1) full unit of Biology; 2) one unit of either Physical Science or Physics; 3) one unit of either Chemistry, Earth Systems, Environmental Science or an AP/IB course; and 4) 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.

d. Social Sciences - Three units of credit shall be required in social studies. One unit of credit shall be required in United States History. One unit of credit shall be required in World History. One-half unit of American Government/Civics shall be required. One-half unit of Personal Finance and Economics shall be required.

e. Academic Pathways - Three units will be required for graduation. Please reference section V. High School Pathway Options. Students are encouraged to select courses in a focused area of interest.

f. Health and Physical Education - One unit of credit in health and physical education is required per State Board Rule 160-4-2-.12 and 2. The Fulton County Board of Education allows schools and its students the opportunity to opt-in to a district wide physical education waiver.

Cross Reference: Charter System Flexibility Options to view a list of current waivers

2. High School Diploma Option B

Complete all Required High School Courses:		Complete Any of the Following Technical College Credentials:
2 English: Am Lit and Another		Any one Associate Degree or
2 Math: Algebra I or Coordinate Algebra & Another	&	Any one Technical College Diploma Program or
2 Science: Biology and Another		Two Technical College Certificates of Credit (TCC)
2 Social Studies: US History, -one-half unit of American Government/Civics, and one-half unit of Personal Finance and Economics.		
1 Health/PE		
All Required Milestones/EOC Exams		

VII. Credit Attainment

A. Credit by Examination

1. A student may be granted credit by examination in accordance with the Board policy and administrative procedure pertaining to this subject. Reference IH - Acceptance of Student Course Credit and/or Grades

2. As provided by Rule 160-5-15 Awarding Units of Credit, a student may only earn up to three credits by testing-out.

B. Dual Enrollment - the Board shall award units of credit to students for high school courses taken through eligible post-secondary institutions as described in the State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.34 Dual Enrollment.

C. Military Dependents - the Fulton County Board of Education shall utilize O.C.G.A. § 20-17-2 to award course credit for students who are dependents of military personnel as defined by that code section to remove barriers to educational success imposed on children of military families because of frequent moves and deployment of their families. Cross Refence Board Policy JG: Opportunities for Military Children

D. Off-Campus Offerings - credit may be granted for courses taken through a school, including an online learning program that has been accredited by a regional accrediting association and approved by the office responsible for secondary curriculum and instruction. Before enrolling in such a course, the student must have approval from the local school and the Learning and Teaching Department.

E. Virtual Courses - all virtual school course requests are reviewed and approved by local school staff. When local school approval is granted for students to enroll in online courses, the following preferences should be applied:

- First preference should be given to a Fulton Virtual School course, or if a student requires a class that cannot be taken from his/her local school, the Fulton Virtual School, or the Georgia Virtual School; he/she may request approval to register for a course offered by an alternative accredited source.

F. Transfer Credit - a student who enrolls from outside the Fulton County Schools system including, but not limited to, private schools, home-study programs, other LEAs, other states or countries, shall meet the graduation requirements for the graduating class based on student's 9th grade entry date.

- All transfer credit from non-accredited schools shall be validated through a proficiency test. Cross reference Board Policy IH: Acceptance of Student Course Credit and/or Grades

G. Courses Taken Prior to High School – following State Board of Education requirements, credit may be awarded for high school courses taken in middle school.

VIII. Responsibility for Implementing and Administering Graduation Requirements

The Superintendent or designee shall have responsibility for implementing and administering the graduation requirements, including the following:

- Developing operating guidelines; and
- Granting special consideration to students new to the district, providing, however, that such consideration shall not be in violation of Georgia law or regulations.

Cross Reference: Board Policy JQK: Foreign Exchange Students

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[1] 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.

American Sign Language or Computer Science may be taken to fulfill the World Language requirements.