

To: Board of Education, Salt Lake City School District  
Dr. Elizabeth Grant, Superintendent

From: Tiffany Hall, Executive Director

Date: August 5, 2025

Re: Study Session: Diploma Options

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The purpose of this study session is to provide the Board of Education with an overview of current state and district graduation credit requirements and to explore the potential positive impacts and challenges of increasing the number of credits required for high school graduation. This discussion supports the Board's strategic priorities related to academic rigor, postsecondary readiness, and equitable access to high-quality learning opportunities.

Action Requested:

- No action is requested (study session)

Background

Utah Administrative Rule R277-700 establishes a 24-credit minimum requirement for a high school diploma, including credits in English language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, and elective areas. Local education agencies may exceed these requirements in alignment with local goals and community values.

Currently, Salt Lake City School District requires 24 credits for graduation. While the majority of students graduate with more than the state minimum, increasing the number of required credits may present both opportunities and challenges. It may strengthen college and career readiness and allow for deeper learning, while also raising important considerations for student support, equity, staffing, and scheduling.

Study Session Objectives

This session will provide the Board with information and context on the following topics:

- Current state and district graduation requirements
- Proposed increases to total credit requirements and potential areas of focus (e.g., electives, world language, science, or career and technical education)
- Implications for students, including academic flexibility, credit recovery, and support needs for multilingual learners and students with disabilities
- Potential impacts on school staffing, course scheduling, and facilities
- Opportunities to differentiate diploma pathways (e.g., basic, standard, honors)

Desired Outcomes

- Deepened Board understanding of the current credit structure and potential revisions
- Board input on the rationale, timing, and design of any proposed changes
- Guidance on how to ensure equitable implementation and support for all students
- Alignment of graduation requirements with the district's overall strategic direction



#### Resources

- Overview of Utah Public District Graduation Requirements June 2025
- SLCS D I-2 Graduation Requirements
- East, Highland, West Credit Earning Patterns
- Sample College Requirement Table
- Diploma Types for Consideration
- Areas to Consider

#### Background Reading

- [Rethinking High School Graduation Requirements: A Strategic Imperative for State Policymakers](#)
- [Changing Graduation Requirements for a Changing World](#)



## Agenda

| Estimated Time | Topic   | Resource   |
|----------------|---|--|
| 4:00           | Welcome and Framing <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>How does this topic connect with our Strategic Plan for Student Achievement and the Board Goals?</li></ul>  | <a href="#">SPSA</a>   |
| 4:05           | Overview: State & Local Credit Requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What Do You See, What Do You Wonder?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In this discussion protocol, we will first identify 'fact' statements—what you observe about the information on the table. For instance, "<i>I see that the graduation requirements for most districts includes...</i>" No interpretations or judgments—just observations.</li><li>Then, we will identify questions or wonderings that we have about choices or implications about which we wish we had more information. For instance, "I wonder why..."</li></ul></li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Overview of Utah Public District Graduation Requirements June 2025</li><li>SLCSD I-2 Graduation Requirements</li></ul> |
| 4:20           | Current Student Patterns in Credit Earning <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What percentage of students graduate with exactly 24 credits, and what percentage exceed that? What might that indicate about student choice, access, or future planning?</li><li>Do our current expectations align with the expectations of colleges and employers in terms of rigor and specialization?</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>East, Highland, West Credit Earning Patterns</li><li>Sample College Requirement Table</li></ul>                        |
| 4:30           | Options: Differentiated Diplomas <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What opportunities might this create?</li><li>What student groups may be most affected?</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Diploma Types for Consideration</li></ul>  |
| 4:40           | Exploring Potential Changes and Implications <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What supports would be essential?</li></ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Areas to Consider</li></ul>  |
| 4:50           | Closing and Next Steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Determine next meeting and topics for discussion</li></ul>   |  |
| 5:00           | Close   |  |

## Overview of Utah Public District Graduation Requirements June 2025

| LEA              | Diploma above 24 credits                              | Changes  |
|------------------|---|--|
| <b>Alpine</b>    | Yes - 28 Credits                                      | +4.0 elective  |
| <b>Beaver</b>    | Yes - 32 Credits                                      | +0.5 PE, Financial Lit, 1.0 CTE<br>+6.0 elective           |
| <b>Box Elder</b> | Yes - 24-30 Credits                                   | +0.5 ELA, Math, PE<br>+5.0 elective                        |
| <b>Cache</b>     | Yes - 25 Credits                                      | +1.0 elective  |
| <b>Canyons</b>   | Yes – 26 or 28<br>(trimester or semester)             | +2.0 – 4.0 elective  |
| <b>Carbon</b>    | Yes - 30 Credits                                      | +1.0 CTE<br>+5.0 elective                                  |
| <b>Daggett</b>   | No  | -  |
| <b>Davis</b>     | Yes – 27 Credits                                      | +0.5 World Civilizations<br>+2.5 elective                  |
| <b>Duchesne</b>  | Yes – 36 Credits                                      | +1.0 Math<br>+11.0 elective                                |
| <b>Emery</b>     | Yes - 31 Credits                                      | +0.5 Digital Stds, Financial Lit, 1.0 CTE<br>+5.0 elective |
| <b>Garfield</b>  | Yes - 36 Credits                                      | +0.5 Health, CTE, Family Relationships<br>+10.5 elective   |
| <b>Grand</b>     | Yes - 28 Credits                                      | +4.0 elective  |
| <b>Granite</b>   | Yes - 27 Credits<br>(school diploma)                  | +3.0 elective  |
| <b>Iron</b>      | Yes – up to 29 Credits<br>(school diploma per school) | <+5.0 elective   |
| <b>Jordan</b>    | Yes - 27 Credits                                      | + 3.0 elective   |
| <b>Juab</b>      | Yes - 32 Credits                                      | +8.0 elective  |
| <b>Kane</b>      | Yes - 36 credits                                      | +12.0 elective   |
| <b>Logan</b>     | Yes - 27 Credits                                      | +1.0 World Language<br>+2.0 elective                       |
| <b>Millard</b>   | Yes - 28 Credits                                      | +4.0 elective  |
| <b>Morgan</b>    | Yes - 30 Credits (trimester)                          | +_ elective  |
| <b>Murray</b>    | Yes – 27 Credits                                      | +3.0 elective  |

|                       |   |  |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| <b>Nebo</b>           | Yes - 26 Credits                          | +2.0 elective                            |
| <b>North Sanpete</b>  | Yes - 28                                  | +3.0 elective                            |
| <b>North Summit</b>   | No  | -  |
| <b>Ogden</b>          | Yes – 28 Credits                          | +3.0 elective                            |
| <b>Park City</b>      | Yes - 28 Credits                          | +3.0 elective                            |
| <b>Piute</b>          | Yes - 32 Credits                          | +8.0 elective                            |
| <b>Provo</b>          | Yes - 27 Credits<br>(advanced)            | +3.0 elective                            |
| <b>Rich</b>           | No  | -  |
| <b>Salt Lake City</b> | No  | -  |
| <b>San Juan</b>       | Yes - 26 Credits                          | +2.0 elective                            |
| <b>Sevier</b>         | No  | -  |
| <b>South Sanpete</b>  | Yes – 28 Credits                          | +4.0 elective                            |
| <b>South Summit</b>   | Yes - 32 Credits                          | +1.0 CTE<br>+7.0 elective                |
| <b>Tintic</b>         | No  | -  |
| <b>Tooele</b>         | Yes - 28 Credits                          | +1.0 CTE<br>+3.0 elective                |
| <b>Uintah</b>         | Yes - 26 Credits                          | +2.0 elective                            |
| <b>Wasatch</b>        | Yes - 28 Credits                          | +4.0 elective                            |
| <b>Washington</b>     | Yes – 27-34 Credits<br>(school dependent) | + _ elective                             |
| <b>Wayne</b>          | Yes - 36 Credits                          | +1.0 Teen & Adult Living<br>+11 elective |
| <b>Weber</b>          | Yes - 27 Credits                          | +3.0 elective                            |

# I-2: Requirements for Graduation

## IMPLEMENTATION OF PROCEDURES

| Subject Area                   | Credit | Description  |
|--------------------------------|--------|--|
| Language Arts/English          | 4.0    | <p>Must complete four credits, including three foundation courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) English 9</li> <li>b) English 10</li> <li>c) English 11, IB, AP Lit, AP Lang, or concurrent enrollment</li> </ul> <p>The fourth unit will be from the Applied and Advanced Course list (attached).</p>  |
| Social Studies                 | 3.0    | <p>Must complete all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) World Geography 0.5 – Grade 9</li> <li>b) World History 0.5 – Grades 10-12</li> <li>c) U.S. History 1.0 – Grades 10-12</li> <li>d) U.S. Government and Citizenship 0.5</li> <li>e) Social Studies elective 0.5</li> </ul>   |
| Mathematics                    | 3.0    | <p>Must complete three credits from the foundation courses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Secondary I</li> <li>b) Secondary II</li> <li>c) Secondary III</li> </ul> <p>The third unit of mathematics may be from the Foundation Courses or from the Applied Courses list (attached) with written parent request.</p>   |
| Science                        | 3.0    | <p>Must complete three credits with at least one course from two of the five science foundation areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Earth Science</li> <li>b) Biology</li> <li>c) Chemistry</li> <li>d) Physics</li> <li>e) Computer Science</li> </ul> <p>The third unit of science may be from the Foundation courses or from the Applied and Advanced Courses list (attached).</p>                                       |
| Fine Arts                      | 1.5    | <p>Must complete 1.5 credits from any of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Visual Arts</li> <li>b) Dance</li> <li>c) Theatre</li> <li>d) Music</li> <li>e) Media Arts</li> </ul>  |
| Career and Technical Education | 1.0    | <p>Must complete 1.0 credits from any of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources</li> <li>b) Architecture and Construction</li> <li>c) Arts, Audio/Visual Technology and Communications</li> <li>d) Health Science</li> <li>e) Computer Science and Information Technology</li> <li>f) Business, Finance, and Marketing</li> <li>g) Engineering and Technology</li> </ul> |

## I-2 Required Credits for Graduation Requirements (cont.)

|                         |      |   |
|-------------------------|------|---|
|                         |      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>h) Health Science</li> <li>i) Education and Training</li> <li>j) Hospitality and Tourism</li> <li>k) Law, Public Safety, Corrections, and Security</li> <li>l) Manufacturing</li> <li>m) Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics</li> <li>n) Naval Science 4</li> </ul>          |
| Digital Studies         | 0.5  | Must complete 0.5 credit from the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Business Office Specialist</li> <li>b) Computer Programming 1</li> <li>c) Computer Science Principles</li> <li>d) Digital Business Application</li> <li>e) Exploring Computer Science</li> <li>f) Web Development 1</li> </ul>       |
| Financial Literacy      | 0.5  |   |
| Health Education        | 0.5  |   |
| Physical Education      | 1.5  | Must complete all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Fitness for Life 0.5</li> <li>b) Participation Skills 0.5 / or Team Sport/Athletics 0.5</li> <li>c) Individualized Lifetime Activities 0.5 / or Team Sport/Athletics 0.5 / or 0.5 of Naval Science 1 (must complete the full year)</li> </ul> |
| Electives               | 5.5  |   |
| Total Credits Required  | 24.0 |   |
| Additional Requirements |      | Passage of Basic Civics Test or alternate assessment  |

**CURRENT COURSES MEETING THE CRITERIA FOR GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

| <b>LANGUAGE ARTS</b>   |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <i>A total of 4.0 credits: 3.0 credits from the Foundations Courses list <b>plus</b> 1.0 credits from the Applied and Advanced Courses list.</i>   |   |   |
| <b>Foundation Courses</b>  | <b>Applied and Advanced Courses</b>   |   |
| English 9 (required)<br>English 10 (required)<br>English 11 (required or courses listed below)<br>Concurrent Enrollment Courses**<br>International Baccalaureate Classes**<br>AP Literature and Composition **<br>AP Language and Composition ** | 12th Grade Language Arts<br>Reading 1 and 2<br>Business Communication<br>College Prep Language Arts<br>Creative Writing 1 and Adv<br>Debate | Humanities<br>Journalism<br>Literature<br>Technical and Professional Communication<br>World Languages 3, 4, CE, or AP |
|  | <b>Communications ELA 12 0.5 Credit Courses</b><br><i>If the course earns 1.0 credit, only 0.5 credit can be used for ELA 12 credit.</i>    |   |
|  | Naval Science 4<br>Civics & Communication   |   |

Language Arts Notes: \*These courses can also be used for the one credit in Applied and Advanced (Language Arts 12).

**MATHEMATICS**

A total of 3.0 credits from Foundation Courses list (Secondary I, II, and III). Secondary III can be replaced by an Applied course with written parent request. Some applied courses do not meet college/university requirements.

| Foundation Courses |  | Applied and Advanced Courses   |   |
|--------------------|--|--|---|
|                    |  | Applied Courses<br>(alternatives for Secondary III)  | Advanced Courses<br>(following Secondary III)   |
| Secondary I        |  |  |   |
| Secondary II       |  |  |   |
| Secondary III      |  | Accounting I and II <sup>^</sup><br>Computer Programming 1 <sup>^</sup><br>Data Science<br>Introductory Statistics<br>Mathematical Decision Making for Life<br>Small Business Math and Start Up <sup>^</sup><br>Medical Math<br>Modern Mathematics<br>AP Computer Science A <sup>^</sup> | AP Calculus AB or BC<br>AP Precalculus<br>AP Statistics<br>College Prep Math<br>Concurrent Enrollment* 1010, 1030, 1040, 1050, or 1060<br>International Baccalaureate Classes<br>Introductory Calculus<br>Precalculus |

**SCIENCE**

A total of 3.0 credits: 1.0 credits from two (2) of the five (5) areas of science on the Foundation Courses list **plus** 1.0 credits from the Foundation Courses list or the Applied and Advanced Courses list.

| Foundation Courses   |   |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Earth Science</b><br>Earth and Space Science<br>AP Environmental Science<br>IB Environmental Systems  | <b>Biology</b><br>Biology<br>Biology: Agriculture Science Technology<br>AP or IB Biology<br>Biology with Lab CE*  | <b>Chemistry</b><br>Chemistry<br>AP or IB Chemistry<br>Chemistry with Lab CE*   | <b>Physics</b><br>Physics<br>AP or IB Physics<br>Physics with Lab CE* | <b>Computer Science</b><br>AP or CE Computer Science Principles<br><br>AP Computer Science A <sup>^</sup><br><br>Computer Programming 2 <sup>^</sup> |
| Applied or Advanced Courses in SLCS  |   |   |   |  |
| Electronics 1, 2, 3 <sup>^</sup><br>Agricultural Biotechnology <sup>^</sup><br>Astronomy<br>Biotechnology <sup>^</sup><br>Botany<br>Computer Science Principles <sup>^</sup><br>Ecology<br>Engineering Capstone <sup>^</sup> | Engineering Principles 1, 2 <sup>^</sup><br>Environmental Science<br>Geology<br>Genetics<br>Human Anatomy<br>Marine Biology/Oceanography<br>Material Science<br>Medical Anatomy and Physiology <sup>^</sup> | Medical Forensics <sup>^</sup><br>Meteorology<br>Robotics 1, 2 <sup>^</sup><br>Wildlife Biology<br>Zoology<br>Concurrent Enrollment Courses <sup>^</sup><br>International Baccalaureate Classes |   |  |

<sup>^</sup>Offered through the CTE Department

**Social Studies**

A total of 3.0 credits: 2.5 from the Foundations Course list and 0.5 elective from any social studies area. This can include an additional 0.5 added to any of the required half-credit courses.

| Foundation Courses   |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <b>World History (0.5)</b><br>World History I or II<br>AP European History<br>AP World History<br>HIST 1100 & 1110 CE* if both taken | <b>World Geography (0.5)</b><br>World Geography I or II<br>AP Human Geography<br>World/Cultural Geography CE* | <b>U.S. History (1.0)</b><br>U.S. History<br>AP U.S. History<br>HIST 1700 CE*, if offered in a full year<br>HIST 2700 & 2710 CE* if both taken | <b>U.S. Government and Citizenship (0.5)</b><br>U.S. Government and Citizenship<br>AP US Government & Politics<br>Political Science CE* |



| <i>Social Studies, con't</i>   |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Elective Courses</b>  |  |   |
| American Government and Law<br>Anthropology<br>AP Comparative Government & Politics<br>AP Economics-Macro<br>AP Economics-Micro<br>AP Psychology | Civics<br>Civics & Communication<br>Clemente Humanities I or II<br>Criminal Justice<br>Current Issues<br>Economics<br>Economics Elective CE*<br>Introduction to Philosophy<br>Introduction to Philosophy CE* | Latin American Studies<br>Native American Studies<br>Political Science<br>Psychology<br>Sociology |

\*Concurrent enrollment (CE) courses are offered through college/university language arts, world language, social studies, mathematics, or science departments.

NOTE: Teachers currently meeting state license and endorsement requirements for an approved applied or advanced course are qualified to teach that course.

New applied, advanced, and supplemental courses may be requested using the form found at <https://apex.slcschools.org/apex/r/slcsd/course-request/my-course-requests?session=281781238747>.

New courses must be approved by the SIC and the District Curriculum Committee. Courses should not be considered approved until they have been made active in PowerSchool.

### **Language Arts**

Determined by the local school board and approved by USBE, using the following criteria:

1. courses are within the field/discipline of language arts, aligned with the Utah Core Standards, and demonstrate a significant portion of instruction aligned to language arts content, principles, knowledge, and skills;
2. courses provide instruction that leads to student understanding of the nature and disposition of language arts;
3. courses apply the fundamental concepts and skills of language arts;
4. courses provide developmentally appropriate content; and
5. courses develop skills in reading, writing, and inquiry.

### **Mathematics**

Determined by the local school board and approved by USBE, using the following criteria:

1. courses are within the field/discipline of mathematics, aligned with the Utah Core Standards, and demonstrate a significant portion of instruction aligned to mathematics content, principles, knowledge, and skills;
2. courses provide instruction that leads to student understanding of the nature and disposition of mathematics;
3. courses apply the fundamental concepts and skills of mathematics;
4. courses provide developmentally appropriate content; and
5. courses include the five process skills of mathematics: problem solving, reasoning, communication, connections, and representation.

### **Science**

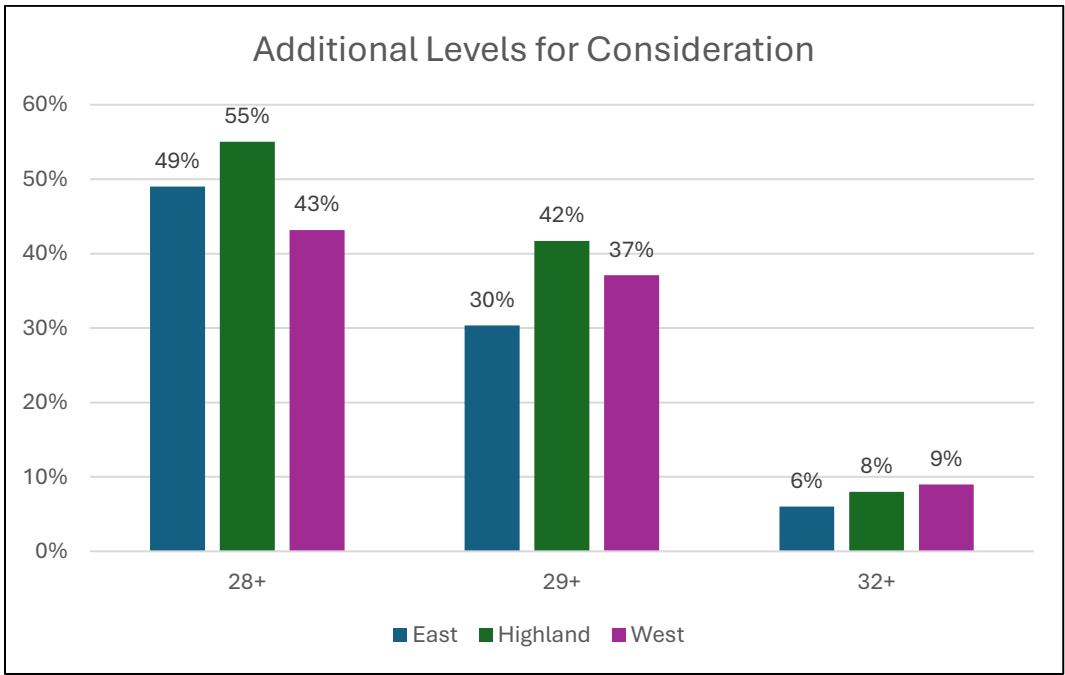
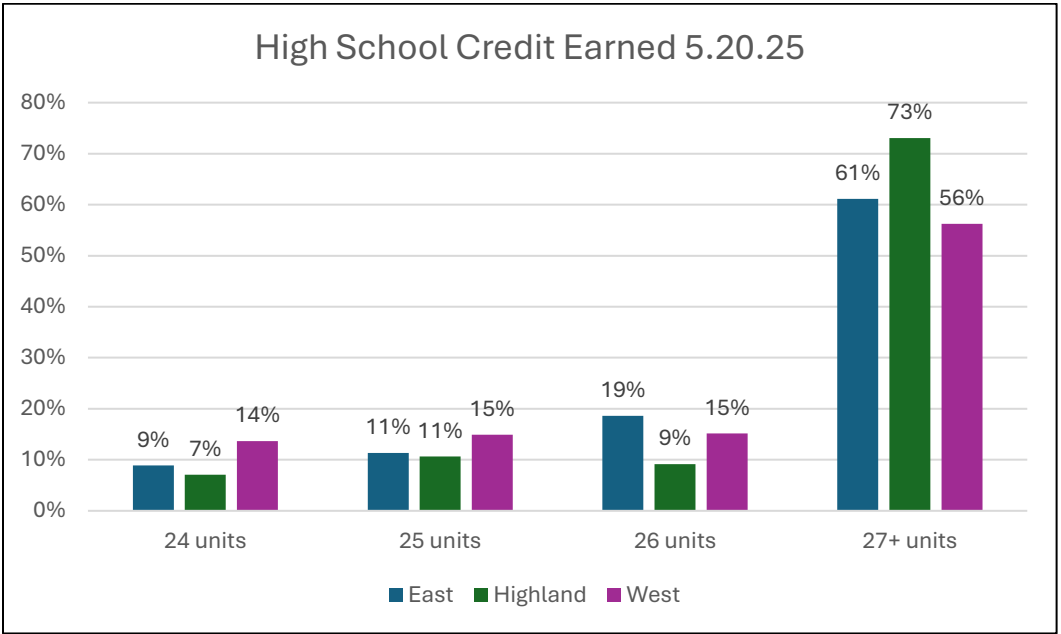
Determined by the local school board and approved by USBE, using the following criteria:

1. courses are within the field/discipline of science, aligned with the Utah Core Standards, and demonstrate a significant portion of instruction aligned to science content, principles, knowledge, and skills;
2. courses provide instruction that leads to student understanding of the nature and disposition of science;
3. courses apply the fundamental concepts and skills of science;
4. courses provide developmentally appropriate content;
5. courses include the areas of physical, natural, or applied sciences; and
6. courses develop students' skills in scientific inquiry.

No district employee or student shall be subjected to discrimination in employment or any district program or activity on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. The district is committed to providing equal access and equal opportunity in its programs, services and employment including its policies, complaint processes, program accessibility, district facility use, accommodations and other Equal Employment Opportunity matters. The district also provides equal access to district facilities for all youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United States Code, including scouting groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries and complaints regarding unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation: Tina Hatch, Compliance and Investigations/Title IX Coordinator, 406 East 100 South, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111, (801) 578-8388. You may also contact the Office for Civil Rights, Denver, CO, (303) 844-5695.

**East, Highland, West Credit Earning Patterns**

Data are for seniors on May 20, 2025, within a week of the end of school.



**Sample College Requirement Table**

| <b>Institution</b>                               | <b>Selectivity Level</b>        | <b>GPA<br/>(Typical Range,<br/>Unweighted)</b> | <b>ACT/SAT</b>                | <b>Coursework Expectations</b>   | <b>Additional Requirements</b>  |
|--|---------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|---|
| Top-tier<br>(e.g., Princeton,<br>Stanford, etc.) | Highly Selective                | 3.9–4.0+                                       | SAT: 1500+ /<br>ACT: 33–35    | 4 yrs English, 4 yrs Math, 3–4 yrs<br>Science, 3+ yrs Social Studies, 2–4 yrs<br>World Language<br><br>AP, IB, or Honors classes strongly<br>encouraged.           | Essays, recommendations,<br>extracurriculars, course rigor  |
| University of Utah                               | Moderately<br>Selective         | 3.5–4.0  | Optional (test-<br>flexible)  | Utah Regents/Core: 4 Eng, 3 Math, 3<br>Science, 3 Soc. Studies, 2 World Lang.<br>(recommended)   | Transcript, optional essay,<br>activities résumé<br><br>Considers coursework rigor and<br>GPA for holistic review |
| Weber State<br>University                        | Open Enrollment<br>(w/ support) | 2.5+<br>(for direct<br>admission)              | Not required for<br>admission | Utah High School Graduation<br>Requirements (24 credits)<br><br>Wide-access model with guided<br>pathways and support for students<br>with lower GPAs.             | Placement exams if no ACT/SAT   |
| Salt Lake Community<br>College (SLCC)            | Open Enrollment                 | No minimum<br>GPA                              | Not required                  | Must have high school diploma or GED<br><br>Admits all high school graduates and<br>focuses on access and transition<br>support through advising and<br>placement. | Placement based on transcript or<br>SLCC test   |

## Diploma Types for Consideration

| Diploma Type     | Credits Required | Diploma Design   | Focus Areas  | Target Student Group  | Notes  |
|------------------|------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Basic Diploma    | 24               | SLCSD is listed as institution                         | Meets state minimum; allows maximum flexibility                                  | Students with unique learning needs or credit recovery needs                    | May require IEP team or district committee approval              |
| Standard Diploma | 26–27            | School is listed as institution                        | Includes district-defined focus areas (e.g., WL, Science, CTE)                   | Majority of students meeting graduation expectations                            | Aligned to current SLCSD requirements with possible enhancements |
| Honors Diploma   | 28+              | Recognized with transcript designation or diploma seal | Includes advanced coursework, GPA threshold, AP/IB/CE courses, or CTE completion | Students pursuing college readiness, academic distinction, and career readiness | Recognizes achievements in addition to course completion         |

## Areas to Consider

| Area of Impact             | Potential Positive Impacts   | Potential Challenges   |
|----------------------------|--|--|
| Students                   | Expanded learning opportunities; increased academic engagement           | Less flexibility; increased risk for off-track students  |
| Multilingual Learners      | More access to credit-bearing courses that promote language development  | Additional support may be needed to ensure access  |
| Students with Disabilities | Supports inclusive access to rigorous content with appropriate scaffolds | May require more accommodations, staff training  |
| Credit Recovery            | Encourages preventative support and earlier credit accumulation          | Increased demand for alternative scheduling and credit recovery options throughout the year and summer   |
| Instructional Staff        | Opportunities for more advanced or specialized courses                   | Teacher interest in creating and teaching advanced or specialized courses - although more teachers are qualified or experienced in specialized areas (e.g., Social Studies Composite vs History) |
| Course Scheduling          | More strategic planning for comprehensive pathways                       | Complexity in meeting new requirements within 4 years  |
| Facilities & Resources     | Efficient use of facilities for electives and labs                       | Demand for specialized classes will require flexibility and sharing  |
| Equity Considerations      | Promotes consistent expectations and access to advanced coursework       | Risk of widening opportunity gaps without proper scaffolding and counseling  |