

EARLY GRADUATION

I. PURPOSE

The Jackson Public School District (JPS) recognizes that some scholars may be ready to graduate from high school early to enter the workforce, pursue post-secondary education, or for other valid reasons. This policy provides guidance for early graduation consideration and ensures that all requirements are met in accordance with the Mississippi Department of Education's (MDE) Rule 36.7, Early Graduation Policy.

II. DEFINITION

For the purposes of this policy, early graduation is defined as the successful completion of all required coursework and standards prior to completing eight (8) semesters of high school work, beginning in the ninth grade.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, the following guidelines shall govern early graduation in JPS:

A. MOTIVATION AND CONSIDERATIONS

The motivation for early graduation is to better tailor the educational system to an individual scholar's needs. Some scholars may be ready to enter college or the workforce at age 17; however, this option may not be suitable for all scholars. When discussing early graduation, the scholar's preparedness for post-secondary endeavors must be considered, including potential drawbacks that may not be evident until after high school.

B. APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Application Requirements

- a. Scholars must complete an early graduation application articulating their post-secondary plans.
- b. The completed application shall be placed in the student's cumulative folder.
- c. Parental or guardian consent is required for scholars under the age of 18.
- d. The School Counselor, Principal, and Superintendent, or their designee, must approve the application.

2. Timeline for Application

- a. Applications for scholars who seek to graduate more than one semester early must be submitted before the end of the first semester of the scholar's junior year.

3. Eligibility Criteria

A scholar must meet the minimum graduation requirements, including earning the appropriate number of Carnegie units and existing standards for a traditional

diploma with an endorsement (CTE, JROTC, Academic, or Distinguished Academic), unless one of the following exceptions applies:

- The scholar is a non-senior who will turn 18 on or before December 1 of the current school year.
- The scholar has been retained in one or more grades.
- The scholar faces a hardship situation (e.g., child, family, or health-related hardship). The existence of a hardship will be determined by the Assistant Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, or the Superintendent or designee.

4. Additional Requirements for Early Graduation More than One Semester Early

Scholars applying to graduate more than one semester early must have completed at least one of the following:

- Met ACT College and Career Readiness Standards for English/Reading and Math and completed the FAFSA.
- Scored Silver or higher on the ACT WorkKeys.
- Earned a CTE national certification.
- Earned at least nine (9) hours of academic dual credit (including Comp I and College Algebra).
- Passed all required End of Course Assessments.
- Completed a one Carnegie unit credit-bearing work-based learning class or a 140-hour work-based learning experience that could lead to family-sustaining employment.

C. TERMINATION OF APPLICATION

The school or District, in its discretion, may terminate a scholar's early graduation application and require the scholar to return to a traditional graduation schedule at any time due to academic, behavioral, or attendance issues.

D. REPORTING

Early graduates shall be reported to the Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS) using the appropriate withdrawal code of 01921 (Graduated with a regular, advanced, International Baccalaureate, or other diploma type), along with the associated exit date. Final grades shall be reported at the time of exit.

DATE: June 30, 2025

REVIEWED: June 10, 2025