

Gateway Regional School District Competency Determination

Section 1: Competency Determination Requirements

General: A student will receive full credit for a course only if a final grade of 60 or higher is achieved. Mastery of an individual competency requires both a passing overall course grade and evidence of competency through a “Demonstration of Learning,” in which the student must articulate how mastery of three key standards (determined by departments) has been met. Specific criteria for each competency are outlined below.

English Language Arts:

-For English Language Arts, a student must (1) complete and earn a final grade of a 60 or higher in all the required courses (see below) (2) articulate mastery of three key standards (determined by English Language Arts Department) during the “Demonstration of Learning” and (3) earn a passing score 20/24 on the “Demonstration of Learning”

Required Courses:

- English I CP or English I Honors
- English II CP or English II Honors

Standards:

Grade 9:

-Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. (RI and RL 9-10.2)

-Write arguments (e.g., essays, letters to the editor, advocacy speeches) to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence. (W.9-10.1).

-Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. (SL.9-10.1). Back-up Standard (note this standard repeats in 10th): Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, vocabulary, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task (SL.9-10.4).

Grade 10:

-RL (Reading Literature).1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what a text states explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

-W (Writing).2. Write informative/explanatory texts (e.g., essays, oral reports, biographical feature articles) to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

-RL2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of a text.

Mathematics:

-For Mathematics, a student must (1) complete and earn a final grade of a 60 or higher in all the required courses (see below) (2) articulate mastery of three key standards (determined by Mathematics Department) during the “Demonstration of Learning” and (3) earn a passing score 20/24 on the “Demonstration of Learning”.

Required Courses:

- Algebra I CP or Algebra I Honors **Algebra can be taken in eighth grade*
- Geometry CP or Geometry Honors

Standards:

Algebra 1

Creating Equations AI.A-CED

A. Create equations that describe numbers or relationships.

Reasoning with Equations and Inequalities A1.A-REI

B. Solve equations and inequalities in one variable.

C. Solve systems of equations.

Interpreting Functions A1.F-IF

C. Analyze functions using different representations.

Geometry:

Congruence GEO.G-CO

A. Experiment with transformations in the plane

Geometric Measurement and Dimension GEO.G-GMD

A. Explain volume formulas and use them to solve problems.

Modeling with Geometry GEO.G-MG

A. Apply geometric concepts in modeling situations.

Science:

-For Science, a student must (1) complete and earn a final grade of a 60 or higher in ONE of the required courses (see below) (2) articulate mastery of three key standards (determined by Science Department) during the “Demonstration of Learning” and (3) earn a passing score 20/24 on the “Demonstration of Learning”.

Required Courses (one):

- Introduction to Physics
- Biology CP or Biology Honors
- Chemistry CP or Chemistry Honors

Standards:

1. Matter and its Interactions

- **Chemistry:** Atoms bond and react, conserving matter.
- **Physics:** Matter has mass, interacts via forces, and follows conservation laws
- **Biology:** Living systems are made of matter; biochemical reactions obey the same principles.
- **Mastery:** Explains that all systems, living and nonliving, are built from atoms and molecules whose interactions follow universal laws.

2. Energy Flow and Conservation

- **Chemistry:** Chemical reactions absorb or release energy but conserve total energy.
- **Physics:** Energy transfers between kinetic, potential, thermal, and other forms, but total energy is conserved.
- **Biology:** Organisms capture, store, and transfer energy (photosynthesis, respiration) within ecosystems.
- **Mastery:** Demonstrates that energy drives all processes, changes form, and is always conserved across physical and biological systems.

3. Laboratory Investigation Standards

- **Design** safe and valid experiments.
- **Collect and analyze** precise, meaningful data.
- **Explain and communicate** results using evidence and reasoning.
- **Mastery** described and evaluated according to the Science department  Lab Rubric

Social Studies:

-For Social Studies, a student must (1) complete and earn a final grade of a 60 or higher in ONE of the required courses (see below) (2) articulate mastery of three key standards (determined by Social Studies Department) during the “Demonstration of Learning” (3) earn a passing score 20/24 on the “Demonstration of Learning” and (4) complete an approved action civics project.

Required Courses (one):

- U.S. History I CP or U.S. History I Honors
- U.S. History II CP or U.S. History II Honors

Standards:

1. Demonstrate civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions.

- Civic knowledge includes the core knowledge in the Content Standards relating to civics and government, economics, geography, and history.
- Civic intellectual skills encompass knowing how to identify, assess, interpret, describe, analyze and explain matters of concern in civic life.
- Civic participatory skills encompass knowing how to make and support arguments, use the political process to communicate with elected officials and representatives of government, and plan strategically for civic change.
- Civic dispositions encompass values, virtues, and behaviors, such as respect for others, commitment to equality, capacity for listening, and capacity for communicating in ways accessible to others'

2. Develop focused questions or problem statements and conduct inquiries.

The ability to develop focused research questions in history and social science or define the dimensions of a particular policy problem is central to learning in these disciplines. Students learn that each field in the social sciences has its own ways of defining questions. For example, in studying the Great Depression,

- A political scientist might ask, how did the major political parties, government institutions and the private sector respond?
- An economist might ask, what were the economic causes of the Depression?
- A geographer might ask, how did the Depression affect areas of the United States differently? • A historian might ask, what related economic, political and social events preceded the Depression?

3. Organize information and data from multiple primary and secondary sources.

Student researchers gather and organize information from a variety of online, print, and other sources. In the history and social science fields, they pay close attention to whether the source is primary or secondary. Primary sources are documents written or created during the period under study (e.g., census data, a map, an interview, a speech, or an artifact such as a building, painting, or tool) and considered first-hand accounts. Secondary sources are later interpretations or commentaries based on primary sources. Often students will use primary and secondary sources together to compose an argument, because each source provides a different type of information.

4. Analyze the purpose and point of view of each source; distinguish opinion from fact. Students need exposure to readings that represent a variety of points of view in order to become discerning and critical readers. They need to be able to identify the purpose of a document and the point of view of its author. As students search primary sources for answers to questions, such as what really happened in Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, they begin to understand that eyewitness accounts of the same event can differ.

5. Evaluate the credibility, accuracy, and relevance of each source.

Students investigating a question using online sources often find all too much material, some of it conflicting. The ability to be discerning and skeptical consumers of information is a crucial college, career, and civic skill. Beginning in elementary school, students should learn how and why to assess, verify, and cite sources.

6. Argue or explain conclusions, using valid reasoning and evidence.

The strength of an argument or explanation lies in its logical development of ideas, acknowledgement of counterclaims, and use of reliable supporting evidence. Effective arguments and explanations often go beyond text alone to include well-chosen and relevant visual elements such as photographs, maps, and displays of quantitative data. Students' ability to adapt a presentation to the task, purpose, and audience and their ability to respond to questions are important skills for civic participation.

7. Determine next steps and take informed action, as appropriate.

One of the main goals of teaching history and the social sciences is to provide opportunities for students to practice using the knowledge and skills that enable them to participate in civic life. Some examples of those opportunities include:

- Exploring questions or problems in the form of classroom discussions, essays, research papers, and other products of research;

- Engaging in discourse about public policy beyond the classroom through social media, letters to the editor, oral presentations in public settings, or community service learning projects.

Section 2: Additional Requirements

In addition to the coursework and mastery requirements outlined in the previous section, the “Demonstration of Learning” includes other components that students must complete to show mastery and competency (see below).

1)Description of Coursework in Grades 9 & 10

Description of course content from ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies. Include reflections on challenges and achievements through work examples.

2)Evidence of Meeting Competency Determination Requirements

Portfolio artifacts demonstrating competency based on Massachusetts standards for ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

3)Evidence of Meeting the “Habits of a Scholar”

Evidence from portfolio artifacts demonstrating mastery of “Habits of a Scholar” (-Leaders, Service-minded, Technologically Skilled, Communicators, Collaborative, Perseverant, Knowledgeable, Engaged, Resourceful, Self-directed)

4)Goals for Life After Graduation

Share career, college, or vocational goals and how they connect to interests and strengths.

5)Action Steps for Reaching These Goals

Present a plan which outlines concrete steps to be taken in high school and post-graduation to reach career goals.

6)Requests for Coursework in Grades 11 and 12

Propose classes or experiences (e.g., internships, AP courses, electives) to be pursued based on interests and goals.

Section 3: Additional Considerations

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities, including students in out-of-district day or residential schools, will have the opportunity to meet the competency determination requirements. For students with disabilities attending GRS, accommodations and modifications will be made to coursework that still demonstrate mastery but meet the needs of the students. This will include expectations of the “Demonstration of Learning”. Individual circumstances and considerations will be reviewed by the special education teacher, school principal, and pupil services department. For students attending out-of-district day or residential schools, coursework and student performance will be reviewed to determine if the above competencies have been met. Depending on the program, and if appropriate, students will be expected to complete a “Demonstration of Learning”. Support for this will be provided by the school principal and pupil services department.

English Learners: English learners will have the opportunity to meet the competency determination requirements and be provided any specialized supports or considerations consistent with the identified support needed.

Late-Enrolling Students: For any student enrolling in GRS, a thorough review of their previous transcripts will be conducted by building administration and the counseling department to determine if students have shown mastery. The review could include review of relevant coursework and discussion with the sending school or institution. Once a decision has been made, required courses that still need to be completed will be shared with a student and built into their schedule in order to meet the competency determination. If a student does not have the ability to make up the coursework in their schedule the qualifying MCAS-score exception will be used on a limited basis.

All graduating students will be required to complete the “Demonstration of Learning”. For students who arrive at GRS during their senior year after the month of February, modifications will be made to the project depending on individual circumstances.

Section 4: Appeals Process

If a student or parent/guardian wishes to appeal to the district that a student did in fact meet the requirements for competency determination, the following process must be followed:

Building Level:

-Student or parent/guardian will email the school principal and request a meeting to discuss the decision. Prior to the meeting, the student and parent/guardian will prepare materials demonstrating that the competency determination has been met. For students

wishing to graduate, notice must be provided before April 15 of their intended graduating year.

-During the meeting, the school principal will review with the student and parent/guardian the relevant documents and the student will be responsible for sharing how the competency determination was met.

-After the meeting, the principal will issue a formal decision within three days.

District Level:

-If a student or parent/guardian wishes to appeal the principal's decision, they are responsible for emailing and requesting a meeting with the principal and superintendent of schools. For students wishing to graduate, notice must be provided before May 1 of their intended graduating year.

-During the meeting, the school principal and superintendent of schools will review with the student and parent/guardian the relevant documents and the student will be responsible for sharing how the competency determination was met.

-After the meeting, the superintendent will issue a formal decision within three days.

School Committee Level:

-If a student or parent/guardian wishes to appeal the superintendent's decision, they are responsible for emailing and requesting a meeting with the school committee. For students wishing to graduate, notice must be provided before May 15 of their intended graduating year.

-During the meeting, the school committee will review with the student and parent/guardian the relevant documents and the student will be responsible for sharing how the competency determination was met.

-After the meeting, the school committee will vote in executive session and a formal decision will be made, which will be final.

Section 5: Diploma Request Process for Previously Enrolled Students

If a student enrolled between 2003 and 2024 requests review of completed coursework to determine if the competency determination has been met the following process must be followed:

-Former students will formally email the school principal and superintendent and request review of transcripts to see if competency determination has been met.

-School personnel will have one month from the initial request to review transcripts and any relevant additional documents shared by the requesting student and make a determination. Personnel will include school and district administration, counseling department, teaching staff, and support staff as needed. The final decision will be made by the school principal.

-The decision is subject to the appeals process listed above.

☒ **Section 6: Certifications**

☒ Policy has been approved by Gateway Regional School Committee

☒ Policy has been shared with all students, families/guardians, and district stakeholders

☒ Policy has been made publicly available in multiple languages

URL: <https://grhs.grsd.org/about-us12>

Gateway Regional School District Graduation Requirements

Section 1: Credit Requirements

General: A student will receive full credit for a course only if a final grade of 60 or higher is achieved. Students enrolled in full year courses will receive ten credits; students enrolled in semester courses will receive five credits; students enrolled in every other day semester courses will receive two and a half credits. Students are required to complete 240 credits for graduation

Required Coursework:

English- 40 Credits
Mathematics- 40 Credits
Science- 30 Credits
Social Studies- 30 Credits
World Languages- 20 Credits
Arts- 10 credits
Physical Education and Health- 12.5 Credits
Electives- 57.5 Credits

Total: 240

Required Coursework (Chapter 74: Welding):

English- 40 Credits
Mathematics- 30 Credits
Science- 30 Credits
Social Studies- 25 Credits
Metals Technology A and B- 7.5 Credits
Shop (Welding)- 50 Credits
Arts- 5 credits
Physical Education and Health- 12.5 Credits
Electives- 40 Credits

Total: 240

Required Coursework (Chapter 74: EEC):

English- 40 Credits
Mathematics- 40 Credits
Science- 30 Credits
Social Studies- 30 Credits
Intro to Early Education and Care A and B- 7.5 Credits
Shop (EEC)- 50 Credits
Arts- 5 credits
Physical Education and Health- 12.5 Credits
Electives- 25 Credits

Total: 240

Section 2: Additional Requirements

To encourage and build skills that students will need to be successful at Gateway Regional School and beyond, students will be expected to work on skills each year. The skill work will begin in grade six and be part of the requirements for promotion to the next grade. In grades 9-12, students will be required to meet the required expectations to show mastery of each skill, each year. Required expectations will vary depending on grade. The skills that students will need to show mastery of each year are the following:

Gateway Gators are...

- Leaders
- Service-minded
- Technologically Skilled
- Communicators
- Collaborative
- Perseverant

- Knowledgeable
- Engaged
- Resourceful
- Self-directed