



VAN BUREN SCHOOL DISTRICT

COURSE PLANNING GUIDE



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The courses outlined in this brochure are subject to change without notice and are not guaranteed to be current after the 2026-2027 school year. Please contact Myron Heckman, VBSD Director of Secondary Education, at Myron.Heckman@VBSD.us with any questions or concerns regarding this publication.

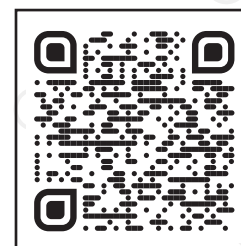
HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Preparing for graduation and beyond takes careful planning. To help students strategize and select the appropriate courses, the Van Buren School District (VBSD) has plotted a number of pathways that outline the necessary steps to graduation. These emphasize areas of strong interest or career focus. Other programs offer unique skills training and opportunities to earn college credit or certifications. Each program seeks to develop young people so they are well-prepared for college, career, and citizenship.

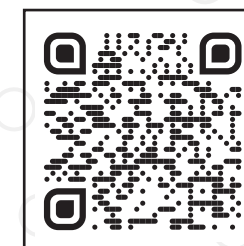
The purpose of this guide is to help students make informed choices in the class registration process. It outlines courses available to VBSD secondary students pursuing a particular career pathway and the potential certifications they can earn. Students may select a pathway as early as their freshman year.

The guide also details graduation requirements and various types of classes offered, including concurrent credit, honors, and advanced placement options. Courses are scheduled based on enrollment. Detailed information about course offerings and curriculum requirements is available using the catalog links below.

VBSD's high-quality curriculum is designed to help students reach their fullest potential. The goal is to equip young men and women with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in life. Programs of study emphasize both academics and character development. Graduation and diploma requirements are intended to ensure students develop a well-formed understanding of the world and a sense of responsibility for themselves and others.



Van Buren
Freshman
Academy
Course Catalog



Van Buren
High School
Course Catalog

COURSE & CAREER PATHWAY OPTIONS

The Van Buren School District provides multiple opportunities for students to advance their college or career goals while still in high school. This guide showcases the various options from which students can choose in planning their futures. Taking into account their long-term career aspirations, students should also factor in the type of diploma they want to earn – Diploma, Diploma with Merit, or Diploma with Distinction. A snapshot of the available academic programs is provided here. Detailed descriptions of each diploma are provided on page 19 of this brochure.

CAREER PATHWAYS

- Pathways are based on 14 Career Clusters as outlined by the Arkansas Department of Education's Division and Career and Technical Education Guide.
- Students gain real-world skills and experience, applicable to future careers.
- Students can receive certifications and specialized training within a specified career path that will give them an employment and earnings advantage.
- Pathways Include:
 - Pre-Engineering
 - Sustainable Energy and Conservation
 - Plant Systems
 - Fashion and Housing Design
 - Culinary Arts and Restaurant Management
 - Software Development
 - Pre-Educator
 - Biomedical Sciences
 - Supply Chain and Logistics
 - Army JROTC

CONCURRENT CREDIT

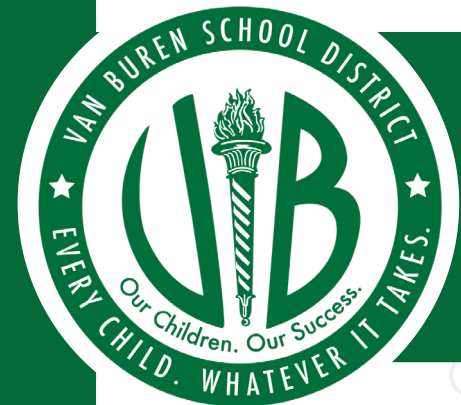
- Students receive college-level instruction for high school courses through partnerships with Arkansas Tech University, Arkansas Tech University-Ozark Campus, and the University of Arkansas Fort Smith.
- In addition to meeting high school graduation requirements, students receive college credit hours upon completing class with a grade of "C" or higher. This saves families time and tuition dollars.
- Students can earn up to 5.0 toward their grade point average (GPA) for completing concurrent credit courses with an appropriate grade. This can potentially improve a student's overall academic class ranking.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

- Advanced Placement (AP) courses are more rigorous than standard classes and demonstrate students are motivated to learn at the next level. Successful completion of AP classes is often viewed favorably by higher education institutions in scholarship and admission considerations.
- Students who complete AP courses can take the AP exam in that subject area during the spring semester. Participants can earn college credit hours upon receiving a passing score on the exam.
- Students can earn up to 5.0 toward their grade point average (GPA) for successfully passing the course and signing up for the AP exam. This can potentially improve a student's overall academic class ranking.

WATC

- The Western Arkansas Training Center (WATC) is a partnership with the University of Arkansas Fort Smith (UAFS) that enables students to receive specialized, technical training while in high school. It is based on student interests and aptitudes.
- WATC participants can earn professional certifications, certificates of proficiency, or technical certifications through UAFS.
- Students who complete UAFS courses through WATC are credited at both the high school and collegiate levels. WATC participants can finish their technical program with as many as 40 hours toward a degree or advanced certification program.
- Students gain practical experience during apprenticeships which are modeled to provide real-world learning.



VBSD CAREER PATHWAYS

EXPLAINED

To give students a career advantage, VBSD proudly offers a wide range of pathway options. High schoolers who declare their intent to pursue a career in one of the fields offered are provided an outline of required coursework and programs. Students gain real-world knowledge and skills, while also receiving industry-recognized credentials and work-based learning experience applicable to their future.

PATHWAY OPTIONS

- Pre-Engineering
- Sustainable Energy and Conservation
- Plant Systems
- Fashion and Housing Design
- Culinary Arts and Restaurant Management
- Software Development
- Pre-Educator
- Biomedical Sciences
- Supply Chain and Logistics
- Army JROTC



PRE-ENGINEERING

PATHWAY

The Engineering pathway enables students to learn firsthand how to craft designs that have real-world applications. Students will create objects and assemble them on a computer using CAD (Computer-Aided Design) software. They also build physical prototypes, such as puzzle cubes, model cars, and model trains. Students work in teams and are tasked with designing various items such as paper bridges, cable cars, and filling machines using designated sets of materials.

As students advance in the program, they will gain hands-on experience working with high-level technologies and machines, including a CNC machine, VEX equipment, and more. The capstone course gives students the opportunity to work closely with industry professionals in researching and resolving an engineering problem. Teams formally present and defend their original solution to a panel, giving them real-world training and connections in the field.



COURSES

- Introduction to Engineering
- Engineering I
- Engineering II
- Practicum/Apprenticeship

CERTIFICATIONS

- CAD – Autodesk Fusion 360

CAREERS

- Industrial Engineer
- Mechanical Engineer
- Chemical Engineer
- Petroleum Engineer
- Electrical Engineer
- Civil Engineer
- Biomedical Engineer
- Aerospace Engineer
- Safety Engineer

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Students who complete the required coursework (three out of the four years) for the Engineering Pathway receive a Completer Cord to be worn at graduation and have the opportunity to take part in the Completer Ceremony during spring of their senior year.

SUSTAINABLE ENERGY & CONSERVATION

PATHWAY

With this pathway, students can further their understanding of the environment and prepare for careers in the energy or conservation fields. Participants begin with introductory agriculture coursework and progress to in-depth earth science topics including man's interactions with nature. In year three, students learn about the forestry and wildlife industries, which play vital roles in the state's economy.

Students in this pathway are also members of the National FFA (formerly Future Farmers of America) organization, which provides additional learning opportunities outside the classroom. Such experiences contribute to leadership development, personal growth, and career success.



COURSES

- Introduction to Agriculture
- CASE Natural Resources and Ecology
Option to be counted as third-year science credit and/or 5.0 weighted credit.
- Forestry and Wildlife Ecosystems

CERTIFICATIONS

- CASE Natural Resources and Ecology; OSHA 10

CAREERS

- Soil Conservationist
- Game and Fish Warden
- Forestry Ranger
- Wildlife Officer
- Ecologist
- Environmental Scientist

PLANT SYSTEMS

PATHWAY

As Arkansas's largest industry, agriculture contributes more than \$20 billion to the state's economy. Van Buren High School's plant systems courses focus on agriculture science, as well as practical applications for agricultural products. Students learn how their food, clothing, and shelter are made. They are given opportunities to work directly with plants in campus gardens and greenhouses, as well as VBSD's state-of-the-art aquaponics facility.

Students in this pathway are also members of the National FFA (formerly Future Farmers of America) organization, which provides additional learning opportunities outside the classroom. Such experiences contribute to leadership development, personal growth, and career success.



COURSES

- Survey of Agriculture
- CASE Principles of Agri Science (Plant)
Option to be counted as third-year science credit and/or 5.0 weighted credit.
- Advanced Plant Science

CERTIFICATIONS

- Survey of Agriculture: Arkansas Hunter Education; Arkansas Boater Education
- CASE Plant Science and CASE Natural Resources and Ecology: OSHA 10

CAREERS

- Agronomist
- Greenhouse Operator
- Botanist
- Horticulturalist
- Florist
- County Extension Agent

FASHION & HOUSING DESIGN

PATHWAY

Students hoping to pursue design careers can get a jumpstart in their desired field through participation in the Fashion and Housing Design Pathway. All participants will begin with a general Family and Consumer Sciences (FACS) course. They will go on to learn skills necessary for managing individual and family wardrobes and making informed decisions as a consumer. They will also explore topics on the role of the clothing and textile industries in the economy.

As part of the advanced design course, students will take a creative approach to studying the elements, principles, and psychology of design.

They will then be given opportunities to apply concepts and explore career options in both the fashion and interiors industries.



COURSES

- Introduction to Digital Arts
- Fashion and Interior Design I
- Fashion and Interior Design II

CAREERS

- Fashion Designer
- Stylist
- Merchandiser
- Interior Designer
- Home Staging Professional
- Textile Designer

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Students can participate in FCCLA (Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America) as part of their FACS educational experience.

CULINARY ARTS & RESTAURANT MANAGEMENT

PATHWAY

Under the umbrella of Hospitality, Tourism, and Events, the Culinary Arts and Restaurant Management Pathway gives students the opportunity to study courses specifically related to food production, nutrition, and more. Students begin the pathway with a general FACS course, designed to equip them with basic information and skills needed to function effectively within the family, society, and workplace.

As they advance in the pathway, they will learn more industry related skills, including how to select, prepare, and serve food to meet nutritional needs of individuals and families. Upper-level classwork seeks to help students develop competencies related to food production, technology, sanitation and safety, menu planning, commercial food service and storage, and more. Students will have ample opportunities to work hands-on in a kitchen and learn skills necessary to succeed in the culinary or hospitality industries.



COURSES

- Introduction to Food Safety and Nutrition
- Culinary and Restaurant Management I
- Culinary and Restaurant Management II

CERTIFICATIONS

- ServSafe® Food Handlers Certification
- ServSafe® Manager Certification

CAREERS

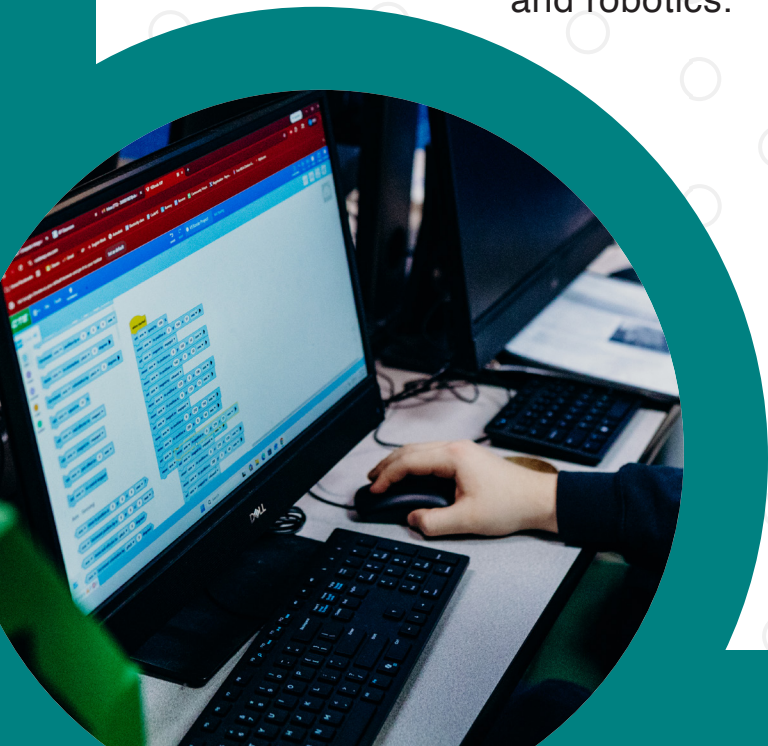
- Chef/Cook
- Restaurant Manager
- Caterer
- Nutritionist
- Quality Control Supervisor
- Hospitality Operations Manager
- Health Inspector
- Food Scientist

SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

PATHWAY

As digital technology plays a pivotal role in most industries and day-to-day life, software development is a wise choice for students seeking a high-demand career field. The pathway focuses on programming and computer science. Students utilize Python® to create apps and develop websites. They also learn to make computers work together to put designs into practice.

As they progress in the pathway, students cultivate their understanding of coding through analyzing, writing, and testing code. Additional course opportunities also focus on cybersecurity and robotics.



COURSES

- Introduction to Computer Science
- Software Development
- Mobile App Development or Game Development and Design

CAREERS

- Software Engineer
- Full-Stack Developer
- Mobile App Developer
- Game Developer
- Data Engineer
- Test Automation Engineer

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

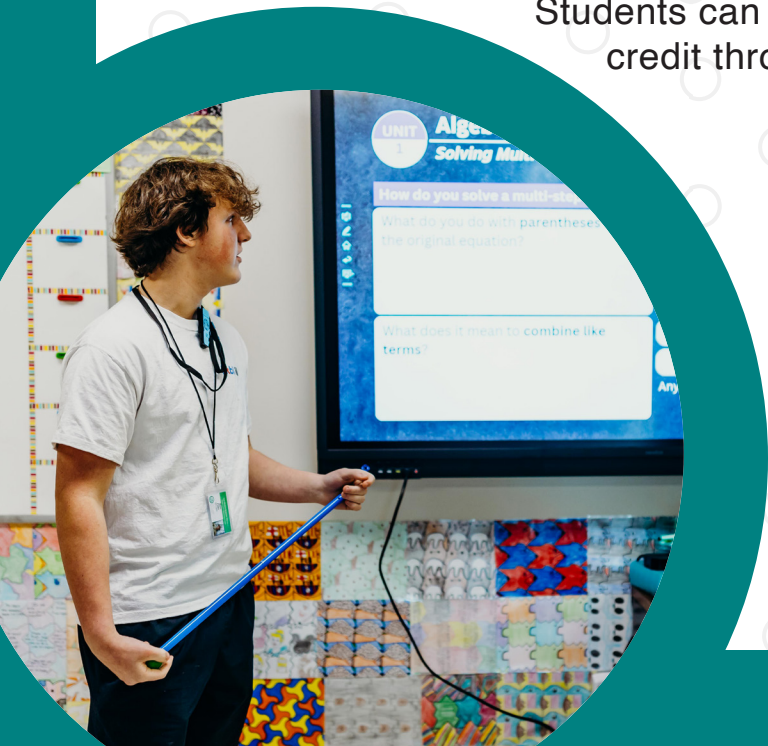
- Students have the opportunity participate in Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSO), as well as FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America), and SkillsUSA.

PRE-EDUCATOR PATHWAY

Students interested in teaching, coaching, or pursuing careers in education will have an academic advantage from taking part in the Pre-Educator Pathway. Curriculum focuses on helping students develop what it takes to succeed in the classroom and beyond.

Pre-Educator Pathway participants begin with an Introduction to Education class, where they engage in 30 hours of field experience. Aspiring educators can earn their Completer Certification by taking all three Pathway courses.

Students can also earn concurrent college credit through Arkansas Tech University.



COURSES

- Introduction to Education
- Education Technology
- Child Growth and Development

CERTIFICATIONS

- Students can earn a Certified Teacher Assistant certificate upon completing the pathway and earning a satisfactory score on the ParaPro Praxis.

CAREERS

- Teacher
- School Counselor
- Coach
- Band Director
- School Media Specialist
- Campus or District Administrator

BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES

PATHWAY

The Biomedical Pathway allows for career exploration within the medical field. Throughout courses, students learn about the human body and medical treatments by simulating various roles in the healthcare profession. Students learn about DNA and genetics while working as analysts and lab technicians to help solve crimes. They also serve as forensic anthropologists by studying bones and anatomy to determine the identify of a skeleton.

Hands-on learning extends to a laboratory, as participants are given opportunities to develop essential diagnostic skills and work collaboratively to solve real-world problems and treat fictional patients. Students learn to take blood pressure and about procedures such as EKGs, micro-pipetting, bacteria cultures, dissections, and more.

Students with a keen interest in the medical field will gain valuable knowledge and a wealth of experience that will parlay well into undergraduate and graduate studies in medicine.



COURSES

- Principles of Biomedical Sciences
- Human Body Systems
- Medical Interventions
Weighted with a 5.0 by the ADE.
- Biomedical Innovations

CERTIFICATIONS

- OSHA approved First Aid Certification

CAREERS

- Physician
- Registered Nurse
- Occupational Therapist
- Physical Therapist
- Medical Assistant
- Phlebotomist
- DNA Analyst
- Pharmacist

SUPPLY CHAIN & LOGISTICS

PATHWAY

Arkansas is home to multiple international carriers and corporations specializing in moving products, making supply chain and logistics one of the most prominent industries in the state. Students in this pathway will gain a fundamental understanding of logistics, transportation, operations, warehousing, supply chain technology, transportation systems, and more.

Beginning coursework will focus on basic business practices and familiarize students with common software programs used across the related fields. Upper-level coursework will cover topics such as the SCOR model, customer service, and ultimately help students learn how to buy, make, and deliver products.

COURSES

- Introduction to Business
- Supply Chain and Logistics I
- Supply Chain and Logistics II
- Internship

CAREERS

- Logistics Coordinator
- Procurement Specialist
- Inventory Planner
- Warehouse Manager
- Supply Chain Analyst
- Transportation Coordinator



JROTC ARMY

PATHWAY

Van Buren High School's Junior Reserves Officer Training Corps (JROTC) is a four-year program that focuses on leadership and character development. JROTC is designed to prepare students for their future, be it in the military, pursuing a college degree, or starting a career.

JROTC students are known as cadets. They take classes in a range of subjects, including leadership, winning color, learning styles, and more. Cadets also have opportunities to compete in a number of military-style contests, including Drill and Physical Training Team.

Participation in JROTC allows students to fulfill their required health and physical education credits during the first year of the program. Cadets also learn how to properly manage their finances through the JROTC Financial Planning Program, which is taught by army instructors. Such skills provide students with a solid foundation for their personal and professional lives.



COURSES

- Army ROTC Health
- Army ROTC PE
- Army ROTC 1
- Army ROTC 2
- Army ROTC 3
- Army ROTC 4

CAREERS

- While cadets are not required to join the military, participation in JROTC may improve ranking if they choose to enlist.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Cadets must complete four full LET years to receive the JROTC cord for high school graduation.
- The first semester of LET fulfills the health credit requirement for graduation.
- The second semester of LET fulfills the Physical Education (PE) credit. Once completed, LET year will count as one extracurricular credit.

CONCURRENT CREDIT

Students who seek to challenge themselves and maximize their resources can benefit greatly from concurrent credit courses. The Van Buren School District proudly partners with regional universities to help students get a jumpstart on their college and career. VBSD students can earn college credit through the District's partnership with Arkansas Tech University (ATU). Additional options are also available through WATC (Western Arkansas Technical Center) at the University of Arkansas Fort Smith.

Concurrent classes are offered at no charge to the student, giving them both an academic and financial advantage toward their degree.

Scan for
ATU Courses



ATU

- English Composition I and II
- Algebra
- Algebra/Trigonometry
- World Civilization
- American History
- Government and Politics
- Speech/Oral Communications (Virtual)
- Elementary Spanish I and II (Virtual)
- Art Appreciation (Virtual)
- Teacher Cadet
- Fine Arts Music
- Physical Education
- Health
- Biology
- Fundamentals of Electricity
- Introduction to Industrial Robotics
- Introduction to Industrial Automation
- Introduction to Manufacturing Components
- Programmable Controllers



ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES

Advanced Placement (AP) courses are key to helping students prepare for learning at the next level. AP courses are taught on a college level and stress critical thinking, writing, and analytical skills. Students who complete the course can take the College Board AP exam. Upon passing, students receive college credit for the subject area. VBSD students who pass both semesters of the AP class and take the correlating AP exam will receive weighted 5.0 credit, which can help bolster their grade point average. Weighting for an AP course will be reduced to a 4.0 scale.

VBSD Honors classes are more rigorous than standard, on-level courses. In honors subjects, students are introduced to higher-order thinking skills, which helps prepare them for AP classes.



HONORS COURSES

- Geometry
- English 9, 10, & 11
- Algebra II and III
- Spanish II and III
- World History

ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES

- Language and Composition
- Calculus AB & BC
- Statistics
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Biology
- Computer Science A and B
- Psychology
- Studio Art Drawing
- Studio Art 3-D Design
- Spanish Literature
- Spanish Language
- World History
- U.S. History
- European History
- Government and Politics
- Literature and Composition
- Studio Art 2-D Design

WATC

PROGRAM

The Western Arkansas Technical Center (WATC) is offered through the University of Arkansas Fort Smith (UAFS) and is geared toward students seeking a hands-on learning experience. WATC participants learn trades and skills that can potentially earn them a job immediately after high school graduation with a highly-competitive salary.

WATC courses also give students a jump-start toward a college degree. All courses easily transfer to UAFS, saving participants time and expenses in earning their certification or degree.

Van Buren students can take part in WATC's career-focused programming that is designed in conjunction with some of the nation's leading manufacturers. Students learn from experienced industry leaders and UAFS faculty, and have access to state-of-the-art technology in their courses.

Through participation in WATC, students meet business leaders who can promptly put them to work and help them establish successful, enduring careers in their field of choice. VBSD's long-standing partnership with WATC has resulted in a countless number of connections and careers in the regional workforce.

View the complete WATC brochure by scanning the QR code to the right.

COURSES

- Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA)
- Computer Engineering/Information Technology
- Computer Integrated Manufacturing
- Electronics Technology
- Emergency Medical Responder
- Practical Nursing
- Welding Technology



**VIEW THE COMPLETE
WATC BROCHURE BY
SCANNING THE QR CODE.**



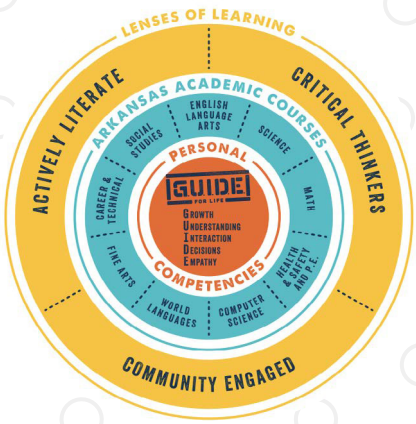
ARKANSAS GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

REV: 12.3.25

Course Requirements	Credit
English Language Arts	4
ADE-Approved English I	1
ADE-Approved English II	1
ADE-Approved English III	1
ADE-Approved English IV	1
Mathematics	4
Algebra I	1
Geometry	1
Algebra II or Quantitative Reasoning (Transitional)	1
ADE-Approved Mathematics or Computer Science Flex Credit	1
Science	3
ADE-Approved Biology	1
ADE-Approved Physical Science (Physical Science, Chemistry, or Physics)	1
ADE-Approved Science or Computer Science Flex Credit	1

Course Requirements	Credit
Social Studies	3
ADE-Approved World History	1
ADE-Approved U.S. History	1
ADE-Approved Civics	0.5
ADE-Approved Economics with Personal Finance	0.5
Physical Education	0.5
Fine Arts	0.5
Oral Communication	0.5
Health & Safety	0.5
Career Focus or Content Electives	6
Total	22

Other Requirements
- An AR graduate shall complete a minimum of 75 clock hours of documented community service in grades 9-12; requirement begins for 2027 graduates. - A.C.A. § 6-16-1901 - An AR graduate must earn credit in a course that includes Personal and Family Finance Standards in grades 9-12. - A.C.A. § 6-16-135 - An AR graduate must pass with a 60% the Arkansas Civics Exam. - A.C.A. § 6-16-149 - An AR graduate must complete CPR training. - A.C.A. § 6-16-143 - An AR graduate must earn one credit of ADE-Approved Computer Science or computer science-related career and technical education course; requirement begins for 2026 graduates. - A.C.A. § 6-16-152





Success-Ready Pathway Guide

Every Arkansas student deserves the opportunity to graduate on a path toward prosperity.

Every student in Arkansas should graduate from high school “success-ready” with the knowledge, skills, abilities, and habits to succeed on their chosen path, with options including **enrollment** in a postsecondary training or degree program, **enlistment** in military service, and **employment** in a career that provides a family-sustaining wage. Beginning with the entering ninth-grade class of 2024-25, all students will have the benefit of flexible college and career readiness pathways to guide high school course selection and progress toward high school graduation. The success-ready pathways in this document are encouraged to be used to guide the purposeful selection of courses toward a student’s postsecondary aspirations and career goals - as part of their career focused electives and student success planning. Completion of a success-ready pathway leads to eligibility to earn a Diploma with Merit or a Diploma with Distinction by demonstrating readiness at the culmination of that pathway. Schools will have an opportunity to earn points in accountability for students graduating with merit or distinction.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL STUDENTS

