

POLICY

VERNON TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF EDUCATION

STUDENTS
5460 – High School Graduation
May 17

5460 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

The Board of Education will recognize the successful completion of the secondary school instruction program by the award of a State-endorsed diploma certifying the student has met all State and local requirements for high school graduation. The Board will annually certify to the Executive County Superintendent each student who has been awarded a diploma has met the requirements for graduation.

A. High School Graduation Requirements

A graduating student must have earned a minimum of 125 (four-year high school: no fewer than one hundred twenty) credits in courses designed to meet all of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) including, but not limited to, the following credits:

1. 20 (At least twenty) credits in English language arts aligned to grade nine through twelve standards;
2. 15 (At least fifteen) credits in mathematics, including Algebra I or the content equivalent; geometry or the content equivalent; and a third year of mathematics that builds on the concepts and skills of algebra and geometry and that prepares students for college and 21st century careers;
3. 15 (At least fifteen) credits in social studies, including satisfaction of N.J.S.A. 18A:35-1 and 18A:35-2; five credits in world history; and the integration of civics, economics, geography, and global content in all course offerings;
4. 15 (At least fifteen) credits in science, including at least five credits in laboratory biology/life science or the content equivalent; one additional laboratory/inquiry-based science course, which shall include chemistry, environmental science, or physics; and one additional laboratory/inquiry-based science course;
5. 4 (At least three and three-quarters) credits in health, safety, and physical education during each year of enrollment, distributed as one hundred fifty minutes per week, as required by N.J.S.A. 18A:35-5, 7, and 8;
6. 5 (At least five) credits in visual and performing arts;

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7. 5 (At least five) credits in world languages or student demonstration of proficiency as set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)2ii(2);
8. 2.5 (At least two and one-half) credits in financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy;
9. Technological literacy, consistent with the NJLS, integrated throughout the curriculum;
10. 5 (At least five) credits in 21st century life and careers, or career-technical education; and
11. Electives as determined by the high school program sufficient to total a minimum of 125 (must be at least one hundred twenty)

As defined in N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.3, “credit” means the award for the equivalent of a class period of instruction which meets for a minimum of forty minutes, one time per week during the school year or as approved through N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)2.

The high school graduation credit requirement may be met in whole or in part through program completion of a range of experiences that enable students to pursue a variety of personalized learning opportunities, as follows:

1. The district shall establish a process to approve individualized student learning opportunities that meet or exceed the NJLS.
 - a. Individualized student learning opportunities in all NJLS areas include, but are not limited, to the following:
 - (1) Independent study;
 - (2) Online learning;
 - (3) Study abroad programs;
 - (4) Student exchange programs; and

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- (5) Structured learning experiences, including, but not limited to, work-based programs, internships, apprenticeships, and service learning experiences.
 - b. Individualized student learning opportunities based upon specific instructional objectives aimed at meeting or exceeding the NJSLs shall:
 - (1) Be based on student interest and career goals as reflected in the Personalized Student Learning Plans;
 - (2) Include demonstration of student competency;
 - (3) Be certified for completion based on the district process adopted according to 2. Below; and
 - (4) Be on file in the school district and subject to review by the Commissioner or designee.
 - c. Group programs based upon specific instructional objectives aimed at meeting or exceeding the NJSLs shall be permitted and shall be approved in the same manner as other approved courses.
2. The district shall establish a process for granting of credits through successful completion of assessments that verify student achievement in meeting or exceeding the NJSLs at the high school level, including standards achieved by means of the individualized student learning opportunities enumerated as outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)2. Such programs or assessments may occur all or in part prior to a student's high school enrollment; no such locally administered assessments shall preclude or exempt student participation in applicable Statewide assessments at grades three through twelve.
 - a. The district shall choose assessments that are aligned with or exceed the NJSLs and may include locally designed assessments.
 - b. The district shall choose from among the following assessment options to determine if students have achieved the level of language proficiency designated as Novice-High as defined by the American Council on the

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Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and recognized as fulfilling the world languages requirement of the NJSLS:

- (1) The Standards-based Measurement of Proficiency (STAMP) online assessment;
 - (2) The ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) or Modified Oral Proficiency Interview (MOPI); or
 - (3) Department of Education-approved locally designed competency-based assessments.
3. The district shall establish a process to approve post-secondary learning opportunities that may consist of: Advanced Placement (AP) coursed; the College-Level Examination Program (CLEP); or concurrent/dual enrollment at accredited higher education institutions.
- a. The district shall award credit for successful completion of an approved, accredited college course that assures achievement of knowledge and skills that meets or exceeds the NJSLS.

B. Additional Graduation Requirements

1. Attendance requirements as indicated in Policy and Regulation;
2. Any statutorily mandated requirements for earning a high school diploma; and
3. Any Statewide assessment graduation requirements as determined by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), and as outlined in C. below.

C. Statewide Assessment Graduation Requirements

1. The requirement that all students demonstrate proficiency in the high school end-of-course Partnership for Assessments of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment in ELA 10 and Algebra I, or through the alternate means set forth at N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(f) through (i);

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2. The Board of Education will provide students who have not demonstrated proficiency on the high school end-of-course PARCC assessments in ELA 10 and Algebra I with the opportunity to demonstrate such competence through one of the alternate means set forth below:
 - a. For the graduation classes of 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019, students who do not take both the ELA 10 and the Algebra I end-of-course PARCC assessments or who take, but do not achieve a passing score on both assessments, as required by N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)6, may satisfy the State requirement to demonstrate proficiency in English language arts and mathematics in one of the following ways:
 - (1) Achieve a passing score, as determined by the Commissioner, on a corresponding substitute competency test in English language arts and/or mathematics, as applicable, or substitute a passing score on another end-of-course PARCC assessment, including ELA 9, ELA 11, Geometry, or Algebra II; or
 - (2) Meet the criteria of the portfolio appeals process; and
 - b. For the graduating class of 2020, students who take all applicable high school end-of-course PARCC assessments for all courses in which they are enrolled, including those students who received a waiver for ELA 11 pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-4.1(c)3i, as of September 6, 2016, and thereafter, but do not achieve a passing score on both the ELA 10 and Algebra I end-of-course PARCC assessments pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)6, may satisfy the State requirement to demonstrate proficiency in English language arts and mathematics in one of the following ways:
 - (1) Achieve a passing score, as determined by the Commissioner, on a corresponding substitute competency test in English language arts and/or mathematics, as applicable, or substitute a passing score on another end-of-course PARCC assessment, including ELA 9, ELA 11, Geometry, or Algebra II; or
 - (2) Meet the criteria of the portfolio appeals process.

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2. Beginning with the graduating class of 2021, students who take all applicable high school end-of-course PARCC assessments for all courses in which they are enrolled, including those students who received a waiver for ELA 11 pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-4.1(c)3i, as of September 6, 2016, and thereafter, but do not achieve a passing score on both the ELA 10 and Algebra I end-of-course PARCC assessments pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)6, by the conclusion of their senior year and after multiple opportunities to take the assessments, may satisfy the State requirement to demonstrate proficiency in English language arts and mathematics by meeting the criteria of the portfolio appeals process.
3. In accordance with a NJDOE Memorandum dated January 24, 2017, students in the graduating cohort of 2020 and 2021 who completed an Algebra I course prior to September 6, 2016 and:
 - a. Took the PARCC Algebra I assessment, but did not pass and are now in an advanced mathematics course (e.g. Geometry or Algebra II); or
 - b. Did not receive a valid test score, but are now in an advanced mathematics course (e.g. Geometry or Algebra II); or
 - c. Did not have an opportunity to take the PARCC Algebra I assessment because the NJDOE did not offer a summer test administration, but are now in advanced mathematics course (e.g. Geometry or Algebra II). Only students in the graduating cohorts of 2020 and 2021 described in the three specific groups above in a., b., and c. are eligible to utilize the following pathways to demonstrate proficiency in mathematics:
 - (1) Take or retake the PARCC Algebra I assessment and pass; or
 - (2) Utilize the NJDOE portfolio appeals process, provided they take the PARCC Geometry assessment and the PARCC Algebra II assessment (if enrolled in the Algebra II course) and receive valid scores; or
 - (3) Take and pass the Geometry or Algebra II assessment.
4. All English Language Learners (ELLs) shall satisfy the requirements for high school graduation, except ELLs may demonstrate they have attained State

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minimum levels of proficiency through passage of the portfolio appeals process in their native language, when available, and passage of a Department of Education-approved English fluency assessment.

5. Students with disabilities as defined in N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1.3 or eligible under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act who participate in the alternative assessment for students with disabilities are not required to participate in repeated administration of high school end-of-course PARCC assessments.

D. Attendance

Regular attendance is required for the successful completion of a course of study and graduation. Students are expected to be present in every scheduled class except as their attendance is excused in accordance with Board Policy 5200.

E. Students with Disabilities

1. Through the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP”) process and pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.11 – Graduation, the district may specify alternate requirements for a State-endorsed diploma for individual students with disabilities as defined in N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1.3.
 - a. The district shall specifically address any alternate requirements for graduation in a student’s IEP, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.11.
 - b. The district shall develop and implement procedures for assessing whether a student with a disability has met the specified alternate requirements for graduation individually determined in an IEP.
2. If a student with a disability attends a school other than that of the school district of residence, which is empowered to grant a diploma, the student shall have the choice of receiving the diploma of the school attended or the diploma of the school district of residence.
 - a. If the school the student is attending declines to issue a diploma to the student, the district of residence Board of Education shall issue the student a diploma if the student has satisfied all State and local graduation requirements, as specified in the student’s IEP.

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3. If the Board of Education grants an elementary school diploma, a student with a disability who fulfills the requirements of his or her IEP shall qualify for and receive a diploma.
4. Students with disabilities who meet the standards for graduation according to the school district's graduation requirements shall have the opportunity to participate in graduation exercises and related activities on a nondiscriminatory basis.
5. A student with a disability whose IEP prescribes continued special education programs beyond the fourth year of high school shall be permitted to participate in commencement ceremonies with his/her graduating class and shall receive a certificate of attendance, provided the student has attended four years of high school.
6. When a student with a disability graduates or exceeds the age of eligibility, the student shall be provided a written summary of his or her academic achievement and functional performance prior to the date of the student's graduation or the conclusion of the school year in which he or she exceeds the age of eligibility. The summary shall include recommendations to assist the child in meeting his or her postsecondary goals.

F. High School Diploma

1. The Board of Education shall award a State-endorsed high school diploma to prospective graduates who have met all of the requirements adopted in accordance with State and local Board of Education requirements.
2. The Board of Education shall not issue a high school diploma to any student not meeting the criteria specified in State and local requirements.
 - a. The district shall provide students exiting grade twelve without a diploma the opportunity for continued high school enrollment to age twenty or until the requirements for a State-endorsed diploma have been met, whichever comes first.
 - b. The district shall allow any out-of-school individual to age twenty who has otherwise met all State and local graduation requirements, but has failed to pass high school end-of-course PARCC assessments to

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demonstrate proficiency as set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(f) pursuant to the standards applicable to the student's graduating class. Students in graduating classes prior to 2016 shall demonstrate proficiency as set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(f)1. Upon certification of passing the test applicable to the student's class accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:8, a State-endorsed diploma shall be granted by the high school of record.

3. The Commissioner of Education shall award a State-issued high school diploma in accordance with the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.2(c) and (d).
4. The Board of Education shall award a State-endorsed high school diploma to any currently enrolled student, regardless of grade level, who:
 - a. Has demonstrated proficiency in the high school end-of-course PARCC assessments in ELA 10 and Algebra I, or as set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(f);
 - b. Has presented official transcripts showing at least thirty general education credits leading to a degree at an accredited institution of higher education; and
 - c. Has formally requested such early award of a State-endorsed high school diploma.

G. Notification

Each student who enters or transfers into the high school and the student's parent(s) will be provided a copy of the school district's requirements for a State-endorsed diploma, and the programs available to assist students in attaining the State-endorsed diploma, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7C-5.

H. Reporting

The Superintendent, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7C-7 and 18A:7E-3, shall report annually to the Board of Education at a public meeting not later than September 30, and to the Commissioner of Education:

1. The total number of students graduated;

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2. The number of students graduated under the substitute competency test process;
 3. The number of students graduated under the portfolio appeals process;
 4. The number of students receiving State endorsed high school diplomas as a result of meeting any alternative requirements for graduation as specified in their IEP's;
 5. The total number of students denied graduation from the twelfth grade class; and
 6. The number of students denied graduation from the twelfth grade class solely because of failure to pass the high school end-of-course PARCC assessments, substitute competency tests, or portfolio appeals process based on the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:8.
- I. The Superintendent shall provide to the Executive County Superintendent the district's graduation requirements each year they are evaluated through the Quality Single Accountability Continuum (QSAC) and update the filed copy each time the graduation policy is revised.

N.J.S.A. 18A:7C-1; 18A:35-1; 18A:35-4.9; 18A:35-7; 18A:36-7
N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1 et seq.; 6A:8-6.2; 6A:14-4.11 et seq.

Adopted: May 2017