

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Policy Code:

3460

The board recognizes the importance of setting rigorous graduation requirements to help ensure that students are receiving an education that will prepare them to be **career and college ready and** productive members of society.

In order to graduate from high school, students must meet the following requirements:

1. successful completion of all **State Board of Education** course unit requirements **as described in Section A**; and ~~mandated by the State Board of Education (see Section A);~~
2. **Successful completion of cardiopulmonary resuscitation instruction;**
3. ~~successful completion of all other requirements mandated by the board, as provided in this policy.~~

The **Buncombe County Board of Education** recommends **28 (twenty-eight) credits** for graduation.

Principals shall ensure that students and parents are aware of the number and nature of credits required for high school graduation, the potential to complete high school graduation requirements in three years, and the availability of early graduate college scholarships.

~~The principal shall ensure that students and parents are aware of all graduation requirements. Guidance program staff shall assist students in selecting their high school courses to ensure that students are taking all the required units and selecting electives consistent with their post-graduation plans. For students who have transferred to the school system during high school or who, for other reasons, have completed course work outside of the school system, the principal shall determine what course work will be applied as credit toward graduation. The principal shall consider the requirements of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (G.S. 115C-407.5) and the requirements of subsection C.3 of this policy in determining the graduation requirements for children of military families.~~

A. COURSE UNITS REQUIRED

~~All students must fulfill the requirements of the Future-Ready Core Course of Study, unless they are approved for the Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study. The tables below list the course unit requirements for the Future-Ready Core Course of Study and the Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study based on the student's year of entry into ninth grade for the first time.~~

As described in State Board of Education Policy GRAD-004, all students must fulfill the course unit requirements of the Future-Ready Core Course of Study, unless they are approved for the Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study. The tables below list the course unit requirements for the Future-Ready Core Course of Study and the Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study, as well as additional course units recommended by

the board, based on the student's year of entry into ninth grade for the first time. School counseling program staff shall assist students in selecting high school courses to ensure that students are taking all required units and selecting electives consistent with their post-graduation plans.

In accordance with policy 3101, Dual Enrollment, and State Board of Education requirements, students may earn high school credit for college courses completed. In addition, students may earn credit for certain high school courses in the Future-Ready Core Course of Study~~ent~~ completed ~~while in middle school~~, prior to grade 9, as authorized by the State Board of Education, and as approved BCS on a case by case basis. Students also have the opportunity to meet course unit requirements without completing the regular period of classroom instruction by demonstrating mastery of the course material in accordance with policy 3420, Student Promotion and Accountability, and State Board of Education requirements. For students who have transferred to the school system during high school or who, for other reasons, have completed course work outside of the school system, the principal shall determine what course work will be applied as credit toward graduation. See policy 3420 for information regarding receiving credit toward graduation for courses taken abroad.

All awards of high school course credit must be consistent with State Board of Education requirements. Any inconsistency between board policy and State Board graduation requirements will be resolved by following the State Board requirements. While the board endeavors to keep its policy up to date with current State Board of Education graduation requirements, students should verify current requirements with their ~~guidance~~ school counselors when planning course schedules or making other decisions based on graduation requirements.

~~The Buncombe County Board of Education has established 28 (twenty-eight) credits as the cumulative number required for graduation. Credits which count toward graduation from high school may begin accumulating in middle school when courses meet specific criteria. High school level equivalent courses taken prior to the ninth grade will be counted in the cumulative number of units required for graduation but will not be part of the student's GPA calculation. A student must meet the requirements for graduation depending upon their first year of entry into the ninth grade. All students are required to have a four year plan. Students may receive more than 10 units of credit during one school year with the principal's prior approval. The principal of the receiving school will develop procedures for evaluating the academic record of transfer students and awarding credit.~~

1. Future-Ready Core Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade for the First Time before 2020-2021

Courses Required* Types of Courses	State Requirements	Local Requirements Recommendations
English	4 sequential (English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	4 (NC Math 1, 2, and 3 and a fourth math course aligned with the student's post-high school plans.)** (A principal may exempt a student from this math sequence. Exempt students will be required to pass NC Math 1 and 2 and two other application-based math courses or selected CTE courses, as identified on the NC DPI math options chart.)***	
Science	3 (a physical science course, Biology, and earth/environmental science)	
Social Studies	4 (including: (1) a founding principles course which shall be either American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics or Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy;† (2) two American history courses which shall be either (a) American History I and II, (b) American History I or II and another Social Studies course, or (c) American History and another Social Studies course; and (3) World History)	
Health/P.E.	1	
Electives	6 (2 electives must be any combination of Career and Technical Education, Arts Education, or World Language; 4 must be from one of the following: Career and Technical Education, J.R.O.T.C., Arts Education, or any other subject area or cross-disciplinary course. A four-course concentration is recommended.)‡	6 additional credits from any content area
Total Credits	22	28

* Certain International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), and Cambridge International Examination (CIE) courses will satisfy specific graduation requirements. See SBE Policy GRAD-008.

** Students who are learning disabled in math may have other options for meeting the four mathematics credits requirement. See DPI memo of August 24, 2016 available at <http://bit.ly/DPIMemo>.

*** Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete four mathematics courses, including a fourth math course with Math 3 as a prerequisite. The math options chart is available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/academic-standards/standard-course-study/mathematics/standard-course-study-supporting-resources>.

† The founding principles courses, American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics and Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy, must follow the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) in its entirety and may not be satisfied by any other courses.

‡ Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete two credits of a single world language.

2. Future-Ready Core Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2020-2021

Courses Required* Types of Courses	State Requirements	Local Requirements Recommendations
English	4 sequential (English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	4 (NC Math 1, 2, and 3 and a fourth math course aligned with the student's post-high school plans.)** (A principal may exempt a student from this math sequence. Exempt students will be required to pass NC Math 1 and 2 and two other application-based math courses or selected CTE courses, as identified on the NC DPI math options chart.)***	
Science	3 (a physical science course, Biology, and earth/environmental science)	
Social Studies	(including: (1) a founding principles course which shall be either American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics or Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy;† (2) an American History course which shall be either (a) American History I, (b) American History II, or (c) American History; (3) World History;‡ and (4) Economics and Personal Finance^)	
Health/P.E.	1	
Electives	6 (2 electives must be any combination of Career and Technical Education, Arts Education, or World Language; 4 must be from one of the following: Career and Technical Education, J.R.O.T.C., Arts Education, or any other subject area or cross-disciplinary course. A four-course concentration is recommended.)‡	6 additional credits from any content area
Total Credits	22	28

* Certain International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), and Cambridge International Examination (CIE) courses will satisfy specific graduation requirements. See SBE Policy GRAD-008.

** Students who are learning disabled in math may have other options for meeting the four mathematics credits requirement. See DPI memo of August 24, 2016 available at <http://bit.ly/DPIMemo>.

*** Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete four mathematics courses, including a fourth math course with Math 3 as a prerequisite. The math options chart is available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/academic-standards/stand-course-study/mathematics/standard-course-study-supporting-resources>.

† Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy must follow the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) in its entirety and may not be satisfied by any other courses. See SBE Policy GRAD-004.

± This course must, at a minimum, include the standards established by the second edition of the Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics and the 2013 National Standards for Financial Literacy, as developed by the Council for Economic Education.

‡ Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete two credits of a single world language.

3. Future-Ready Core Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade for the First Time Between 2021-2022 and 2025-2026

Types of Courses	State Requirements*	Local Recommendations
English	4 sequential (English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	4 (NC Math 1, 2, and 3 and a fourth math course aligned with the student's post-high school plans.)** (A principal may exempt a student from this math sequence. Exempt students will be required to pass NC Math 1 and 2 plus two additional courses identified on the NC DPI math options chart.)***	
Science	3 (a physical science course, Biology, and an earth/environmental science course)	
Social Studies	4 (including: Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy; Economics and Personal Finance;† American History; and World History)	
Health/P.E.	1	
Electives	6 (2 electives must be any combination of Career and Technical Education, Arts Education, or World Language; 4 must be from one of the following: Career and Technical Education, J.R.O.T.C., Arts Education, or any other subject area or cross-disciplinary course. A four-course concentration is recommended.)‡	6 additional credits from any content area
Total Credits	22	28

4. Future-Ready Core Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2026-2027

Types of Courses	State Requirements*	Local Recommendations
English	4 sequential (English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	4 (NC Math 1, 2, and 3 and a fourth math course aligned with the student's post-high school plans.)** (A principal may exempt a student from this math sequence. Exempt students will be required to pass NC Math 1 and 2 plus two additional courses identified on the NC DPI math options chart.)***	
Science	3 (a physical science course, Biology, and an earth/environmental science course)	
Social Studies	4 (including: Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy; Economics and Personal Finance;† American History; and World History)	
Health/P.E.	1	
Computer Science	1‡	

Electives	5 (2 must be any combination of Career and Technical Education, Arts Education, or World Language; 3 may be from any subject area or cross-disciplinary course)^	6 additional credits from any content area
Total Credits	22	28

* Certain International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), and Cambridge International Examination (CIE) courses will satisfy specific graduation requirements. See SBE Policy GRAD-008.

** Students who are learning disabled in math may have other options for meeting the four mathematics credits requirement. See DPI memo of August 24, 2016, available at <http://bit.ly/DPIMemo>, and the math options chart linked below.

*** Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete four mathematics courses, including a fourth math course with Math 3 as a prerequisite. The math options chart is available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/academic-standards/standard-course-study/mathematics/standard-course-study-supporting-resources>.

† This course must, at a minimum, include the standards established by the second edition of the Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics and the 2013 National Standards for Financial Literacy, as developed by the Council for Economic Education.

‡ Students who are exempt from this requirement due to a disability or because they enrolled in a NC public school after completion of grade 11 must earn one additional elective credit.

^ Students must complete at least one arts education course in grades 6-12 that satisfies the standard course of study for that course, unless exempt due to transfer status.

5. Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade prior to 2020-2021 (only available to certain students with disabilities who have an IEP)

Courses Required Types of Courses	State Requirements	Local Requirements Recommendations
English	4 (including English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	3 (including Introduction to Math, NC Math I, and Financial Management)	
Science	2 (including Applied Science and Biology)	
Social Studies	2 (including American History I and American History II)* OR (1) American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics or Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy; and (2) American History I or American History II or American History**	
Health/P.E.	1	
Career/Technical	4 (Career/Technical Education electives)	
Occupational Preparation	6 (including Occupational Preparation I, II, III, and IV, which require 150 hours of school-based training, 225 hours of community-based training, and 225 hours of paid employment***)	
Electives	0	
Other Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of IEP objectives • Career Portfolio 	
Total Credits	22	

* Applicable only to students entering the ninth grade for the first time prior to 2017-18.

** Applicable only to students entering the ninth grade for the first time between 2017-2018 and 2019-2020.

*** Paid employment is the expectation; however, when paid employment is not available, 225 hours of unpaid vocational training, unpaid internship experience, paid employment at community rehabilitation facilities, and volunteer and/or community service hours may substitute for 225 hours of paid employment.

6. **Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2020-2021 (only available to certain students with disabilities who have an IEP)**

Types of Courses	State Requirements	Local Recommendations
English	4 (including English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	3 (including Introduction to Math, NC Math I, and Financial Management)	
Science	2 (including Applied Science and Biology)	
Social Studies	2 (including American History I and American History II* OR (1) American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics or Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy; and (2) American History I or American History II or American History)**	
Health/P.E.	1	
Career/Technical	4 (Career/Technical Education electives)	
Occupational Preparation	6 (including: (1) Occupational Preparation I or Employment Preparation I: Science; (2) Occupational Preparation II or Employment Preparation II: Citizenship IA and Employment Preparation II: Citizenship IB; (3) Occupational Preparation III or Employment Preparation III: Citizenship IIA and Employment Preparation III: Citizenship IIB; and (4) Occupational Preparation IV or Employment Preparation IV: Math)	
Work Hours***	600	
Electives	0	
Other Requirements	Completion of IEP objectives Career Portfolio	
Total Credits	22	

* Applicable only to students entering the ninth grade for the first time prior to 2017-18.

** Applicable only to students entering the ninth grade for the first time between 2017-2018 and 2019-2020.

*** The work hours must include: (1) 150 hours of school-based training with work activities and experiences that align with the student's post-school goals; (2) 225 hours of community-based training; and (3) 225 hours of paid employment or 225 hours of unpaid vocational training, unpaid internship, paid employment at community rehabilitation facilities, and volunteer and/or community services hours, for a total of 600 required work hours.

7. Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2020-2021 and Thereafter (only available to certain students with disabilities who have an IEP)

Courses Required Types of Courses	State Requirements	Local Requirements Recommendations
English	4 (including English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	3 (including Introduction to Math, NC Math I, and Financial Management) and Employment Preparation IV: Math (to include 150 work hours)	
Science	2 3 (including Applied Science and Biology, and Employment Preparation I: Science (to include 150 work hours)))	
Social Studies	2 (including Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy and Economics and Personal Finance)	
Health/P.E.	1	
Career/Technical	4 (Career/Technical Education electives)	
Occupational Additional Employment Preparation	6 2 (including Occupational Preparation I, II, III, and IV, which require 150 hours of school-based training, 225 hours of community-based training, and 225 hours of paid employment*)	
Electives	0	
Other Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of IEP objectives • Career Portfolio 	
Total Credits	22	

* Paid employment is the expectation; however, when paid employment is not available, 225 hours of unpaid vocational training, unpaid internship experience, paid employment at community rehabilitation facilities, and volunteer and/or community service hours may substitute for 225 hours of paid employment. * The work hours included in Employment Preparation I, II, III, and IV are as follows: (1) 150 hours of school-based training with work activities and experiences that align with the student's post-school goals; (2) 225 hours of community-based training; and (3) 225 hours of paid employment or 225 hours of unpaid vocational training, unpaid internship, paid employment at community rehabilitation facilities, and volunteer and/or community services hours, for a total of 600 required work hours.

B. HIGH SCHOOL END-OF-COURSE AND OTHER TESTING

High school students must take all end-of-course (EOC) tests **and** Career and Technical Education State Assessments (CTE) State Assessments, ~~and any other applicable exams or assessments~~ required by the State Board of Education and pursuant to policy 3410, Testing and Assessment Program.

C. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

~~The board adopts the following policies with regard to graduation.~~

1. Honor Graduates

Honor graduates may be designated by principals on the basis of criteria established by the superintendent. ~~(Please refer to 3400R). A student who completes the requirements of the North Carolina Academic Scholars Program will receive recognition, including a seal affixed to his or her diploma. Recognition of honor graduates may be included in graduation programs.~~

2. Students with Disabilities

~~Graduation requirements must be applied to students with disabilities to the extent required by state and federal law and State Board policy. A student enrolled in the NC Occupational Course of Study as of 2019 that has completed all academic requirements, but still lacks needed internship hours (225 hours) or paid employment hours (225 hours) to graduate with a NC High School Diploma, can exit high school with a Graduation Certificate. The student will have until December 31st in the year that they turn 21 years of age to bring documentation of needed hours (pay stubs, employer signed documentation, etc.) to the Exceptional Children's Department of Buncombe County Schools. Buncombe County Schools will issue a NC High School Diploma to the former student once all information is verified to be accurate. Submission of documentation beyond the student's 21st year of age will not be accepted.~~

3. Children of Military Families

~~In order to facilitate the on-time graduation of children of military families, the board adopts the following policy provisions for students to whom the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children applies.~~

In order to facilitate the on-time graduation of children of military families, as defined in policy 4050, Children of Military Families, school officials shall comply with the requirements of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (G.S. 115C-407.5), G.S. 115C-407.12, and the following requirements.

- a) Waiver Requirements

Specific course work required for graduation will be waived for children of military families if similar course work has been satisfactorily completed in another school system. If a waiver is not granted, school administrators shall provide the student with reasonable justification for the denial. If a waiver is not granted to a student who would qualify to graduate from the sending school, the superintendent or designee shall provide the student with an alternative means of acquiring the required course work so that the student may graduate on time.

- b) Testing Requirements for Graduation

The superintendent shall accept **from children of military families** the following in lieu of any local testing requirements for graduation: (1) the end-of-course exams required for graduation from the sending state; (2) national norm-referenced achievement tests; or (3) alternative testing. If these alternatives are not feasible for a student who has transferred in his or her senior year, subsection c below will apply.

c) Transfers During Senior Year

If a child of a military family who has transferred at the beginning of or during his or her senior year is ineligible to graduate from the school system after all of the alternatives listed above have been considered and the student meets the graduation requirements at his or her sending school, then school officials from the school system shall collaborate with the sending school system to ensure that the student will receive a diploma from the sending Board of Education.

4. ~~Early admission to college~~

~~Early admission to college requires that a plan be reviewed and approved by the principal prior to any arrangements with a college or university. An Early Admission to College Contract must be signed by the student; parent or legal guardian; and principal. A copy of the signed contract will be retained at the school.~~

~~Upon completion of the third year, a Buncombe County high school student who has been accepted by an accredited college (state or regional association) for study during what would have been the fourth year may, upon satisfactory completion of the first year of college, have his college credit equated with high school graduation requirements by and subject to the approval of the principal of his former high school for the purpose of obtaining a high school diploma.~~

~~Principals must advise the student that upon completion of the program, he will be allowed to participate in the high school graduation exercise; however, recognition for honors, class ranking, participation in senior activities, and all other rights and privileges will not be afforded.~~

~~Prior to graduation, all credit earned at the college or university must be reported to the high school by the college or university. _____~~

5. Early Graduation

~~Graduation prior to that of one's class may be permitted on the basis of criteria approved by the board upon recommendation by the superintendent.~~

Students have the option of graduating early by completing the State Board of

Education minimum graduation requirements on an accelerated three-year pathway. Students choosing to use an accelerated pathway must follow the process required for early graduation as described in State Board Policies GRAD-001 and GRAD-006.

6. ~~Mid-year completion~~

~~Under certain circumstances, a Buncombe County high school student during the senior year of enrollment may qualify for consideration as a mid-year completer. In order to qualify, the student must have met all credits required for graduation, as outlined within Policy #3460.~~

~~A Mid-Year Completion Statement of Intent must be signed by the student; parent or legal guardian; and principal.~~

~~Students meeting the requirements of the mid-year completion will be allowed to participate in a system-wide high school graduation exercise held at mid-year. As graduates of the Buncombe County School System, mid-year completers forfeit senior student privileges relevant to second semester school-sponsored activities.~~

~~Buncombe County School System is under no obligation to reschedule students beyond the initial computer placement to accommodate a request for mid-year completion.~~

7. Graduation Certificates

Graduation certificates will be awarded to eligible students in accordance with the standards set forth in State Board policy **GRAD-010**.

8. ~~State Graduation Credit Requirements~~

~~Students enter 9th grade
2009-2012= 21 Credits
2012-Current Year = 22 Credits~~

~~The principal may exempt a student from local graduation requirements as long as the student has met all state graduation requirements. The recommendation must follow the procedures established by the Minimum Credit High School Diploma Program.~~

9. ~~Alternative School Requirements~~ **Non-Traditional High School Requirements**

The Buncombe County Board of Education has adopted the state minimum requirements of **22 credits** as the **cumulative standard** number required for graduation for Community High School (CHS), **Buncombe County Middle College and Buncombe County Schools Center for Career Innovation (BCCI)**, or other approved alternative programs. **In addition, students enrolled in these schools must also complete other requirements of the particular program.**

~~meet local and state graduation requirements.~~

10. Diploma Endorsements

~~Students have the opportunity to earn diploma endorsements as described in State Board Policy GRAD-007. No endorsement is required to receive a diploma. Individual students may qualify for and earn more than one endorsement.~~

~~Students in North Carolina public schools may receive one or more endorsements on their high school diploma. These endorsements indicate that students have completed specific course concentrations preparing them to be ready for college or careers. The five ~~six~~ endorsements are:~~

- ~~• Career Endorsement indicating completion of a rigorous course of study that includes a Career Technical Education concentration;~~
- ~~• College Endorsement indicating readiness for entry into community colleges;~~
- ~~• College/UNC Endorsement indicating readiness for entry into a four-year university in the University of North Carolina system;~~
- ~~• NC Academic Scholars Endorsement indicating that students have completed a balanced and academically rigorous high school program preparing them for post secondary education;~~
- ~~• Global Languages Endorsement indicating proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English.~~
- ~~• Arts Proficiency Endorsement indicating proficiency in an arts area based on both course attainment as well as outside of school arts experiences.~~

Legal References: G.S. 115C-12(40), -47, -81.25(c), -81.45(d), -81.65, -174.11, -276, -288, -407.5; State Board of Education Policies CCRE-001, GRAD-004, GRAD-007, GRAD-008, GRAD-010, TEST-003

Cross References: Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Evaluation of Student Progress (3400R), Dual Enrollment (3101), Testing and Assessment Program (3410), Student Promotion and Accountability (policy 3420), Citizenship and Character Education (policy 3530), Children of Military Families (policy 4050)

Replaces Board Policy 610/612

History of Policy 610

Adopted: August 6, 1992

Revised: August 5, 1993

Revised: December 9, 1993

Revised: August 4, 1994

Revised: May 4, 2000

Revised: May 8, 2003

Revised: December 1, 2005

Revised: March 5, 2009

Revised: May 6, 2010

Revised: December 6, 2010

History of Policy 612

Adopted: March 5, 2009

NCSBA wording and revisions replacing Policy 610/612 were adopted: January 9, 2014

Revised: May 5, 2016

Revised: May 3, 2018

Revised: March 7, 2019

Revised: October 3, 2019

Revised: October 1, 2020

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