

# Graduation Requirements

## Fact Sheet

### Definitions

**Graduation requirements:** The number of required and elective units of credit that must be earned by a student in order to be graduated from high school in West Virginia. A high school diploma is a document awarded to a student to verify completion of the graduation requirements.

**Unit of Credit:** Recognition given to a student for successful demonstration of mastery of specific instructional objectives at a level established for an approved course as determined by the County Board of Education.

**Standard Diploma:** Formal documentation and recognition that a student has satisfactorily completed both state and county school district graduation requirements.

**Modified Diploma:** Awarded when a student, with significant intellectual disabilities, satisfactorily completes modified graduation requirements. Students with significant intellectual disabilities are defined as those students with cognitive impairments so significant that instructional objectives for required and elective courses are not appropriate, even when delivered in altered form or through different strategies, i.e. changes in delivery, specially designed instructional objectives, teaching strategies, media/resources and evaluation techniques. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team determines if a student is unable to meet the graduation requirements for a regular diploma. The modified graduation requirements are recorded on the student's IEP and Personalized Education Plan (PEP).

### What are the minimum high school graduation requirements in West Virginia?

Foundations for High-Quality Adolescent Education Programming (9-10, 11-12) graduation requirements are effective for all students enrolled in school year 2014-2015, and thereafter or as otherwise specified. Courses needed for graduation require mastery of approved Content Standards and Objectives (CSOs). Students should consult with their chosen postsecondary educational program when selecting optional upper-level courses. Students who do not demonstrate mastery of the approved CSOs shall be provided extra assistance and time through personalized learning and support.

Each County Board of Education must have a written policy specifying that students are eligible for graduation only upon, at minimum, completion of the following requirements:

- Four credits of English Language Arts, which shall include English 9, English 10, English 11, English 12 or English 12 Credit Recovery or Transition English Language Arts for seniors. An Advanced Placement (AP) English course may be substituted for any of the above courses.
- On February 18, 2015, the West Virginia Board of Education allowed a one year waiver to county school systems to choose how the college and career ready mathematics standards are organized into high school course offerings.
- Three credits of Science, which shall include Physical Science (Grade 9), Biology or Conceptual Biology or AP Biology (Grade 10), one additional lab science course or AP science course.
- Four credits of Social Studies, which shall include World Studies (Grade 9) or an AP Social Studies course, United States Studies (Grade 10) or an AP Social Studies course, Contemporary Studies or an AP Social Studies course, Civics for the Next Generation or AP Government and Politics.
- One credit of Physical Education, which shall include Physical Education 9-12 [WV Education Information System (WVEIS) course 6609]. At least 50 percent of class time for physical education should be spent in moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity.
- One credit of Health, which shall include Health 9-12 (WVEIS course 6909).
- One credit of The Arts
- Four credits of a Personalized Education Plan (PEP), which will identify course work credits that will lead directly to placement in entry-level, credit-bearing academic college courses, an industry-recognized certificate or license, or workforce training programs. Best practices encourage students to take the following:
  - One AP and/or Advanced Credit course with corresponding examination
  - A fourth Science credit
  - Two credits in one World Language, and/or

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- Four credits cumulating in acquisition of industry and recognized Career and Technical Education (CTE) credential focused on career aspirations.

**Career and Technical Education (CTE):** The four credits taken in a career and technical concentration must be consistent with those identified for WVDE approved career and technical programs of study, (Refer to W V 126CSR44M, Policy 2520.13: Content Standards for Career and Technical Education in West Virginia Schools). Each career and technical concentration in a school shall provide students the opportunity to obtain an industry recognized credential as part of the instructional program when applicable. School systems wishing to offer a concentration outside of the state approved CTE concentrations, must have four related courses approved by the local board of education or the local school.

Eighty (80) percent of students in grades 9-10 must have access to at least one career and technical foundation course; one of which must be a parenting skills class.

Thirty (30) percent of students in grades 11-12 must have access to four units in a career and technical concentration and two career and technical electives.

An additional thirty (30) percent of students in grades 11-12 must have access to two units in a career and technical concentration.

### All Students Must Select an Approved WV Career Cluster:

Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources  
Architecture and Construction  
Arts, A/V Technology and Communication  
Business Management and Administration  
Education and Training  
Finance  
Government and Public Administration  
Health Sciences  
Hospitality and Tourism  
Human Services  
Information Technology  
Law, Public Safety, Correction and Security  
Manufacturing  
Marketing  
Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)  
Transportation, Distribution and Logistics

All students must select from the list below a state approved or locally created program of study that he/she will follow and then choose the career concentration and the four corresponding courses aligned with that area.

- State Approved CTE Program of Study
- Locally Approved Program of Study

Additional options available for students with IEPs:

- State Approved Individual Work Readiness Certificate (IWRC)
- Locally Approved Community Readiness Course

**World Languages:** Communicating in a global society requires students to apply appropriate language strategies through embedded opportunities to explore and gain an understanding of the world around them. Undergraduate admission to West Virginia four-year colleges and universities include the completion of two units of the same world language.

- Two credit electives may be world languages of the remaining graduation requirements. When choosing electives, students should consult with their chosen postsecondary educational program to make sure the electives are acceptable.

### Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Student Success and Career Readiness

- Career Development will be provided to all students, grades 9-12, in the form of structured, on-going experiences for career exploration, decision-making and career preparation. Career development shall include an integrated approach, engaging all staff in assisting students during the school day to explore the 16 career clusters. Career exploration will include opportunities for students to discover their interests in emerging careers, including STEM careers in science, oil & gas, technology, engineering and math. The school will engage student advisors in utilizing each student's career awareness activities to develop the PEP. Advisors will assist students and their parents to apply their various interests, learning styles, career and academic assessments to guide educational planning and career choices. Career exploration activities will be documented in each student's personalized career portfolio.
- The Comprehensive School Counseling Program is a standards-focused, integrated, comprehensive

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and developmental school counseling program to assist students with the acquisition of school success and career readiness skills in preparation of high school and postsecondary success.

School counselors will work collaboratively with other school staff to assist students with academic and postsecondary planning that leads to seamless transitions to their identified postsecondary options. Refer to WVBE Policy 2315 to ensure Comprehensive School Counseling Programs alignment with policy requirements.

- Student Advocate/Advisor/Mentors assigned in high schools implement an advisory system that provides students with meaningful supportive relationships and maximizes each student's personalized learning experience. An adult advocate, advisor or mentor takes an interest in each student's successful learning, goal setting, career planning and personal growth. The advisory system is evidence-based and systemically integrates school success and career readiness skills (e.g., work, ethic, communication skills, team work, collaborative skills, personal responsibility, social skills, organization, financial literacy and study skills).
- Healthy lifestyles and academic success are tightly interwoven. Therefore, schools promote wellness activities that extend beyond the course requirements for physical education and health. This is accomplished through programs focused on skill development, sportsmanship and teamwork. Opportunities should be provided daily for 30 minutes of moderate to vigorous integrated physical activity to keep high school students physically active throughout the school year. Wellness education should target the widespread behaviors that undermine the health and resulting capacity for personal success during adolescence.
- To master the standards set forth in WVBE Policy 2520.14: 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Skills and Technology Tools Content Standards and Objectives for West Virginia Schools, technology for students in grades 9-12 shall be provided as regular opportunities within the context of normal course work.

The infrastructure of classrooms should infuse technology and pedagogy to transform instruction, thus leading to improved student engagement. It is recommended that all students complete an online learning experience during grades 9-12. Students must be provided opportunities for advanced technology applications.

### **Can the local board of education increase the number of graduation requirements?**

County boards of education have the authority to increase graduation requirements for schools in their counties. At a minimum, they must adhere to the requirements set by the state, but they may increase graduation requirements. The county superintendent shall notify the WVDE of any changes in requirements beyond the state requirements.

### **Can the local board of education change the graduation requirements for certain students?**

As specified in West Virginia Code §18-20-1 students with disabilities whose IEPs provide for a modified diploma shall be allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies with their same grade classmates when requested by parents in writing and shall be allowed to continue to receive services until twenty-one years of age.

### **This information was developed from the following resources:**

- West Virginia Department of Education  
<http://apps.sos.wv.gov/adlaw/csr/readfile.aspx?DocId=25770&Format=PDF>
- West Virginia Department of Education  
<http://wvde.state.wv.us/institutional/CountyGradRequire.html>