

## **Waiver of the Fourth Year (Partial or Full)**

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### Introduction

Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) is allowed to provide opportunities for students to either attend only part of the day in their senior year or waive the entire senior year (COMAR 13A.03.02.03, 13A.03.02.10, 13A02.03.02.11). Baltimore County Public Schools' Policy and Rule 5250 allows for alternatives to the fourth year of attendance related to early admission to a college, an approved postsecondary school program, or an approved employment or internship experience. A waiver of the fourth year of high school is allowed providing that all credits, assessments, and student service requirements are met and if the local superintendent of schools or designee determines that a waiver is in the best interest of the student.

In the Baltimore County Public Schools, the following options are available to students on a limited and approved basis (each request is considered individually).

- I. Full-time Waiver of Entire Fourth Year - All high school graduation requirements are completed three years after Grade 8. A BCPS diploma is awarded after the third year of high school. The application for full-time waiver of the fourth year should be submitted during the registration process of the sophomore year.
- II. Full-time Waiver for Early College Admission - Acceptance to an accredited college or an approved career/technology school or other post-secondary program following three years of attendance in high school. State competency assessments and service learning requirements must be completed before the start of the college program. A plan to complete all needed high school credits must be included in this request for waiver. Approved courses required for BCPS graduation taken at the college will be credited to the student following successful completion of the first year of college. At the conclusion of a full year of study (generally 24 credits), a written request for a diploma and a transcript from the post-secondary institution should be submitted to the high school principal. The application for waiver for full-time status for early college admission should be submitted during the registration process of the junior year.

- III. Other – Baltimore County Public School/College – This alternative for structuring programs is permitted for individuals or groups of students to fulfill graduation requirements at the college. An alternative plan may include a waiver of the fourth year if all credits, competency assessments, and service learning requirements are met, and if the local superintendent or designee determines that this waiver is in the best interest of the student(s). Consideration for and implementation of these alternative programs are done on a case-by-case basis. This application should be submitted during the registration process of the junior year.
- IV. Partial Attendance Waiver - Partial Waiver of The Fourth Year of Attendance – Schools using a block scheduling format may be able to offer seniors the option of completing all graduation requirements during the first semester of the year. Schools using other scheduling modules may be able to offer seniors the option of completing all graduation requirements in the first half of the school day. To be considered for this option, students must have completed all state competency assessments and service learning requirements before the start of their senior year. This application should be submitted during the registration process of the junior year.

It is recommended that the student meets with his or her school counselor to review the four-year program and transcript and to discuss future plans prior to making a formal request for a waiver. The formal process to receive a partial or full waiver of the fourth year begins with the completion of BEBCO form 6158228478, *Request for Waiver of the Fourth Year (partial or full)* by the student and the parent/guardian and must include a letter of request from the student and his or her parent/guardian. These documents are to be submitted during the registration process of either the sophomore (full-time waiver of the entire fourth year) or junior years (full-time waiver for early college admission, partial attendance waiver or other waivers).

Once the *Request for Waiver of the Fourth Year (partial or full)* form is complete (Parts I and II) and signed by both the student and his or her parent/guardian, it is returned to the school counselor. The school counselor reviews the request and the accompanying documentation and sends it to the principal for his or her recommendation (Part III). If the request is not approved, the student should meet with the school counselor and administrator to discuss why the approval was not granted and what other options exist.

If the approval is granted, BEBCO forms 61588228478 *Partial Attendance During the Senior Year* (parent letter), *Document of Agreement*, and *Graduation Requirement Checklist for Waiver of the Fourth Year of Attendance* are shared with the student and his or her parent/guardian and signed, as designated on the forms. Copies should be made for the student and his or her parent/guardian and signed originals should be kept in the student's record as designated on the forms.

**Note:** Parallel/dual enrollment, school-to-career work study, and evening high school have their own process and forms and do not need to, but can be, addressed using this procedure.

Approved: 03/2010