



STUDENTS: Graduation Requirements

1. General Requirements

The Baltimore County Public Schools award high school diplomas and high school certificates. To earn a high school diploma from Baltimore County Public Schools, students must satisfactorily complete all state and county graduation requirements. Students with disabilities who cannot meet the requirements for a diploma may earn a Maryland high school certificate of program completion by meeting state and county requirements.

The Baltimore County Public Schools offer instructional programs that will permit high school students to complete their requirements for graduation in a manner that best suits their individual needs. It is the responsibility of the local school principal and the professional staff to plan with the students and their parents/guardians programs that have reasonable and feasible goals for satisfying state and county requirements for either a Maryland diploma or a high school certificate of program completion.

2. Definitions

- a. Approved Study – Study will be considered “approved” when a student earns a minimum of 21 credits in a three to four-year time period following eighth grade. Fourth year alternatives will be based on the individual needs of the student and will include earning up to 8 credits in the day school, early admission to a college, or early admission to an approved postsecondary school program. Also, an approved employment or internship experience may be included as an additional alternative.
- b. Combined Overall Score for High School Diploma Requirements – The total of passing scores established by the Maryland State Department of Education on the Maryland High School Assessments in Algebra/Data Analysis, Biology, English 10, and Government.
- c. Credit – A unit of achievement awarded for the completion of a course and/or the successful demonstration of established learning goals. Course credits will be published in the course registration guide each year and will

be accepted for either a high school diploma or a high school certificate of program completion.

- d. Maryland High School Assessments – The culminating tests required by the Maryland State Department of Education that are aligned with content standards and measure a student’s skills and knowledge.
- e. Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion – The official state document issued to students with disabilities who cannot meet the requirements for a diploma but who have completed the identified standards in a special education program.
- f. Minimum Score for High School Diploma Requirement – An acceptable score established by the Maryland State Department of Education below the passing score on a Maryland High School Assessment that may be used by a student to satisfy the combined score option.

3. Enrollment Requirements

COMAR 13A.03.02.03 specified the student shall satisfactorily complete four years of approved study beyond the eighth grade unless one of the alternatives in COMAR 13A.03.02.10 OR .11 is satisfied. The alternatives include:

- a. Early college admission;
- b. Early admission to an approved vocational, technical, or other postsecondary school program, or
- c. A waiver of the fourth year enrollment requirement if all credit, assessments, and student service learning requirements are met, and if the Superintendent in conjunction with the Executive Director for Special Programs, PreK-12, determines that the waiver is in the best interest of the student. Waiver forms may be requested from the local school principal or guidance office.

4. Credit Requirements for Graduation and Single Diploma

A single diploma is authorized by the State for all graduates. The minimum number of credits required for high school graduation shall be twenty-one (21), in courses identified as meeting State indicators in specific subject areas, of which seventeen (17) must be in the approved core of general education courses and four (4) in an approved program sequence, which prepares students for postsecondary education and/or entrance into the workforce.

Graduation credit requirements for students shall be:

<u>Area</u>	<u>Units of Credits</u>
English (organized instruction in listening and speaking, reading and literature, and written composition and use of language)	4
Fine Arts (visual arts, music, theater, and/or dance)	1
Mathematics (including one (1) credit in algebra and One (1) credit in geometry)	3
Physical Education (fitness foundations/fitness mastery)	1
Health Education	0.5
Science (including one (1) credit in biology; earth, life and/or physical sciences in which laboratory experiences are an integral component)	3
Social Studies (including one (1) credit in United States history; one (1) credit in world history; one (1) credit in local, state, and national government; and one-half (0.5) credit in economics)	3.5
Technology education (one (1) credit that includes the application of knowledge, tools, and skills to solve practical problems and extend human capabilities)	1

In addition to meeting these specific credit requirements, a student shall complete at least one of the following program sequences:

Four (4) credits in a state-approved specified sequence of courses in a career and technology completer program

or

Two (2) credits in advanced technology courses and two (2) credits in any elective

or

3

Two (2) credits in World Languages and two (2) credits in any elective.

Total number of credits = 21

5. Maryland State Assessment Requirements for Graduation

- a. For graduating classes of 2005 through 2008 – To be awarded the Maryland High School diploma all students, including middle school students who take high school level courses, must take the Maryland High School Assessment for English 10, Algebra/Data Analysis, Biology, and Government.
- b. For graduating classes of 2009 and beyond – To be awarded the Maryland High School diploma all students, including middle school students who take high school level courses, must take the Maryland High School Assessment for English 10, Algebra/Data Analysis, Biology, and Government. The student must achieve one of the following:
 - (1) the passing score on each test,
 - (2) a minimum score for each test and a combined overall score,
 - (3) a specific score on a MSDE-approved comparable assessment(s), or
 - (4) a passing score on the four high school assessments by a combination of (1) and (3).

6. Student Service Learning Requirements for Graduation:

To be eligible for graduation, all students must complete seventy-five (75) hours of approved student service learning, which may begin during the middle school years.

7. High School Credit for Middle School Courses

High school credit may be earned for selected middle school courses in science, mathematics, and world languages, which meet or exceed the curricular indicators established for high school courses by the Baltimore County Public Schools.

To be awarded high school credit for these courses, middle school students must complete the following requirements:

- Take the same end-of-course examination given to high school students in the same course, and

- Earn a passing final grade calculated according to the formula used by high schools in Baltimore County.

Middle school grades in these courses will not be included on transcripts. Credits only will be recorded on transcripts. There will be no effect on the high school grade point average (GPA) or quality point average (QPA).

8. Graduation Exercises

The professional staff shall arrange each spring for appropriate awards and recognition programs and graduation exercises. There shall be no formal graduation exercises for elementary or middle schools.

Legal References: Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §7-205 (Promotion and Graduation of Students)
Code of Maryland Regulations
13A.03.02.02 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland -- Definitions)
13A.03.02.03 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland -- Enrollment)
13A.03.02.04 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland – Credit Requirements)
13A.03.02.05 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland – Other Provisions for Earning Credit)
13A.03.02.06 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland – Student Service)
13A.03.02.07 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland – State Assessments)
13A.03.02.08 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland – Diplomas and Certificates)
13A.03.02.10 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland – Alternatives to 4-Year Enrollment Requirement)
13A.03.02.11 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland – Alternatives for Structuring Programs)

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 5250, Graduation Requirements

Rule
Adopted: 4/25/06

Superintendent of Schools