



STUDENTS: Promotion and Retention

Graduation Requirements

I. Purpose

- A. To implement the state and county graduation requirements.

II Definitions

- A. *Approved Study* – A minimum of 21 credits in a 3 to 4-year time period following eighth grade. Fourth year alternatives will be approved based on the individual needs of the student; early admission to an approved postsecondary school program; or approved employment or internship.
- B. *Bridge Plan* – Specific modules developed by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) in each High School Assessment (HSA) area: biology, English, algebra/data analysis, and government. Students must meet eligibility criteria to participate.
- C. *Combined Score* – A combined overall score of 1,602 on the 4 Maryland High School Assessments in algebra/data analysis, biology, English 10, and government.
- D. *Credit* – 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.
- E. *Maryland High School Assessments* – The culminating tests required by MSDE that are aligned with content standards and measure a student’s skills and knowledge.
- F. *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.
- G. *Maryland High School Diploma* – The official state document issued to a

student indicating fulfillment of the minimum enrollment, credit, state assessment, student service learning, and completer sequence requirements.

III. General Requirements

- A. The Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS) awardS high school diplomas and high school certificates.
 - 1. To earn a high school diploma from BCPS, students must satisfactorily complete all state and county graduation requirements.
 - 2. 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.
 - 3. BCPS will award a high school diploma to any individual who was honorably discharged from military service if the individual was enrolled as a full-time BCPS student and withdrew from school to enlist in the armed forces of the United States during World War II, the Korean Conflict, or the Vietnam Conflict. Any requests for a diploma under these circumstances should be directed to the Office of School Counseling.

- B. BCPS offers instructional programs that permit high school students to complete graduation requirements in a manner that best suits their individual needs. It is the responsibility of the 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.
 - 1. Communication of student progress towards graduation must be established by school staff with the use of:
 - a. 4/5 year plans;
 - b. Notice of assistance for passing of HSA; and
 - c. Senior status graduation notices by February 1 of a student's senior year for a student in danger of not graduating.

IV. Enrollment Requirements

- A. A student shall satisfactorily complete four years of approved study beyond the Grade 8 unless a waiver of this requirement is approved as outlined in Pupil Services 206, *Waiver of Fourth Year (Partial or Full)*.

V. Credit Requirements

- A. To be awarded a diploma, a student shall have earned a minimum of 21 credits.
- B. For students entering Grade 9 prior to 2011, a student shall earn the following specified core credits as part of the 21 credit requirement:

<u>Subject Area</u>	<u>Units of Credit</u>
1. English - organized instruction in listening and speaking; reading and literature; written composition; and use of language;	4
2. Fine Arts - visual arts, music, theater, and/or dance;	1
3. Mathematics - including 1 credit in algebra and 1 credit in geometry;	3
4. Physical Education - fitness foundations/fitness mastery;	1
5. Health Education;	0.5
6. Science - including 1 credit in biology; earth, life, environmental and/or physical sciences in which laboratory experiences are an integral component;	3
7. Social Studies - including 1 credit in United States history; 1 credit in world history; 1 credit in local, state, and national government; and 0.5 credit in economics;	3.5
8. Technology Education – 1 credit that includes the application of knowledge, tools, and skills to solve practical problems and extend human capabilities); <u>and</u>	1
9. In addition, a student shall complete at least 1 of the following program sequences consisting of 4 credits:	
a. 4 credits in a State-approved specified sequence of courses in a career and technology completer program; <u>or</u>	4
b. 2 credits in advanced technology courses and 2 credits in any elective; <u>or</u>	
c. 2 credits in World Languages and 2 credits in an elective.	

Total number of credits 21

- C. For students entering Grade 9 in 2011, graduation credit requirements shall be the same as specified above, except the following language is substituted for Section V(B)(9):
 - 1. In addition, a student shall complete at least 1 of the following program sequences consisting for 4 credits:
 - a. 2 credits of the same high school world language, or 2 credits in American sign language, and 1 credit of a non-trivial algebra in the final year of high school beyond algebra I, algebra II, and geometry; and 1 credit in any elective (Science recommended), or
 - b. 2 credits of advanced technology and 2 credits in electives; or
 - c. 4 credits by successfully completing a state-approved career and technology program.

VI. Maryland High School Assessments

- A. Students who entered Grade 9 in school year 2005-2006 and beyond, including middle school students who take high school level courses, shall take the Maryland High School Assessments (HSA) for algebra/data analysis, biology, English, and government. The student shall satisfy one of the following:
 - 1. Pass each of the 4 HSA tests;
 - 2. Achieve a combined score of 1,602 on the 4 HSA tests;
 - 3. Achieve a score as established by a MSDE-approved substitution assessment(s);
 - 4. Achieve a passing score on the 4 high school assessments by a combination of 1 and 3 above.
 - 5. Successfully complete the Bridge Plan for academic validation for students who meet eligibility criteria for each assessment where a passing score is not achieved.
 - 6. A waiver may be granted if allowed by MSDE and the student meets criteria set forth by the MSDE and approved by the BCPS' Superintendent.

VII. Student Service Learning

- A. To be eligible for graduation, all students shall complete 75 hours of approved student service learning, which may begin during the middle school years.

VIII. High School Credit for Middle School Courses

- A. High school credit may be earned for selected middle school courses in science, mathematics, visual arts, and world languages, which meet or exceed the curricular indicators established for high school courses by BCPS.
- B. To be awarded high school credit for these courses, middle school students must complete the following requirements:
 - 1. Take the same end-of-course examination given to high school students in the same course; and
 - 2. Earn a passing final grade calculated according to the formula outlined in Board of Education Policy and Superintendent's Rule 5210, *Factors Involved in Student Evaluation*.
 - 3. Grades in these courses will not be included on transcripts; only credits will be recorded. There will be no effect on the high school grade point average (GPA) or quality point average (QPA).

IX. Graduation Exercises

- A. The principal shall arrange each spring for appropriate awards, recognition programs and graduation exercises.
- B. There shall be no formal graduation exercises for elementary or middle schools.

Legal References: *Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §7-206.1., High School Diploma for Certain Individuals Enlisted During World War II or Korean Conflict*
COMAR 13A.03.02, Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland

Related Policies: Board of Education Policy 5200, *Promotion and Retention*
Board of Education Policy 5210, *Factors Involved in Student Evaluation*

Rule
Adopted: 4/25/06
Revised: 12/7/10

Superintendent of Schools