



STUDENTS: Promotion and Retention

Graduation Requirements

I. Purpose

To establish graduation requirements for students enrolled in Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS).

II Definitions

- A. *Approved Study* – For students entering high school in school year 2016–2017, a minimum of 22 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 for Academic Validation (Bridge Plan)* – Project modules developed by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) for a student who has not passed a Maryland High School Assessment (HSA) or Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers Assessment (PARCC) in each content area. Students must meet eligibility criteria to participate in the Bridge Plan.
- C. *Combined Score* – The total of the passing scores established by MSDE on the Maryland HSA and PARCC assessments in each content area.
- 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 (HSA)* – State-mandated tests that measure school and individual student progress toward Maryland’s high school core learning goals in English, Algebra/Data Analysis, Government and Biology. Passing the HSA is a graduation requirement.
- 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 complete sequence requirements.
- H. *Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) State Assessments* – State-mandated assessments in English Language Arts and mathematics aligned with the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards.

### III. General Requirements

- A. 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.
- C. Communication of student progress towards graduation must be established by school staff with the use of:
  - 1. 6-year plans;
  - 2. Notice of assistance for passing of HSA/PARCC; and

3. Senior status graduation notices during the third week of the third marking period of a student's senior year for a student in danger of not graduating.

#### IV. Enrollment Requirements

A student shall be in attendance at a BCPS high school one full semester immediately preceding graduation and shall have satisfactorily completed four years of approved study beyond the Grade 8 unless one of the alternatives to four-year enrollment in a public high school is satisfied.

#### V. Credit Requirements

- A. Credit requirements for a student to be awarded the Maryland High School Diploma in BCPS are based on the year the student enters Grade 9.
- B. To be awarded a diploma, a student shall have earned a minimum of 22 credits.
  1. A student shall have earned a minimum of 21 credits as established by the Maryland State Board of Education.
  2. In addition to the state-mandated credits, a student shall also have earned the following local requirements:
    - a. Physical Education – Additional one-half credit; and
    - b. Social Studies – Additional one-half credit in Economics.

#### VI. State Assessments

A student shall meet all Maryland High School Assessment (HSA) requirements and/or the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment requirements established by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) by:

1. Achieving a passing score; or
2. Meeting the requirements of the combined score option; or
3. Successfully completing a Bridge Plan in those content areas that the student did not pass.

#### VII. Student Service

To be eligible for graduation, all students shall complete 75 hours of approved student service that includes preparation, action and reflection components and that

may begin during the middle school grades.

VIII. High School Credit in Middle School

- A. Credit may be earned for high school courses in middle school in science, mathematics, visual arts and world languages.
- B. To be awarded high school credit for these courses, middle school students must complete the following requirements:
  - 1. Participate in the same final evaluation activity 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, *Grading and Reporting*.

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.

X. Notice

- A. Annually, each principal shall inform all students and their parents or guardians of the following:
  - 1. Maryland's graduation requirements;
  - 2. The student's progress on fulfilling the credit, state assessments, service and applicable IEP requirements for graduation;
  - 3. Results of each HSA/PARCC assessment taken or Bridge Plan completed by the student;
  - 4. A plan for appropriate assistance, if applicable; and
  - 5. The MSDE schedule for HSA/PARCC assessments.
- B. BCPS graduation requirements will be published annually in the BCPS *Course Registration Guide* and posted on the Office of School Counseling's Web page.

Legal References: *Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §7-205, Promotion and Graduation of Students*  
*Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article §7-205.1, High School Curriculum and Graduation Requirements*  
*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, *Grading and Reporting*  
Board of Education Policy 6600, *Educational Options Programs*

Rule

Superintendent of Schools

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