5460 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

For a State-endorsed diploma, the Board of Education shall develop, adopt, and implement local graduation requirements that prepare students for success in postsecondary degree programs, careers, and civic life, that are delivered by educators who are appropriately certified within each of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) content areas, and that include the requirements outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1.

The words and terms used in this Policy shall have the meanings as defined in N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.3.

As defined in N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.3, "credit" means the award for the equivalent of a class period of instruction, which meets for a minimum of forty minutes, one time per week during the school year or as approved through N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)2 and A.**2**. below.

A. High School Graduation Requirements

1. Participation in a local program of study of not fewer than 120 credits in courses designed to meet all of the NJSLS, including, but not limited to, the following credits:

    a. At least 20 credits in English language arts (ELA), aligned to grade nine through twelve standards;

    b. At least 15 credits in mathematics, including Algebra I or the content equivalent; geometry or the content equivalent; and a third year of mathematics that builds on the concepts and skills of algebra and geometry and that prepares students for college and ~~21~~**st** ~~century~~ careers;

    c. At least 15 credits in evidence-based science courses that develop proficiency with the full range of grades nine through twelve NJSLS for science, which shall include the disciplines of physical science; life science; earth and space sciences; and engineering, technology, and applications of science;

    d. At least 15 credits in social studies, including satisfaction of N.J.S.A. 18A:35-1 and 18A:35-2; five credits in world history; and the integration of civics, economics, geography, and global content in all course offerings;

e. At least 2 1/2 credits in financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy;

f. At least 3 3/4 credits in health, safety, and physical education during each year of enrollment, distributed as one hundred fifty minutes per week, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:35-5, N.J.S.A. 18A:35-5, 18A:35-7, 18A:35-8;

g. At least 5 credits in visual and performing arts;

h. At least 5 credits in world languages or student demonstration of proficiency as set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)2.v(2) and A.2e. below;

i. Technological literacy, consistent with the NJSLS, integrated throughout the curriculum;

j. At least 5 credits in career readiness or career and technical education; and

k. Electives as determined by the high school program sufficient to total a minimum of 120 credits.

2. The 120-credit requirement set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)1. and in A.1 above may be met through program completion of a range of experiences that enable students to pursue a variety of individualized student learning opportunities, as follows:

a. The district shall establish a process to approve individualized student learning opportunities that meet the NJSLS, as well as any performance or competency assessment that will be used to determine student completion of programs.

(1) Individualized student learning opportunities based upon specific instructional objectives aimed at meeting the NJSLS and intended to supplant NJSLS-based courses shall:

(a) Be designed, approved, and delivered by appropriately certified educators, except as follows:

(i) For approved career and technical education programs and work-based learning experiences, individualized student learning opportunities shall be designed, approved, and supervised by appropriately certified educators in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:19-6.4, 6A:9B-14.19, and 6A:9B-14.20; or

(ii) For dual enrollment, individualized student learning opportunities shall be reviewed and approved by appropriately certified educators;

(b) Include demonstration of student competency approved by appropriately certified educators;

(c) Be certified for completion based on the Board process adopted in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)2.v. and A.2.e. below; and

(d) Be on file in the district and subject to review by the Commissioner of Education or the Commissioner's designee.

(2) Group programs based upon specific instructional objectives aimed at meeting the NJSLS shall be permitted pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1 and shall be approved in the same manner as other approved courses.

b. A Board that establishes a process pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)2.i. and A.2.a. above shall:

(1) Provide programs and related assessments based on specific instructional objectives aimed at meeting the NJSLS and overseen by educators appropriately certified within each aligned content area;

(2) Approve group programs in the same manner as other courses;

(3) Provide equitable access pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:7 – Managing for Equity in Education;



(4) Develop policies that clearly address student safety, transportation, tuition, and fee requirements and comply with applicable laws and rules as set forth at N.J.A.C. 6A:19-14.2; and

(5) Consider the need for procedures that are consistent with the Board's employment practices, including criminal background checks in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:6-7.1.

c. Coursework and experiences may bear credit for core academic courses or elective coursework. The Board may establish policies that:

(1) Allow the granting of credits for summer courses that replace traditional courses;

(2) Allow the granting of credits for work-based learning experiences, including, but not limited to, internships, apprenticeships, and service-learning;

(3) Limit opportunities to only courses that are not offered to all students by the Board; and

(4) Prioritize opportunities that are more experiential in nature and not designed to meet the course requirements at N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)1. and A.1. above.

d. Boards that allow the granting of credit for experiences designed to supplant courses required for graduation as set forth at N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)1. and A.1. above shall document the experiences' substantial equivalency with the identified NJSLS and locally adopted curriculum designed to meet the requirements at N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)1. and A.1. above. The documentation shall be subject to review, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:30, including the instruction and program indicators at 6A:30 Appendices A and B.

e. The Board shall establish a process for granting of credits through successful completion of assessments that verify student achievement in meeting the NJSLS at the high school level, including standards achieved by means of the individualized student learning opportunities set forth at N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)2. and A.2. above. Such programs or assessments may occur all, or in part, prior to a student's high school enrollment; no such locally administered



assessments shall preclude or exempt student participation in applicable Statewide assessments at grades three through twelve.

(1) The Board shall choose assessments that are aligned with the NJSLS and may include locally designed assessments.

(2) The Board shall determine if students have achieved the level of language proficiency designated as Novice-High as defined by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and recognized as fulfilling the world languages requirement of the NJSLS through either New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE)-approved proficiency assessments or NJDOE-approved locally designed competency-based assessments;

f. The district shall establish a process to approve post-secondary learning opportunities that may consist of Advanced Placement (AP) courses, College-Level Examination Program (CLEP), International Baccalaureate (IB), or concurrent/dual enrollment at accredited higher education institutions.

(1) The district shall award credit for successful completion of an approved, accredited college course that ensures achievement of knowledge and skills that meets the NJSLS.

3. Local student attendance requirements;

4. Any statutorily mandated requirements for earning a high school diploma;

5. For students in the graduating classes of 2026 and 2027, completion of a financial aid application in a form prescribed by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority, including, but not limited to, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the New Jersey Alternative Financial Aid Application, or be exempted from the requirement in accordance with procedures set forth at P.L. 2023, c.295 and P.L. 2025, c.95 pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)6.;

6. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)7., the requirement that all students demonstrate proficiency by achieving a passing score on the ELA and mathematics components of the State graduation proficiency test or through the alternative means at N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(f), if applicable, or for students



who take the State graduation proficiency test but do not achieve a passing score through the alternative means set forth at N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(e) and E. below and N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(g) and G. below;

7. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)8., for students who have not demonstrated proficiency on the ELA and/or mathematics components of the State graduation proficiency test, the opportunity to demonstrate proficiency may be achieved by the following:

   a. Remediation, as appropriate, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7C-3.; and

   b. One or more additional opportunities to demonstrate proficiency on the State graduation proficiency test, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7C-6.;

8. The portfolio appeals process, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7C-3., for students who have not demonstrated proficiency on the ELA and/or mathematics components of the State graduation proficiency test and have been provided with the opportunities at A.8. above; and

9. Students graduating from an adult high school shall demonstrate proficiency in the ELA and mathematics components of the State graduation proficiency test, or through the alternative means set forth at N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(e), (f), and (g) and E., F., and G. below.

B. Alternative Requirements for State-Endorsed Diploma

1. Through the IEP process set forth at N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.7 and pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.11, the Board may specify alternate requirements for a State-endorsed diploma for individual students with disabilities as defined at N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1.3 pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(b).

   a. The Board shall specifically address any alternate requirements for graduation in a student's IEP, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.11.

   b. The Board shall develop and implement procedures for assessing whether a student has met the specified alternate requirements for graduation individually determined in an IEP.



C. Graduation Requirements Provided to Executive County Superintendent

The Board shall provide to the Executive County Superintendent their graduation requirements each year they are evaluated through NJQSAC and update the filed copy each time their graduation policies are revised pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(c).

D. Copy of Graduation Requirements to Students and Parents

The Board shall provide each student entering high school and the student's parents with a copy of the Board's requirements for a State-endorsed diploma and the programs available to assist students in attaining a State-endorsed diploma, in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:7C-5. pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(d).

E. Alternative Means

1. The alternative means referenced at N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)7. and A.7. above shall be as follows:

   a. Achieve a passing score, as determined by the Commissioner of Education and approved by the New Jersey State Board of Education, on a corresponding substitute competency test in ELA and/or mathematics, as applicable; and/or

   b. Demonstrate proficiency through the portfolio appeals process, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7C-3.

F. Multilingual Learners (ML) Requirements for High School Graduation

All multilingual learners (MLs) shall satisfy the requirements for high school graduation**.** However, MLs may demonstrate they have attained State minimum levels of proficiency through passage of the portfolio appeals process in their native language, when available, and passage of a NJDOE-approved English language proficiency assessment.

G. Alternate Assessment Based on Alternate Academic Achievement

Students, including students with disabilities as defined at N.J.A.C.6A:14-1.3 or eligible pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act**,** who participate in the alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards (AA-

AAAS) for students with significant intellectual disabilities are not required to participate in repeated administrations of high school assessment components required at N.J.A.C. 6A:8-4.1(c).

H. State Seal of Biliteracy

1. The Board will participate in the State Seal of Biliteracy Program and award a State Seal of Biliteracy to any student who has met all requirements for a high school diploma at N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.2 and demonstrates proficiency in the following:

   a. One or more languages other than English through an assessment approved pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.3(f) and H.6. below during the student's next to last or final year of high school**.**

      (1) Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:7C-15.a., a language other than English shall include, but not be limited to, American Sign Language, Latin, and Native American languages.

   b. ELA as set forth at ~~in~~ N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a)6. and A.6. above or through a NJDOE-approved English proficiency assessment as set forth at N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(f) and F. above.

2. Pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.3(b), the Board shall incorporate the process **for** awarding the State Seal of Biliteracy into this Policy developed, adopted, and implemented pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(a) and A.1. above, denoting participation in the voluntary program. Participation in the State Seal of Biliteracy Program is optional for students. The Board shall submit to the Executive County Superintendent, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1(c~~d~~) and C. above, a copy of this Policy that reflects the option for students to participate in the State Seal of Biliteracy.

3. The Board will not pay the costs for related assessments. If the Board does not pay the related costs, the Board will charge a fee.

4. The Board shall:

   a. Provide the NJDOE with information regarding students who qualify for the State Seal of Biliteracy pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.3(a) and H.1. above;



b. Present each student who qualifies pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.3(a) and H.1. above with a NJDOE-issued certificate;

c. Include the Commissioner-developed insignia "New Jersey State Seal of Biliteracy" and the language(s) for which it was awarded on the student's transcript; and

d. Maintain appropriate records to identify students who have earned the State Seal of Biliteracy.

5. The Board shall not award a State Seal of Biliteracy to any student who does not meet the criteria for a State Seal of Biliteracy as required at N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.3(a) and H.1. above and shall not include the Commissioner-developed insignia on the student's transcript.

6. A list of NJDOE-approved, nationally or internationally recognized assessments and the Statewide scores necessary for a student to satisfy requirements for the State Seal of Biliteracy shall be set by a resolution approved by the State Board of Education.

a. If an approved assessment, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.3(f) and H.6. above, does not exist for a particular language, the Board may administer a NJDOE-approved, locally designed proficiency-based assessment.

N.J.S.A. 18A:6-7.1.; 18A:7C-3.; 18A:7C-6.;
N.J.A.C. 6A:8-4.1; 6A:8-5.1; 6A:8-5.3; 6A:9B-14.19;
6A:9B-14.20; 6A:14-1.1 et seq.

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