

704 KAR 3:305. Minimum requirements for high school graduation.

RELATES TO: KRS 156.160(1)(a), (d), 158.140(6), 158.142, 158.645, 158.6451

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: KRS 156.070, 156.160(1)(a), (d), 158.140(6), 158.142

NECESSITY, FUNCTION, AND CONFORMITY: KRS 156.160 requires the Kentucky Board of Education to promulgate administrative regulations relating to the courses of study for the different grades and the minimum requirements for high school graduation. KRS 158.142(3)(b) requires the board to promulgate administrative regulations establishing requirements for early graduation from high school. The content standards for the courses of study are established in the Kentucky academic standards incorporated by reference in 704 KAR 3:303 and 704 KAR Chapter 8. This administrative regulation establishes the minimum requirements necessary for entitlement to a high school diploma.

Section 1. Definitions. (1) "Early graduation" means meeting the competency-based criteria established in this administrative regulation in three (3) academic years or less.

(2) "Early Graduation Certificate" means a certificate, awarded by the district and signed by the principal and superintendent, that shall make the recipient eligible for a scholarship award equal to one-half (1/2) of the state portion of the average statewide per pupil guaranteed base funding level, to be used at a Kentucky public two (2) year community and technical college or a Kentucky four (4) year public or non-profit independent institution accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

(3) "Individual Learning Plan" or "ILP" is defined in 704 KAR 19:002.

Section 2. (1) A district shall implement an advising and guidance process throughout the middle and high schools to provide support for the development and implementation of an individual learning plan for each student. The plan shall include career development and awareness and specifically address the content as provided in the Kentucky academic standards for career studies established in 704 KAR Chapter 8. The individual learning plan shall not be a substitute for the statement of transition service needs for students with disabilities as provided in 707 KAR 1:320.

(2) A district shall develop a method to evaluate the effectiveness and results of the individual learning plan process. The evaluation method shall include input from students, parents, and school staff. As part of the evaluation criteria, the district shall include indicators related to the status of the student in the twelve (12) months following the date of graduation.

(3) A feeder middle school and a high school shall work cooperatively to ensure that each student and parent receives information and advising regarding the relationship between education and career opportunities. Advising and guidance shall include information about financial planning for postsecondary education.

(4) A school shall maintain each student's individual learning plan. The individual learning plan shall be readily available to the student and parent and reviewed and approved at least annually by the student, parents, and school officials.

(5) Beginning with a student's eighth grade year, the individual learning plan shall set learning goals for the student based on academic and career interests and shall identify required academic courses, electives, and extracurricular opportunities aligned to the student's postsecondary goals. The school shall use information from the individual learning plans about student needs for academic and elective courses to plan academic and elective offerings.

(6) The development of the individual learning plan for each student shall begin by the end of the sixth grade year and shall be focused on career exploration and related postsecondary education and training needs.

Section 3. (1) For students entering grade 9 on or before the first day of the 2018-2019 academic year, each student in a public school shall have a total of at least twenty-two (22) credits for high school graduation.

(2) Those credits shall include the content standards as provided in the Kentucky academic standards, established in 704 KAR 3:303 and KAR Chapter 8.

(3) Additional standards-based learning experiences shall align to the student's individual learning plan and shall consist of standards-based content.

(4) The required credits and demonstrated competencies shall include the following minimum requirements:

(a) Language arts - four (4) credits (English I, II, III, and IV) to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area and comply with the following:

1. Language arts shall be taken each year of high school; and

2. If a student does not meet the college readiness benchmarks for English and language arts as established by the Council on Postsecondary Education in 13 KAR 2:020, the student shall take an English and language arts transitional course or intervention, which is monitored to address remediation needs, before exiting high school;

(b) Social studies - three (3) credits to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area;

(c) Mathematics - three (3) credits to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area and include the following minimum requirements:

1. Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II. An integrated, applied, interdisciplinary, occupational, or technical course that prepares a student for a career path based on the student's individual learning plan may be substituted for a traditional Algebra I, Geometry, or Algebra II course on an individual student basis if the course meets the content standards in the Kentucky academic standards, established in 704 KAR 3:303 and 704 Chapter 8;

2. A mathematics course or its equivalent as determined by the district shall be taken each year of high school to ensure readiness for postsecondary education or the workforce;

3. Any mathematics course other than Algebra I, Geometry, or Algebra II shall be counted as an elective; and

4. If a student does not meet the college readiness benchmarks for mathematics as established by the Council on Postsecondary Education in 13 KAR 2:020, the student shall take a mathematics transitional course or intervention, which is monitored to address remediation needs, before exiting high school;

(d) Science - three (3) credits that shall incorporate lab-based scientific investigation experiences and include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area;

(e) Health - one-half (1/2) credit to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area;

(f) Physical education - one-half (1/2) credit to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area;

(g) Visual and performing arts - one (1) credit to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area or a standards-based specialized arts course based on the student's individual learning plan;

(h) Academic and career interest standards-based learning experiences - seven (7) credits including four (4) standards-based learning experiences in an academic or career interest based on the student's individual learning plan; and

(i) Demonstrated performance-based competency in technology.

Section 4. (1) Beginning with students who enter grade 9 on or after the first day of the 2019-2020 academic year, in order to receive a high school diploma, each student in a public school shall Earn a total of at least twenty-two (22) credits for high school graduation.

(2) The required credits shall include the content standards as provided in the Kentucky academic standards, established in 704 KAR 3:303 and 704 KAR Chapter 8.

(3) Additional standards-based learning experiences shall align to the student's individual learning plan and shall consist of standards-based content.

(4) Each student shall be required to complete the following foundational credits and demonstrated competencies, consisting of ten (10) credits:

(a) English/language arts - two (2) credits (English I and II) to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area;

(b) Social studies - two (2) credits to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area;

(c) Mathematics - two (2) credits (Algebra I and Geometry) to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area;

(d) Science - two (2) credits that shall incorporate lab-based scientific investigation experiences and include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area;

(e) Health - one-half (1/2) credit to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area;

(f) Physical education - one-half (1/2) credit to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area; and

(g) Visual and performing arts - one (1) credit to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area or a standards-based specialized arts course based on the student's individual learning plan.

(5) In addition to the foundational requirements established in subsection (4) of this Section, every student shall earn a minimum of twelve (12) personalized credits in order to receive a high school diploma. These twelve (12) personalized credits shall include:

(a) Two (2) additional English/Language Arts credits that include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area and are aligned to the student's individual learning plan;

(b) Two (2) additional mathematics credits that include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area and are aligned to the student's individual learning plan; (c) One (1) additional science credit that includes the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area and is aligned to the student's individual learning plan; (d) One (1) additional social studies credit that includes the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area and is aligned to the student's individual learning plan; (e) Academic and career interest standards-based learning experiences - six (6) credits including four (4) standards-based learning experiences based on the student's individual learning plan;

(f) Demonstrate performance-based competency in technology as approved by the Kentucky Department of Education;

(g) Pass a civics test as required by KRS 158.141; and

(h) Beginning with students entering grade 9 on or after the first day of the 2020-2021 academic year, successfully complete one (1) or more courses or programs that meet the financial literacy requirements pursuant to KRS 158.1411 and standards as established in 704 KAR Chapter 8.

Section 5. (1) Only students who meet the criteria established in this section shall be eligible for early graduation.

(a) Those students who meet the criteria for early graduation shall receive from the school district a diploma and an Early Graduation Certificate.

(b) Students wishing to graduate early shall indicate that intent to the school principal at the beginning of grade 9 or as soon as the intent is known, but within the first thirty (30) school days of the academic year in which they wish to graduate.

(c) A student's intent to graduate early shall be entered into the student information system by the school district by October 1 of the year in which the student makes the declaration.

(d) Students working toward early graduation and receipt of a corresponding Early Graduation Certificate shall be supported by development and monitoring of an individual learning plan to support their efforts.

(2) To graduate early and earn an Early Graduation Certificate, a student shall:

(a) Score proficient or higher on the state-required assessments required by the Kentucky Board of Education in 703 KAR 5:200; and

(b) Meet the college readiness exam benchmarks established by the Council on Postsecondary Education in 13 KAR 2:020 for placement in credit-bearing courses without the need for remediation.

(3) A student who has indicated an intent to graduate early may participate in the student's state administration of the college readiness exam prior to the junior year, if needed.

Section 6. (1) A local board of education may substitute an integrated, applied, interdisciplinary, occupational, technical, or higher level course for a required course if the alternative course provides rigorous content.

(2) For students with disabilities, a local board of education may substitute a functional, integrated, applied, interdisciplinary, occupational, technical, or higher level course for a required course if the alternative course provides rigorous content. These shall be based on grade-level content standards and may be modified to allow for a narrower breadth, depth, or complexity of the general grade-level content standards.

Section 7. (1) A local board of education may award credit toward high school graduation for satisfactory demonstration of learning based on content standards described in the Kentucky academic standards, established in 704 KAR 3:303 and 704 KAR Chapter 8, and a rigorous performance standards policy established by the local board of education. A school shall establish performance descriptors and evaluation procedures to determine if the content and performance standards have been met.

(2) A local board of education shall award credit toward high school graduation based on:

(a) A standards-based Carnegie unit credit that shall consist of at least 120 hours of instructional time in one (1) subject; or

(b) A performance-based credit based on standards, regardless of the number of instructional hours in one (1) subject.

(3) A local board of education which has chosen to award performance-based credit shall award a standards-based credit earned by a student enrolled in grade 5, 6, 7, or 8 if:

(a) The content of the course is the same as that described in the Kentucky academic standards, established in 704 KAR 3:303 and 704 KAR Chapter 8; and

(b) The district has criteria in place to make a reasonable determination that the middle level student is capable of success in the high school course.

(4) A local board of education which has chosen to award performance-based credit shall establish a policy for a performance-based credit system that includes:

- (a) The procedures for developing performance-based credit systems and for amending the system;
- (b) The conditions under which each high school may grant performance-based credits and the related performance descriptors and assessments;
- (c) Objective grading and reporting procedures;
- (d) Content standards established in 704 KAR 3:303 and 704 KAR Chapter 8;
- (e) The extent to which state-provided assessments will be used in the local performance-based credit system;
- (f) The ability for students to demonstrate proficiency and earn credit for learning acquired outside of school or in prior learning; and
- (g) Criteria to ensure that internships, cooperative learning experiences, and other learning experiences in the school and community are:
 1. Designed to further student progress towards the individual learning plan;
 2. Supervised by qualified instructors; and
 3. Aligned with state and local content and performance standards.
- (5) A board of education may award standards-based, performance-based credit toward high school graduation for:
 - (a) Standards-based course work that constitutes satisfactory demonstration of learning in any high school course, consistent with Sections 3 and 4 of this administrative regulation;
 - (b) Standards-based course work that constitutes satisfactory demonstration of learning in a course for which the student failed to earn credit when the course was taken previously;
 - (c) Standards-based portfolios, senior year, or capstone projects;
 - (d) Standards-based online or other technology mediated courses;
 - (e) Standards-based dual credit or other equivalency courses; or
 - (f) Standards-based internship, cooperative learning experience, or other supervised experience in the school or the community.
- (6) Each local board of education shall maintain a copy of its policy on high school graduation requirements. This policy shall include a description of how the requirements address KRS 158.6451(1)(b) and 703 KAR 4:060.

Section 8. (1) A student who satisfactorily completes the requirements of this administrative regulation and additional requirements as may be imposed by a local board of education or meets the requirements for early graduation established in Section 5 of this administrative regulation shall be awarded a graduation diploma.

(2) A local board shall not adopt any high school graduation requirements that include achieving a minimum score on a statewide assessment as established in KRS 158.140.

(3) The local board of education shall award the diploma.

Section 9. This administrative regulation shall not be interpreted as prohibiting a local governing board, superintendent, principal, or teacher from awarding special recognition to a student.

Section 10. (1) If the severity of an exceptional student's disability precludes a course of study that meets the high school graduation requirements established in Sections 3 and 4 of this administrative regulation leading to receipt of a high school diploma, an alternative course of study shall be offered.

(2) This course of study shall be based upon student needs and the provisions established in 704 KAR 3:303 and 704 KAR Chapter 8, and shall be reviewed at least annually.

(3) A student who completes this course of study shall receive an alternative high school diploma to be awarded by the local board of education consistent with the graduation practices for all students.

(4) A local board of education may establish policies to award an alternative high school diploma to a former student who has received a certificate or certificate of attainment. (5 Ky.R. 633; 6 Ky.R. 53; eff. 7-17-1979; 6 Ky.R. 238; 526; eff. 4-1-1980; 9 Ky.R. 1027; 1208; eff. 8-3-1983; 11 Ky.R. 1076; eff. 3-12-1985; 17 Ky.R. 113; eff. 9-13-1990; 23 Ky.R. 3419; 3827; 24 Ky.R. 82; eff. 7-2-1997; 32 Ky.R. 1779; 2028; 33 Ky.R. 766; eff. 10-6-2006; 37 Ky.R. 138; 1644; eff. 2-4-2011; 39 Ky.R. 612; 1115; eff. 1-4-2013; 40 Ky.R. 1138; 1406; eff. 3-7-2014; 45 Ky.R. 1414, 2111, 2342; eff. 4-5-2019; 47 Ky.R. 1068, 1559; eff. 5-4-2021.)