

The board recognizes the importance of setting rigorous graduation requirements to help ensure that students are receiving an education that will prepare them to be productive members of society.

In order to graduate from high school, students must meet the following requirements:

1. successful completion of all course unit requirements mandated by the State Board of Education (see Section A);
2. successful completion of all other requirements mandated by the board, as provided in this policy.

The principal shall ensure that students and parents are aware of all graduation requirements. Guidance program staff shall assist students in selecting their high school courses to ensure that students are taking all the required units and selecting electives consistent with their post-graduation plans. For students who have transferred to the school system during high school or who, for other reasons, have completed course work outside of the school system, the principal shall determine what course work will be applied as credit toward graduation. The principal shall consider the requirements of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children (G.S. 115C-407.5) and the requirements of subsection C.3 of this policy in determining the graduation requirements for children of military families.

#### **A. COURSE UNITS REQUIRED**

All students must fulfill the requirements of the Future-Ready Core Course of Study, unless they are approved for the Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study. The tables below list the course unit requirements for the Future-Ready Core Course of Study and the Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study based on the student's year of entry into ninth grade for the first time.

In accordance with policy 3101, Dual Enrollment, and State Board of Education requirements, students may earn high school credit for college courses completed. In addition, students may earn credit for certain high school courses in the Future-Ready Core Course of Student completed while in middle school, as authorized by the State Board of Education. Students also have the opportunity to meet course unit requirements without completing the regular period of classroom instruction by demonstrating mastery of the course material in accordance with policy 3420, Student Promotion and Accountability, and State Board of Education requirements.

All awards of high school course credit must be consistent with State Board of Education requirements. Any inconsistency between board policy and State Board graduation requirements will be resolved by following the State Board requirements. While the board endeavors to keep its policy up to date with current State Board of Education graduation requirements, students should verify current requirements with their guidance

counselors when planning course schedules or making other decisions based on graduation requirements.

The Buncombe County Board of Education has established 28 (twenty-eight) credits as the cumulative number required for graduation. Credits which count toward graduation from high school may begin accumulating in middle school when courses meet specific criteria. High school level equivalent courses taken prior to the ninth grade will be counted in the cumulative number of units required for graduation but will not be part of the student's GPA calculation. A student must meet the requirements for graduation depending upon their first year of entry into the ninth grade. All students are required to have a four-year plan. Students may receive more than 10 units of credit during one school year with the principal's prior approval. The principal of the receiving school will develop procedures for evaluating the academic record of transfer students and awarding credit.

1. Future-Ready Core Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade for the First Time before 2020-2021

Courses Required*	State Requirements	Local Requirements
English	4 sequential (English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	4 (NC Math 1, 2, and 3 and a fourth math course aligned with the student's post-high school plans.)** (A principal may exempt a student from this math sequence. Exempt students will be required to pass NC Math 1 and 2 and two other application-based math courses or selected CTE courses, as identified on the NC DPI math options chart.)***	
Science	3 (a physical science course, Biology, and earth/environmental science)	
Social Studies	4 (including: (1) a founding principles course which shall be either American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics or Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy;† (2) two American history courses which shall be either (a) American History I and II, (b) American History I or II and another Social Studies course, or (c) American History and another Social Studies course; and (3) World History)	
Health/P.E.	1	
Electives	6 (2 electives must be any combination of Career and Technical Education, Arts Education, or World Language; 4 must be from one of the following: Career and Technical Education, J.R.O.T.C., Arts Education, or any other subject area or cross-disciplinary course. A four-course concentration is recommended.)‡	
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>22</b>	

\* Certain International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), and Cambridge International Examination (CIE) courses will satisfy specific graduation requirements. See SBE Policy GRAD-008.

\*\* Students who are learning disabled in math may have other options for meeting the four mathematics credits requirement. See DPI memo of August 24, 2016 available at <http://bit.ly/DPIMemo>.

\*\*\* Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete four mathematics courses, including a fourth math course with Math 3 as a prerequisite. The math options chart is available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/academic-standards/standard-course-study/mathematics/standard-course-study-supporting-resources>.

† The founding principles courses, American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics and Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy, must follow the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) in its entirety and may not be satisfied by any other courses.

± Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete two credits of a single world language.

## 2. Future-Ready Core Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2020-2021

Courses Required*	State Requirements	Local Requirements
English	4 sequential (English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	4 (NC Math 1, 2, and 3 and a fourth math course aligned with the student's post-high school plans.)* (A principal may exempt a student from this math sequence. Exempt students will be required to pass NC Math 1 and 2 and two other application-based math courses or selected CTE courses, as identified on the NC DPI math options chart.)***	
Science	3 (a physical science course, Biology, and earth/environmental science)	
Social Studies	(including: (1) a founding principles course which shall be either American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics or Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy;† (2) an American History course which shall be either (a) American History I, (b) American History II, or (c) American History; (3) World History;± and (4) Economics and Personal Finance^)	
Health/P.E.	1	
Electives	6 (2 electives must be any combination of Career and Technical Education, Arts Education, or World Language; 4 must be from one of the following: Career and Technical Education, J.R.O.T.C., Arts Education, or any other subject area or cross-disciplinary course. A four-course concentration is recommended.)‡	
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>22</b>	

\* Certain International Baccalaureate (IB), Advanced Placement (AP), and Cambridge International Examination (CIE) courses will satisfy specific graduation requirements. See SBE Policy GRAD-008.

\*\* Students who are learning disabled in math may have other options for meeting the four mathematics credits requirement. See DPI memo of August 24, 2016 available at <http://bit.ly/DPIMemo>.

\*\*\* Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete four mathematics courses, including a fourth math course with Math 3 as a prerequisite. The math options chart is available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/classroom-resources/academic-standards/stand-course-study/mathematics/standard-course-study-supporting-resources..>

† Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy must follow the North Carolina Standard Course of Study (NCSCOS) in its entirety and may not be satisfied by any other courses. See SBE Policy GRAD-004.

± This course must, at a minimum, include the standards established by the second edition of the Voluntary National Content Standards in Economics and the 2013 National Standards for Financial Literacy, as developed by the Council for Economic Education.

‡ Students seeking to complete minimum course requirements for UNC universities must complete two credits of a single world language.

3. Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade prior to 2020-2021 (only available to certain students with disabilities who have an IEP)

Courses Required	State Requirements	Local Requirements
English	4 (including English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	3 (including Introduction to Math, NC Math I, and Financial Management)	
Science	2 (including Applied Science and Biology)	
Social Studies	2 (including American History I and American History II)* OR (1) American History: Founding Principles, Civics and Economics or Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy; and (2) American History I or American History II or American History**	
Health/P.E.	1	
Career/Technical	4 (Career/Technical Education electives)	
Occupational Preparation	6 (including Occupational Preparation I, II, III, and IV, which require 150 hours of school-based training, 225 hours of community-based training, and 225 hours of paid employment***)	
Electives	0	
Other Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of IEP objectives</li> <li>• Career Portfolio</li> </ul>	
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>22</b>	

\* Applicable only to students entering the ninth grade for the first time prior to 2017-18.

\*\* Applicable only to students entering the ninth grade for the first time between 2017-2018 and 2019-2020.

\*\*\* Paid employment is the expectation; however, when paid employment is not available, 225 hours of unpaid vocational training, unpaid internship experience, paid employment at community rehabilitation facilities, and volunteer and/or community service hours may substitute for 225 hours of paid employment.

4. Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study Credits Required for Students Entering Ninth Grade for the First Time in 2020-2021 and Thereafter (only available to certain students with disabilities who have an IEP)

Courses Required	State Requirements	Local Requirements
English	4 (including English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	3 (including Introduction to Math, NC Math I, and Financial Management)	
Science	2 (including Applied Science and Biology)	
Social Studies	2 (including Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy and Economics and Personal Finance)	
Health/P.E.	1	
Career/Technical	4 (Career/Technical Education electives)	
Occupational Preparation	6 (including Occupational Preparation I, II, III, and IV, which require 150 hours of school-based training, 225 hours of community-based training, and 225 hours of paid employment*)	
Electives	0	
Other Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of IEP objectives</li> <li>• Career Portfolio</li> </ul>	
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>22</b>	

\* Paid employment is the expectation; however, when paid employment is not available, 225 hours of unpaid vocational training, unpaid internship experience, paid employment at community rehabilitation facilities, and volunteer and/or community service hours may substitute for 225 hours of paid employment.

## **ENDORSEMENTS**

### **NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA ENDORSEMENTS**

(excerpt from <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/districts-schools/high-school-graduation-requirements/high-school-diploma-endorsements>)

Students in North Carolina public schools may receive one or more endorsements on their high school diploma. These endorsements indicate that students have completed specific course concentrations preparing them to be ready for college or careers. The five endorsements are:

- Career Endorsement indicating completion of a rigorous course of study that includes a Career Technical Education concentration;
- College Endorsement indicating readiness for entry into community colleges;
- College/UNC Endorsement indicating readiness for entry into a four-year university in the University of North Carolina system;
- NC Academic Scholars Endorsement indicating that students have completed a balanced and academically rigorous high school program preparing them for post-secondary education;
- Global Languages Endorsement indicating proficiency in one or more languages in addition to English.

Individual students may qualify for and earn more than one endorsement.

## **B. HIGH SCHOOL END-OF-COURSE AND OTHER TESTING**

High school students must take all end-of-course (EOC) tests, Career and Technical Education State Assessments (CTE) State Assessments, and any other applicable exams or assessments required by the State Board of Education and pursuant to policy 3410, Testing and Assessment Program

### C. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The board adopts the following policies with regard to graduation.

#### 1. Honor Graduates

Honor graduates may be designated by principals on the basis of criteria established by the superintendent (Please refer to 3400R). A student who completes the requirements of the North Carolina Academic Scholars Program will receive recognition, including a seal affixed to his or her diploma. Recognition of honor graduates may be included in graduation programs.

#### 2. Students with Disabilities

Graduation requirements must be applied to students with disabilities to the extent required by state and federal law and State Board policy. A student enrolled in the NC Occupational Course of Study as of 2019 that has completed all academic requirements, but still lacks needed internship hours (225 hours) or paid employment hours (225 hours) to graduate with a NC High School Diploma, can exit high school with a Graduation Certificate. The student will have until December 31<sup>st</sup> in the year that they turn 21 years of age to bring documentation of needed hours (pay stubs, employer signed documentation, etc.) to the Exceptional Children's Department of Buncombe County Schools. Buncombe County Schools will issue a NC High School Diploma to the former student once all information is verified to be accurate. Submission of documentation beyond the student's 21<sup>st</sup> year of age will not be accepted.

#### 3. Children of Military Families

In order to facilitate the on-time graduation of children of military families, the board adopts the following policy provisions for students to whom the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children applies.

##### a) Waiver Requirements

Specific course work required for graduation will be waived if similar course work has been satisfactorily completed in another school system. If a waiver is not granted, school administrators shall provide the student with reasonable justification for the denial. If a waiver is not granted to a student who would qualify to graduate from the sending school, the

superintendent or designee shall provide the student with an alternative means of acquiring the required course work so that the student may graduate on time.

b) Testing Requirements for Graduation

The superintendent shall accept the following in lieu of any local testing requirements for graduation: (1) the end-of-course exams required for graduation from the sending state; (2) national norm-referenced achievement tests; or (3) alternative testing. If these alternatives are not feasible for a student who has transferred in his or her senior year, subsection c below will apply.

c) Transfers During Senior Year

If a child of a military family who has transferred at the beginning of or during his or her senior year is ineligible to graduate from the school system after all of the alternatives listed above have been considered and the student meets the graduation requirements at his or her sending school, then school officials from the school system shall collaborate with the sending school system to ensure that the student will receive a diploma from the sending Board of Education.

4. Early admission to college

Early admission to college requires that a plan be reviewed and approved by the principal prior to any arrangements with a college or university. An Early Admission to College Contract must be signed by the student; parent or legal guardian; and principal. A copy of the signed contract will be retained at the school.

Upon completion of the third year, a Buncombe County high school student who has been accepted by an accredited college (state or regional association) for study during what would have been the fourth year may, upon satisfactory completion of the first year of college, have his college credit equated with high school graduation requirements by and subject to the approval of the principal of his former high school for the purpose of obtaining a high school diploma.

Principals must advise the student that upon completion of the program, he will be allowed to participate in the high school graduation exercise; however, recognition for honors, class ranking, participation in senior activities, and all other rights and privileges will not be afforded.

Prior to graduation, all credit earned at the college or university must be reported to the high school by the college or university.

5. Early Graduation

Graduation prior to that of one's class may be permitted on the basis of criteria approved by the board upon recommendation by the superintendent.

6. Mid-year completion

Under certain circumstances, a Buncombe County high school student during the senior year of enrollment may qualify for consideration as a mid-year completer. In order to qualify, the student must have met all credits required for graduation, as outlined within Policy #3460.

A Mid-Year Completion Statement of Intent must be signed by the student; parent or legal guardian; and principal.

Students meeting the requirements of the mid-year completion will be allowed to participate in a system-wide high school graduation exercise held at mid-year. As graduates of the Buncombe County School System, mid-year completers forfeit senior student privileges relevant to second semester school sponsored activities.

Buncombe County School System is under no obligation to reschedule students beyond the initial computer placement to accommodate a request for mid-year completion.

7. Graduation Certificates

Graduation certificates will be awarded to eligible students in accordance with the standards set forth in State Board policy.

8. State Graduation Credit Requirements

Students enter 9<sup>th</sup> grade  
2009-2012= 21 Credits  
2012-Current Year = 22 Credits

The principal may exempt a student from local graduation requirements as long as the student has met all state graduation requirements. The recommendation must follow the procedures established by the Minimum Credit High School Diploma Program.

9. Alternative School Requirements

The Buncombe County Board of Education has adopted the state minimum requirements as the cumulative number required for graduation for Community High School, Buncombe County Middle College or other approved alternative programs. In addition, students must meet local and state graduation requirements.



Legal References: G.S. 115C-12(40), -47, -81.25(c), -81.45(d), -81.65, -174.11, -276, -288, -407.5; State Board of Education Policies CCRE-001, GRAD-004, GRAD-007, GRAD-008, GRAD-010, TEST-003

Cross References: Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Evaluation of Student Progress (3400R), Dual Enrollment (3101), Testing and Assessment Program (3410), Student Promotion and Accountability (policy 3420), Citizenship and Character Education (policy 3530), Children of Military Families (policy 4050)

Replaces Board Policy 610/612

#### **History of Policy 610**

Adopted: August 6, 1992

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Revised: December 9, 1993

Revised: August 4, 1994

Revised: May 4, 2000

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Revised: December 1, 2005

Revised: March 5, 2009

Revised: May 6, 2010

Revised: December 6, 2010

#### **History of Policy 612**

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