GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Policy Code: 3460

The Cleveland County Board of Education (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 career and college ready and 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 as described in Section A;
2. successful completion of cardiopulmonary resuscitation instruction; and
3. 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. School counselors shall assist students in selecting their high school courses to ensure that students are taking all of 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 course unit requirements of the Future-Ready Core Course of Study, unless they are approved for the Future-Ready Occupational Course of Study. Course unit requirements for the Future-Ready Core Course of Study differ depending on the year a student enters ninth grade for the first time. In accordance with 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 Study 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 State Board of Education requirements.

Students in middle school who earn credit for high school courses, as permitted by State Board policy, shall have those credits added to the high school record and the earned credit shall count as one of the total number of credits toward graduation requirements. High School credit earned in middle school shall not count towards the grade point average on the school record.

All awards of high school course credit must be consistent with State Board of Education requirements (State Board Policy GCS-N-004 State Graduation Requirements). Any inconsistency between Board policy and State Board graduation requirements will be
resolved by following the State Board requirements. High school graduation in Cleveland County Schools requires completion of all requirements set by the State Board of Education, plus completion of local graduation requirements adopted by the Board. Among other requirements, the Cleveland County Board of Education requires completion of twenty-eight (28) units of high school credits in order to earn a diploma. Students enrolled in certain alternative programs or students on a modified program as approved by the principal and Superintendent’s designee, may earn a diploma upon completion of twenty-two (22) high school credits and the other requirements of the particular program.

In addition to Future Ready Core diploma requirements, the UNC Board of Governors has established minimum admission requirements (MAR) for UNC system schools. These requirements include two levels of the same world language and four units of mathematics with the fourth unit being a level beyond Algebra II or its equivalent.

B. **HIGH SCHOOL FINAL EXAMS AND END-OF-COURSE TESTING**
High school students must take all end-of-course (EOC) tests, NC Final Exams, and Career and Technical Education State Assessments (CTE Post-Assessments) required by the State Board of Education.

C. **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**
The Board adopts the following policies with regard to graduation.

1. **Honor Distinctions**
   Honor distinctions may be designated by principals on the basis of criteria established by the Superintendent and Board policy. Recognition of honor distinctions 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. Students who are following the Occupational Course of Study are not required to complete a Graduation Project in order to receive a diploma.

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 Graduation
   Students who have completed state and local graduation requirements may be awarded a high school diploma and exit with an official transcript prior to the end of the senior year and after the successful completion of their junior year. Students who complete graduation requirements early may participate in graduation exercises at the end of the school year. Students who will meet all graduation requirements and wish to exit early should submit an application for early graduation to the principal at the end of the school year prior to the academic year in which the student wishes to be awarded a diploma.

5. Transfer of Credit from Other Institutions
   Any full or partial credit earned in a high school having state or regional accreditation shall be accepted toward graduation by the Cleveland County Schools. The principal shall evaluate units transferred from non-accredited institutions and determine if credit is awarded. Courses earned from a non-accredited, non-public school or home school will be recorded as “Pass” (P) or “Fail” (F). Pass or Fail grades and credits will not be included in the calculation of the student’s GPA or class rank.

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

7. Diploma Endorsements
   Students have the opportunity to earn one or more of the following diploma endorsements identifying a particular area of focused study: (1) Career Endorsement, (2) College Endorsement (two options), (3) North Carolina
Academic Scholars Endorsement, and/or (4) a Global Languages Endorsement. No endorsement is required to receive a diploma.

Legal References: G.S. 115C-12(40), -47, -81.25(c)(10)(c), -81.45(d)(1), -174.11, -276, -288, -407.5; State Board of Education Policies CCRE-001, GRAD-004, GRAD-007, GRAD-008, GRAD-010, TEST-003

Adopted: September 24, 2018

Replace: Board policy 3610, Graduation Requirements