

**Graduation Requirements**

Graduation from our public school implies (1) that students have satisfactorily completed the prescribed courses of study for the several grade levels in accordance with their respective abilities to achieve, (2) that they have satisfactorily passed any examinations and satisfactorily demonstrated the district's performance standards, assessed in part by the statewide mastery examinations, established by the faculty and approved by the Board of Education, and (3) that they have fulfilled the legally mandated number and distribution of credits. Graduation shall not be held until 180 days and 900 hours of actual school work are completed.

The Board of Education, in establishing a graduation date, may establish for any school year a firm graduation date for students in grade twelve which is no earlier than the one-hundred-eighty-fifth day in the Board's adopted school calendar. After April first in any school year the Board may establish a firm graduation date for the school year which, at the time of such establishment provides for at least 180 days of school.

The Principal shall submit to the Board of Education through the Superintendent his/her detailed requirements and standards to agree with the goals of our schools as adopted by the Board of Education. It is expected that the faculty will apply measures of achievement to provide evidence that each student has progressed far enough toward school goals to warrant graduation according to the terms of paragraph #1 above.

The Board of Education, in recognition of its responsibility for the education of all youths in the school system, including those who do not successfully complete the assessment criteria listed above, and those who drop out of school, shall make available to all the school district's youths a course of study or alternative programs for meeting standards that will enable them to acquire a high school or vocational school diploma.

The Board of Education shall award a high school diploma to any World War II veteran or veteran of the Korean Hostilities or Vietnam Era veteran requesting such diploma who left high school for military service as defined in the statutes and did not receive a diploma as a consequence of such service.

The Board of Education shall award a high school diploma to any person who (1) withdrew from high school prior to graduation to work in a job that assisted the war effort during World War II, December 7, 1941 to December 31, 1946, inclusive, (2) did not receive a diploma as a consequence of such work, and (3) has been a resident of the state for at least fifty (50) consecutive years.

The Board of Education may grant students high school credit for successful completion of coursework earned from an accredited institution of higher learning taken either during the school year or summer months.

**Graduation Requirements - continued**

Commencing with the graduating class of 2023 (beginning with the incoming class of 2019-2020) and for each graduating class thereafter, in order to graduate and be granted a diploma, students must satisfactorily complete a minimum of twenty-five (25) credits, including not fewer than (1) nine credits in the humanities, including civics and the arts; (2) nine credits in science, technology, engineering and mathematics; (3) one credit in physical education and wellness; (4) one credit in health and safety education; (5) one credit in world languages and (6) a one credit mastery-based diploma assessment.

A student shall be excused from the physical education requirement upon presentation of a certificate from a physician or advanced practice registered nurse indicating that participation in physical education is medically contradicted because of the student's physical condition. The credit for physical education may be fulfilled by an elective.

In addition, also beginning with the graduating class of 2023, the Board of Education will provide adequate student support and remedial services for students beginning in grade seven (2017-2018 school year). Such student support and remedial services shall provide alternate means for a student to complete any of the high school graduation requirements, previously listed if such student is unable to satisfactorily complete any of the required courses or exams. Such student support and remedial services shall include, but not be limited to, (1) allowing students to retake courses in summer school or through an on-line course; (2) allowing students to enroll in a class offered at a constituent unit of the state system of higher education, allowing students who received a failing score, as determined by the Commissioner of Education, on an end of the school year exam to take an alternate form of the exam; and (4) allowing those students whose individualized education plans state that such students are eligible for an alternate assessment to demonstrate competency on any of the five core courses through success on such alternate assessment.

The Board of Education shall grant a student credit towards meeting high school graduation requirements for (1) completing a world-language course provided by a non-profit organization and (2) passing a subject area proficiency test identified and approved by the Commissioner of Education. Up to four credits for a private non-profit world language course shall be granted if the student achieves a passing grade on a test prescribed by the Commissioner of Education. In other subject areas, credit shall be granted, based upon successful passage of the subject area proficiency tests prescribed or identified and approved by the Commissioner of Education,\* regardless of the number of hours spent by the student in a public school classroom learning the subject matter.

\*The Commissioner, per statute, must prescribe or identify and approve the examinations within available appropriations.

The fulfillment of the mandated one credit foreign language requirement, beginning with the class of 2023, can include the successful completion of a world language course in grades six

**Graduation Requirements - continued**

seven or eight, or an online course successfully completed, or the successful completion of a course offered privately through a nonprofit provider, provided such student achieves a passing grade on an examination prescribed by the Commissioner and such credits do not exceed four.

All credits earned toward meeting any of the graduation requirements through the successful completion of online courses must fulfill the requirements established in policy #6172.6, "Virtual/On-line Courses."

The Board shall create a student success plan for each enrolled student, beginning in grade six. Such plan shall include a students' career and academic choices in grades six to twelve, inclusive.

Per statute (C.G.S. 221a(f)) the determination of eligible credits is at the discretion of the Board of Education, provided the primary focus of the curriculum of eligible credits corresponds directly to the subject matter of the specified course requirements. The Board may permit a student to graduate during a period of expulsion if the Board determines the student has satisfactorily completed the necessary credits. The graduation requirements shall apply to any student requiring special education except when the Planning and Placement Team (PPT) determines the requirement not to be appropriate.

A credit shall consist of not less than the equivalent of a forty-minute class period for each school day of a school year except for a credit or part of a credit toward high school graduation earned (1) at an institution accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or State Board of Education or regionally accredited, (2) through on-line course work or (3) through a demonstration of mastery based on competency and performance standards, in accordance with guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education.

Only courses taken in grades nine through twelve, inclusive, and that are in accordance with the state-wide subject matter content standards, adopted by the State Board of Education shall satisfy the graduation requirements except that the Board may grant a student credit toward meeting the high school graduation requirements upon the successful demonstration of mastery of the subject matter content described in this section achieved through educational experiences and opportunities that provided flexible and multiple pathways to learning, including cross-curricular graduation requirements, career and technical education, virtual learning, work-based learning, service learning, dual enrollment and early college, course taken in middle

**Graduation Requirements - continued**

school, internships and student designed independent studies, provided such demonstration of mastery is in accordance with such state-wide content standards; toward meeting a specified course requirement upon successful completion in grade seven or eight of a course that corresponds directly to the subject matter of a specified course requirement in grades nine through twelve.

**Academic Advancement Program**

The Board of Education permits students in grades eleven and twelve to substitute (1) achievement of a passing score on an existing nationally recognized examination, approved by the State Board of Education, or series of examinations approved by the State Board of Education, (2) a cumulative grade point average determined by the State Board of Education and (3) at least three letters of recommendation from school professionals (defined in 10-66dd), for the required high school graduation requirement. The State Board of Education will issue an Academic Advancement Program Certificate to any student successfully completing such program. The Academic Advancement Program Certificate shall be considered in the same manner as a high school diploma for purposes of determining eligibility of a student for enrollment at a Connecticut public institution of higher education.

The Board of Education shall permit a student to graduate from high school upon the successful completion of the above described academic advancement program.

**Connecticut Seal of Biliteracy**

Commencing with the graduating class of 2018, and for each graduating class thereafter, the Board of Education, utilizing criteria established by the State Board of Education, may/shall affix the "Connecticut State Seal of Biliteracy" to a diploma awarded to a student who has achieved a high level of proficiency in English and one or more foreign languages. "Foreign language" means a world language other than English and includes American Sign Language and any other language spoken by a federally recognized Native American tribe. The Board of Education shall include on such student's transcript a designation that the student received the "Connecticut Seal of Biliteracy."

**Graduation Requirements - continued**

(cf. 5121 - Examination/Grading/Rating)

(cf. 6111 - School Calendar)

(cf. 6146.2 - Statewide Proficiency/Mastery Examinations)

(cf. 6172.6 - Virtual/On-line Courses)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-5 State high school diploma" "honors diploma." Payment of fees; exceptions. (as amended by PA 17-29)

10-5c Board examination series pilot program. Issuance of certificate (as amended by P.A. 13-247 and P.A. 15-215)

10-14n State-wide mastery examination. Conditions for reexamination. Limitation on use of test results. (as amended by Section 115 of PA 14-217)

10-16(l) Graduation exercises. (as amended by P.A. 96-108, An Act Concerning Student Use of Telecommunication Devices and the Establishment of Graduation Dates)

10-221a High school graduation requirements. (As amended by P.A. 00-124, An Act Concerning High School Diplomas and Veterans of World War II, P.A. 00-156, An Act Requiring A Civics Course for High School Graduation, P.A. 08-138, An Act Concerning High School Credit for Private World Language Courses and Other Subject Areas, P.A. 10-111, An Act Concerning Education Reform in Connecticut, P.A. 11-135, An Act Concerning Implementation Dates for Secondary School Reform, P.A. 13-57, An Act Concerning Honorary Diplomas for Vietnam Veterans, P.A. 13-122, An Act Concerning Minor Revisions to the Education Statutes, P.A. 13-247, Budget Implementer Bill, P.A. 15-237 An Act Concerning High

**Graduation Requirements - continued**

School Graduation and P.A. 16-4(SS), section 310), PA 17-42, An Act Concerning Revisions to the High School Graduation Requirements and PA 17-29, An Act Concerning Connecticut's Seal of Biliteracy)

10-233(a) Promotion and graduation policies. (as amended by PA 01-166)

P.A. 13-108, An Act Unleashing Innovation in Connecticut Schools.

P.A. 13-247, An Act Implementing Provisions of the State Budget.

P.A. 15-237 An Act Concerning High School Graduation

P.A. 17-42 An Act Concerning Revisions to the High School Graduation Requirements

**Policy adopted:**

# P.A. 17-42: An Act Concerning Revisions to the High School Graduation Requirements

~Page 1~

August 10, 2017

Update Mailing No. 4

This Act, amends C.G.S. 10-221a, and extends the current graduation requirements, which require that students earn at least 20 credits to graduate, for another two school years. Therefore, heightened graduation requirements that require students to earn 25 credits would take effect with the freshman class beginning in the 2019-20 school year instead of in the 2017-18 school year. The Act also makes changes to the heightened requirements established in current law and allows graduation requirements to be met through successful demonstration of subject matter content mastery achieved through educational experiences and opportunities that provide flexible and multiple pathways to learning.

The Act also does the following:

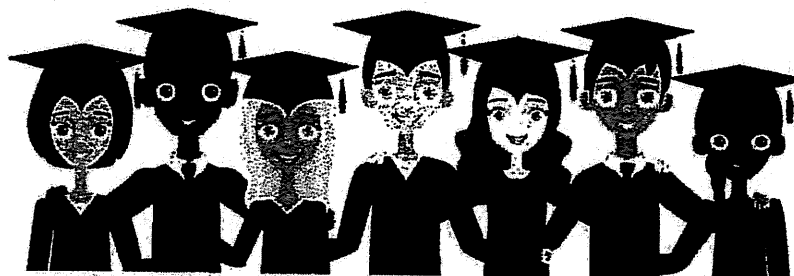
1. Postpones by two years the beginning of required remedial services for grades seven through twelve (instead beginning with classes graduating high school in 2023),
2. Specifies that high school courses must meet statewide subject matter standards to fulfill graduation requirements and allows mastery-based courses to satisfy these requirements; and
3. Requires the State Board of Education to adopt statewide subject matter content standards that are reviewed and revised at least every 10 years.

## Heightened Graduation Requirements

The Act makes the following changes to the heightened requirements established in current law:

1. increases the minimum science, technology, engineering, and mathematics credits from eight to nine;
2. reduces the minimum career and life skills credits from three-and-a-half to one;
3. reduces the minimum world language requirement from two credits to one;
4. adds a one-credit, mastery-based diploma assessment, rather than a senior demonstration project; and
5. removes end-of-year exams for certain math, history, science, and English courses.

The table below compares the heightened graduation requirements in current law set to take effect with the freshman class entering high school in 2017-18 with the heightened requirements under the Act set to take effect two years later (2019-2020).





**P.A. 17-42: An Act Concerning Revisions to the High School Graduation Requirements**

~Page 2~

**Table: Comparison of Heightened Graduation Requirements**

<i>Heightened Graduation Requirements in Current Law (CGS §10-221a)</i>	<i>Heightened Graduation Requirements under the Bill</i>
<p><b>Humanities:</b> at least nine credits, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at least four in English, including composition;</li> <li>at least three in social studies, including one in American history and at least one-half credit in civics and American government;</li> <li>at least one credit in fine arts; and</li> <li>at least one credit in an elective</li> </ul>	<p><b>Humanities:</b> nine credits, including civics and the arts</p>
<p><b>Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics:</b> at least eight credits, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at least four credits in mathematics, including algebra I, geometry, and algebra II or probability and statistics;</li> <li>at least three credits in science, including at least one credit in life science and one in physical science; and</li> <li>at least one credit in a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics elective</li> </ul>	<p><b>Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics:</b> nine credits</p>
<p><b>Career and life skills:</b> at least three-and-a-half credits, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>at least one credit in physical education; and</li> <li>at least two credits in career and life skills electives, such as career and technical education, personal finance, and public speaking</li> </ul>	<p><b>Physical education and wellness:</b> one credit <b>Health and safety education:</b> one credit</p>
<p><b>World languages:</b> at least two credits</p>	<p><b>World languages:</b> one credit</p>
<p><b>Senior demonstration project:</b> one credit</p>	<p><b>Mastery-based diploma assessment:</b> one credit</p>
<p><b>End of school year examinations in algebra I, geometry, biology, American history, and grade 10 English</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>





**P.A. 17-42: An Act Concerning Revisions to the High School  
Graduation Requirements**

~Page 3~

**Subject Matter Content Mastery**

Under the Act, students may fulfill high school graduation requirements through successful demonstration of subject matter content mastery achieved through educational experiences and opportunities that provide flexible and multiple pathways to learning. These pathways include:

1. cross-curricular graduation requirements,
2. career and technical education,
3. virtual learning,
4. work-based learning,
5. service learning,
6. dual enrollment and early college,
7. courses taken in middle school,
8. internships, and
9. student-designed independent studies.

The Act specifies that (1) a local or regional board of education determines whether to grant academic credit for demonstration of mastery through these pathways and (2) demonstration of mastery must be in accordance with statewide subject matter content standards.

The effective date of this legislation is July 1, 2017.

**Policy Implications**

Policy #6146 "Graduation Requirements" pertains to this issue. Samples have been revised to comply with the new legislation and follow for consideration. This is a recommended policy for inclusion in the district's policy manual.

The revisions to this policy also contain the changes necessitated by P.A. 17-29.

