Graduation Requirement Information

While state legislators passed Ohio’s new high school graduation law in June, they looked to the State Board of Education and Ohio Department of Education staff to create the many rules needed to guide local implementation. Since then, staff members and the board’s Graduation Requirements Committee have worked urgently to craft and adopt these many rules and policies. We understand that you, too, must feel a sense of urgency to provide details about Ohio’s new diploma requirements to staff, students and families. Thank you very much for your patience as we’ve worked thoughtfully to hammer out rules that can make implementation much easier for you.

Now, we can report a major milestone. The State Board this week approved two essential elements of the new requirements: the graduation points system and a list of tests students can take in lieu of Ohio’s tests. Here is a summary of the State Board’s major decisions, the steps still needed to finalize the requirements and some items you can expect to be resolved in the coming months.

**New Decisions**

**Graduation points**

As one of the three pathways to a diploma, students can accumulate their scores from end-of-course exams. The higher a student scores on any end-of-course exam, the more graduation points he or she earns:

  Advanced Level = 5 points

  Accelerated Level = 4 points

  Proficient Level = 3 points

  Basic Level = 2 points

  Limited Level = 1 point

If a student reaches 18 graduation points overall, he or she becomes eligible for a diploma.

Of these overall points, a student must earn at least four points between the math exams, four points between the English exams, and six points between the science and social studies exams.

**Substitute exams**

Students in certain courses can take a substitute exam, such as an Advanced Placement (AP) exam, instead of the state’s end-of-course exam. The State Board-approved AP exams may be substitute tests for the following courses:

Physical Science:

  AP Physics 1: Algebra-Based

  AP Physics 2: Algebra-Based

American History:

  AP United States History

American Government:

  AP United States Government and Policy

**Retaking exams**

A student who scores below Proficient on any end-of-course exam may retake the exam after receiving extra help from the school. A student scoring Proficient or higher can retake an exam only if he or she has taken all seven end-of-course exams and still is below the minimum point requirements. Any student who *automatically* earned three graduation points from a course can retake the exam for a higher score.

**Highest score counts**

The highest score a student gets on a test will count. For example, if a student retakes an end-of-course exam, or if he or she takes the college admissions test before or after it is offered by the state, the student’s highest recorded score will count.

**Transfer students**

Districts will scale down the graduation points requirements for students who arrive at a school with credit for some, but not all, tested courses. However, these students still must earn at least five points between the English II and either the Geometry or Integrated Math II exams.

Students who transfer having taken all of the tested courses will take only the college admissions test (see below for more information on this test). If the student does not reach the score needed for graduation, the student must take the English II and Integrated Math II exams and earn five points between them.

**Major Steps Forward**

**Phase-in exemption and automatic points**

If a student earned high school credit for a tested course before July 1, 2014, the student automatically earns three graduation points. Students who earn credit for a first semester block course in American history, American government or physical science before January 31, 2015, will also automatically earn three graduation points. If a student receives automatic points, he or she does not have to take the exam, unless that student chooses to take it. The exemption for block schedule students is part of a rule that will be finalized in December 2014.

**Industry credentials**
The State Board approved the criteria for the industry credentials a student may use to help qualify for a diploma.

All credentials must be tied to jobs that are in-demand, either statewide or locally. A student can use any credential for graduation that appears on the list during the student’s junior year, even if that credential comes off the list during the senior year. A student may always use new credentials added to the list after his or her junior year. The department will release the first approved credentials list in December 2014.

**Future Work**

**College admissions test**

Reaching a remediation-free score on the approved college admissions test (like the SAT or ACT) is one of the pathways to a diploma. The State Board will select a college admissions test in the spring of 2015 to be given to the class of 2018 in the fall of their junior year (2016).

**Job skills test**

Earning an approved industry credential and achieving a workforce readiness score on a corresponding job skills test, such as the WorkKeys assessment, is one of the pathways to a diploma. The State Board will approve a job skills test in December 2014.

**Substitute exams**

The State Board will consider more AP exams, International Baccalaureate exams and dual enrollment course exams in the coming months. The department will release the score crosswalk for assigning graduation points for these exams early spring 2016, when all the state and substitute assessment results from 2014-2015 are reported and compared.

The department will continue to provide updates on any new developments. For a comprehensive look at the new graduation requirements, please visit [education.ohio.gov](http://education.ohio.gov/). If you have any questions, please send them togradrequirements@education.ohio.gov.

