



# Graduation Requirements AR

## **Purpose**

This Administrative Regulation specifies the high school programs of study that shall be offered by the City Schools of Decatur Board of Education and lists specific courses that meet core, required, or elective credits for students.

The Graduation Requirements AR for City Schools of Decatur is informed by State Board of Education (SBOE) Rule 160-4-2-.48.

## **Definitions**

1. Carnegie unit - one unit of credit awarded for a minimum of 135 clock hours of instruction.
2. Carnegie unit, summer school - one unit of credit awarded for a minimum of 120 clock hours of instruction.
3. Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) Pathways – Three elective units in a coherent sequence that includes rigorous content aligned with industry-related standards leading to college and work readiness in a focused area of student interest.
4. Core Courses - courses identified as “c” or “r” in SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.20 List of State-Funded K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses.
5. Dual Enrollment - a program in which a student enrolls as a part-time or full-time postsecondary student and concurrently earns Carnegie units of credit to meet the requirements for graduation and post-secondary credit hours (SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.34).
6. Elective Courses – any courses identified as “e” in SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.20 List of State-Funded K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses that a student may select beyond the core requirements to fulfill the unit requirements for graduation.
7. Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA) -- an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards. The GAA is a portfolio assessment designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) whose IEP team has determined they are unable to reasonably participate in the regular assessment program. The purpose of the GAA is to ensure all students, including students with significant cognitive disabilities, are provided access to the state curriculum and given the opportunity to demonstrate progress toward achievement of the state standards.
8. Gifted Education Elective Courses - A gifted-identified student may earn elective credit through Directed Study and Mentorship/Internship with the approval of the DHS Gifted Specialist and the CSD District Gifted & Talented Coordinator.
9. Joint enrollment - a program in which a high school student enrolls as a part-time or full-time



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postsecondary student at a Georgia post-secondary school that is not a part of Dual Enrollment program and concurrently meet the requirements for graduation and earn post-secondary credit hours.

10. Program of study - courses needed to complete requirements for a College Preparatory diploma.
11. Required courses - specific courses identified as “r” in SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.20 List of State-Funded K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses that each student in a program of study shall pass to graduate from high school.
12. Seal of endorsement - a seal/stamp approved by the Georgia Department of Education and affixed to high school diplomas by local school system staff for students who have satisfied specified requirements.
13. Secondary School Credentials - documents awarded to students at the completion of the high school experience.
  - a. High School Diploma Credential - the document awarded to students certifying that they have satisfied attendance requirements, unit requirements, and the state assessment requirements as referenced in SBOE Rule 160-3-1-.07 Testing Programs - Student Assessment.
  - b. High School Certificate of Attendance - the document awarded to pupils who do not complete all of the criteria for a diploma or who have not passed the state assessment requirements as referenced in SBOE Rule 160-3-1-07 Testing Programs – Student Assessment, but who have earned 25 units of credit.

## **Graduation Requirements**

A student shall meet the graduation requirements in effect at the time of enrollment in the ninth grade regardless of changes in requirements affecting subsequent classes.

City Schools of Decatur Board of Education shall require that students who enroll from another state meet the graduation requirements for the graduating class they enter and the state assessment requirements determined by State Board of Education rules.

Students shall meet state assessment requirements as referenced in SBOE Rule 160-3-1-.07 (Testing Programs - Student Assessment) to be eligible for a diploma.

The high school shall make available to all students the programs of study for the required High School Diploma.

Except for Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education; Physical Education; and Fine Arts, a course shall count only once for satisfying any Carnegie unit requirement for graduation. The



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same course cannot be used to satisfy a Carnegie unit requirement in more than one core area of study unless specified in SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.15. See the following charts.

For students entering the 9th Grade in 2015-2016 and beyond:

| Subject   | Units    | Courses   |
|---|----------|---|
| <b>English/Language Arts</b>  | <b>4</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 unit Ninth Grade Literature/Composition</li><li>• 1 unit American Literature/Composition</li><li>• 2 units English/Language Arts Core, including AP/IB courses</li></ul>  |
| <b>Mathematics</b>  | <b>4</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 unit of Algebra 1 or equivalent</li><li>• 1 unit of Geometry or equivalent</li><li>• 1 unit of Algebra 2 or equivalent</li><li>• 1 additional unit of mathematics beyond Algebra 2, including AP/IB Courses</li></ul>         |
| <b>Science</b>  | <b>4</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1 unit Physical Science or Physics 1</li><li>• 1 unit Chemistry, Earth Systems, Environmental Science or an AP/IB course</li><li>• 1 unit Biology 1</li><li>• 1 additional unit Science Core, including AP/IB Courses</li></ul> |
| <b>Social Studies</b>   | <b>4</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 0.5 unit American Government &amp; Civics</li><li>• 0.5 unit Economics</li><li>• 1 unit World History</li><li>• 1 unit US History</li><li>• 1 additional unit Social Studies Core, including AP/IB Courses</li></ul>            |
| <b>World Language</b>   | <b>2</b> | 2 units of the same world language or American Sign Language  |
| <b>Career, Technical and Agricultural Education , Fine Arts, or Additional World Language</b> | <b>3</b> | Any approved courses in these areas   |
| <b>Physical Education and Health</b>  | <b>1</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 0.5 unit Personal Fitness</li><li>• 0.5 unit Health</li></ul>   |



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|---|-----------|---|
| <b>Personal Project (10<sup>th</sup>)/<br/>Capstone Project<br/>(Senior Project, IB<br/>Diploma project, IB<br/>Career project)</b> |           | <p><b>Under extenuating circumstances, the Principal may waive the Personal Project or Senior Project requirement.</b></p> <p><b>Students enrolling into DHS after October 1st of their 10th grade year are exempt from the Personal Project requirement.</b></p> <p><b>Students enrolling in DHS after 1st semester of their 12th grade year are exempt from the Senior Project requirement.</b></p> |
| <b>Electives</b>  | <b>3</b>  |   |
| <b>Total number of<br/>required units</b>   | <b>25</b> |   |

### Special Education Considerations

The total number of required units of credit for the State of Georgia cannot be waived. Students with disabilities also complete the Senior Capstone Project (a condition of graduation in CSD), receiving the necessary accommodations and modifications per their IEP.

#### Special Education Math Rubric:

Local boards of education shall award units of math credit only for courses that include concepts and skills based on the state-adopted curriculum for grades 9-12 approved by the State Board of Education. Students with disabilities with an IEP, who were identified prior to enrollment in high school and have a disability affecting mathematics achievement, may follow an alternate course sequence to meet the mathematics course requirements of SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.48. Alternate course sequences would allow a student with disabilities with an IEP earning core credit in Coordinate Algebra or Algebra I AND Analytic Geometry or Geometry with two other mathematics courses to satisfy the minimum mathematics requirements for high school graduation. This decision may impact University System of Georgia or other 4-year post-secondary institution options. If the assurance statement in the IEP of the student is checked “Yes” by the student’s IEP team, then the student is NOT eligible to follow an alternate course sequence to meet the mathematics course requirements of SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.48.

#### Special Education Credit Waiver:

For students whose rights have transferred to them and/or for parents/guardians of students with IEPs who wish to waive CSD’s graduation requirements that exceed Georgia’s graduation requirements (SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.48), parents/guardians must contact their IEP team and submit a request to waive specific CSD graduation requirements that are beyond Georgia’s graduation requirements. The IEP team must then convene to discuss the student’s progress towards the graduation requirements and determine next steps. This credit waiver may impact University System of Georgia or other 4-year post-secondary institution options.



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### Students with significant cognitive disabilities:

Students with significant cognitive disabilities are students with significant intellectual disabilities or intellectual disabilities concurrent with motor, sensory or emotional/behavioral disabilities who require substantial adaptations and support to access the general curriculum and require additional instruction focused on relevant life skills and participate in the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA). Students with significant cognitive disabilities may graduate and receive a general high school diploma when the student's IEP team determines that the student has:

- (I) completed an integrated curriculum based on the state-mandated standards that includes instruction in Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science and Social Studies as well as career preparation, self-determination, independent living and personal care to equal a minimum of 25 units of instruction (**unless otherwise determined by the IEP team**),
- (II) participated in the GAA during middle school and high school, and
- (III) reached the 22nd birthday OR has transitioned to an employment/education/training setting in which the supports needed are provided by an entity other than the local school system.

### **Exceptions**

#### World Language (Other than English)

Students whose native language is not English receive an exemption from the requirement by demonstrating proficiency in the native language pursuant to SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.48. Students who receive exemptions from this requirement shall substitute core courses for the two required modern language units. Students using this world language exemption to meet graduation requirements will have limited University System of Georgia or other 4-year post-secondary institution options.

Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), upon determination from the IEP Team, may apply for a waiver to meet specific CSD graduation requirements that are beyond Georgia's graduation requirements (see Special Education Considerations above). Completing two years of a language other than English is an admissions requirement for entrance into a University System of Georgia four-year college or university and should be considered by the SST, 504, or IEP team as this determination is considered.

### **Promotion**

Six (6) credits must be earned each year to get promoted (must include 1.0 credit of each Math, Science, ELA, and Social Studies). Students enrolled in 10<sup>th</sup> grade at Decatur High School must achieve success on the Personal Project to be promoted to the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. Students must



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successfully complete a Senior Capstone Project in order to graduate.

Students shall be promoted at the end of second semester or summer session of each year. Students shall not be promoted midyear. With the approval of the principal, a student may be moved from 11th to 12th grade at the end of 1st semester if the student can graduate during the same academic year.

### **Awarding Credits**

A student must earn a grade of 3 or higher to receive credit for a course toward fulfilling graduation requirements.

Carnegie unit credit for graduation shall be awarded only for courses that include concepts and skills based on the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) and Georgia Performance Standards in content areas where applicable (GPS). Courses offered in the high school that shall earn Carnegie unit credit in English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, health/physical education, world languages, fine arts, special education, and technology/career education are listed in the most current version of GaDOE's List of State Funded K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses (Reference: SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.20).

Carnegie units of credit for graduation shall be awarded to high school students participating in dual enrollment or postsecondary options (SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.34).

#### **Credits are awarded as follows:**

Students who enroll in the ninth grade and meet attendance requirements (compulsory attendance for students ages 7-16 for 180 days each school year except when legally excused) earn unit credit in grades 9 through 12 as specified in the Graduation Requirements Administrative Regulation and take all required state assessments.

Units for graduation shall be awarded only for courses approved by the Georgia Department of Education for grades 9 through 12.

Except for Career, Technical, and Agricultural Education; Physical Education; and Fine Arts, a course shall count only once for satisfying any Carnegie unit requirement for graduation. The same course cannot be used to satisfy a Carnegie unit requirement in more than one core area of study unless specified in SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.15.

A Carnegie unit of credit for graduation shall be awarded only to students in grades 9-12 for successful completion of courses of study based on the required hours of instruction provided during the regular school year or in summer school.



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Unit credit shall be awarded to students participating in dual enrollment programs based on the requirements in SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.34 Dual and Joint Enrollment Programs.

Unit credit shall be awarded to students who pass courses in the Georgia Virtual School based on the requirements of SBOE Rule 160-8-1-.01. Online courses delivered by other providers must meet regional standards of accreditation, align with the state curriculum standards and meet the minimum clock hour requirements listed above.

Students shall meet the graduation requirements in effect at the time of their enrollment in the 9th grade, regardless of changes in requirements affecting subsequent classes.

Students transferring from other Georgia schools, home study programs, or other states or countries shall meet the graduation requirements that apply to the cohort of students in the grade in which they enroll. The transcripts of transfer students for whom it is not possible to meet the City Schools of Decatur graduation requirements by the end of the senior year shall be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

For students who officially withdraw from school and re-enroll in school at a later date, the graduation requirements for their original 9th grade cohort apply.

Students are prohibited from substituting and exempting courses except when in accordance with SBOE Rule 160-5-1-.15 (Awarding Units of Credit and Acceptance of Transfer Credit and/or Grades).

The unit(s) earned in middle school shall be posted on the high school transcript as a “P” for passing and shall be counted as elective units, but grades for these courses shall not be used to calculate grade-point averages for purposes of class rank or HOPE scholarship eligibility. This includes transfer credits.

On a case-by-case basis, the principal or designee may decide to award core credit for 8th grade transfer courses if the City Schools of Decatur or State graduation requirements may not be met without inclusion of the middle school units.

Awarding credit for McKinney-Vento students:

- Allows for students to be issued partial credit with administrator approval if they leave prior to the completion of the school year when the regular credit would normally be issued
- Allows for school stakeholder teams including administrators, administrative designees, curriculum coordinators, MTSS/RTI staff, and alternative education staff to review



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student transcripts to determine credit that may be issued based on proficiency and attendance

- Allows for students to be provided with credit recovery option

### Testing Out for credit

A student may be awarded credit or test-out for up to 3 units of credit by demonstrating subject area competency with a Distinguished Learner level of performance. A student may test-out of any course that has an associated EOC but may not be awarded more than 3 units of credit by demonstrating subject area competency.

Students must meet the following eligibility requirements to exercise this option:

- A. Not currently or previously enrolled in the course;
- B. Have earned a grade of B or better in the most recent course that is the same content area of the course for which the student is attempting the EOC;
- C. Received a teacher recommendation from the teacher of the most recent course in the same content area (or, if not available, a teacher in the same content area with knowledge of the student's academic achievement) for which the student is attempting the EOC; and
- D. Received parent/guardian permission if the student is less than 18 years of age.

To Note:

1. Students are allowed only one opportunity per course to demonstrate subject area competency with a Distinguished Learner level of performance;
2. Students must take the EOC during the appropriate state-approved testing window for administering the EOC test (testing will take place during EOC Mid-Month windows and during the annual Summer Main Administration.);
3. Students who do not reach the performance level of Distinguished when attempting to test-out must enroll in and complete the associated course and retake the EOC test even if the students make a passing grade on the EOC test during the testing-out attempt, if the course is required for graduation;
4. Units of credit earned under this testing-out option will be counted toward fulfillment of students' requirements for a subject area course, toward fulfillment requirement as to course sequences, and towards meeting graduation requirements;
5. Families may be required to pay the \$50 fee per test associated with this test-out option;
6. If a student is scheduled into the next level course, they are no longer eligible for EOC Exemption. Example: If a student is taking AP Physics, they may not test out of Physical Science.





## **Transferring Credits**

Schools shall accept student course credit earned in an accredited public or private school. These schools shall have been accredited at the time the credit was earned. Specific courses shall be determined to meet core curriculum requirements by evaluating course content. This evaluation shall be done by a school administrator or counselor. Information about course content may be obtained from students, parents, and/or former schools. Credit will be granted when, in the judgment of the evaluator, the course substantially meets the requirements.

Students entering the City Schools of Decatur from non-public or non-accredited educational institutions usually have attended either a non-accredited private school, non-accredited public school, or a home study program. This section of the Administrative Regulation (AR) also explains how previous credit and grades for such transfer students may be determined, as well as how to handle students enrolling from accredited situations. This section of the AR applies to the acceptance or rejection of credit from foreign schools where records cannot be attained or verified.

To determine the number of credits needed to graduate for any high school student transferring into the City Schools of Decatur from a school that does not provide an opportunity to earn at least 7 credits per year, the school counselor will subtract from elective requirements reducing total credits needed to graduate to not go lower than the number of credits required to graduate by the state.

Students who transfer from another school system which allows credits to count toward graduation may use the credits to exempt specific course requirements if the principal or designee determines the City Schools of Decatur graduation requirements may not be met without inclusion of the credits.

The unit(s) earned in middle school shall be posted on the high school transcript as a “P” for passing and shall be counted as elective units, but grades for these courses shall not be used to calculate grade-point averages for purposes of class rank or HOPE scholarship eligibility. This includes transfer credits.

### **Regionally Accredited Public or Private Schools**

Any high school student requesting admission into the City Schools of Decatur from a regionally accredited public school or private school will transfer credits as recorded on the transcript from the issuing school. The number grade for such transfer courses will be converted to a letter grade using the City Schools of Decatur’s conversion chart unless the previous system utilized a letter grading system that is the same as the City Schools of Decatur. Transfer elective course titles, when necessary, will be changed to broad categorical titles such as physical education, business education, and career/technical education. High school students who transfer from



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accredited schools must also pass all of the accountability assessments required by the State of Georgia and City Schools of Decatur Board of Education graduation requirements before a diploma will be issued.

### **Home Study Programs and Non-Accredited Situations**

Any student requesting admission into Decatur High School from a home study program must have their parent or guardian provide proof at the time of registration to the District Registrar that all eight requirements for operating a home study program specified in Georgia Code 20-2-690 have been met. Subject and grade transfer must meet the district's requirement for instructional contact hours for the regular academic year. The student will be tentatively scheduled in classes, pending verification, as indicated by records furnished to the school by the parent or guardian.

The maximum number of units accepted from non-accredited institutions and home study program is ten (10), two (2) per subject area. No more than seven (7) units or eight (8) from a block schedule can be applied for or awarded from any non-accredited situation in any single academic year. Home study credit may not be applied for or awarded for summer school work. School district personnel will administer standardized and/or instructional placement tests in the areas of language arts, science, social studies, mathematics, and foreign language. Georgia Department of Education policy requires that a student transferring from a home study program or non-accredited institution and requesting credit for an EOCT course must take and pass the EOC with a minimum of 70 grade conversion score to receive credit for the course. Students are allowed one testing opportunity to achieve this score. Students that do not achieve this minimum score must take course and the EOC.

Students from nonaccredited schools, home study programs, and non-traditional educational centers will receive probationary course placement based on the student's records in prior school(s), home study programs, or non-traditional educational centers. Student progress will be monitored for satisfactory performance for at least one grading period.

Non-academic course credit may be accepted from a non-accredited institution or home school, provided the student passes a performance test, a portfolio review, and/or interview by school district personnel. Testing for academic and non-academic course credit will be content specific and will include, but not be limited to course objectives as defined by the State of Georgia's official curriculum and standards.

If the student passes the required tests to determine the acceptance of credit, the school will also accept the grades listed on the records provided by the parent or guardian for those



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specific courses tested.

Students who have been enrolled in a home study program or other non-accredited situation must pass all accountability assessments required by the State of Georgia and City Schools of Decatur Board of Education graduation requirements before a diploma will be issued.

A student who has been enrolled in a home study program or any other non-accredited situation shall be informed by the school's counseling office at the time of application to the public school that their participation in class is on a credit basis. Auditing of classes is not permitted in the City Schools of Decatur except as determined by State policy related to currently enrolled English Language Learners. A student enrolling in Decatur High School for the first time during a grading period shall be responsible for the content and objectives for the total grading period's work and major grade-bearing activities for the class. Teachers shall be responsible for informing students of their obligation for grade-bearing activities, but teachers shall not be responsible for re-teaching information to students on content that was presented prior to the time of enrollment in school. School district personnel will assess with the student and parents school work done in the non-accredited situation prior to enrollment or re-enrollment.

If a parent or legal guardian disagrees with credit accepted or denied by the school for a student from a non-accredited situation or home school, an appeal may be made to the principal of the school. If still dissatisfied, they may appeal to the Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction. The appeal should contain all pertinent information, documentation, transcripts, attendance record, and reasons for the appeal. The decision of the Executive Director of Curriculum & Instruction is final.

Schools shall not substitute courses and exempt students from the required secondary minimum core curriculum unless the student transferred from an accredited secondary school or the courses presented for credit meet criteria identified in these procedures.

### **Recovering Credits**

Any high school student who has failed to pass and earn credit in an English, Math, Science, or Social Studies course, will be given an opportunity to recover the credit in summer school or during the following school year. The course failure will remain on the transcript. The recovered course credit will be added to the transcript as a separate course entry.



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Questions about this regulation should be directed to the Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

**Related Board Policy:** 1.2

**Approved by Cabinet:** 16 September 2019