



# Graduation Requirements AR

## Purpose

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

The Graduation Requirements AR for City Schools of Decatur (CSD) is informed by State Board of Education (SBOE) Rules 160-5-1-.15 and 160-4-2-.48.

## Definitions

1. Alternate Diploma – the document awarded to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who were assessed using the alternate assessment aligned to alternate academic achievement standards. While this diploma is standards based and aligned with the state requirements for the regular high school diploma, it is not a regular high school diploma. Therefore, an alternate diploma does not terminate Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Refer to definition 8 below regarding the alternate assessment.
2. Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) Pathways – three or four specialized courses developed to provide students rigorous core elements, performance standards, and skills necessary after high school graduation to go straight into the workforce or choose college/university, or the military for additional training.
3. Core Courses – courses identified as “c” or “r” in Rule 160-4-2-.20 List of State-Funded K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses.
4. Dual Enrollment – a program in which a student enrolls as a part-time or full-time postsecondary student and concurrently earns units of credit to meet the requirements for graduation and post-secondary credit hours (SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.34).
5. 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.
6. EOC – End of Course
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



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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. Program of study – courses needed to complete requirements for a College Preparatory diploma.
10. 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.
11. 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 – 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.
12. Special Education Diploma – the document awarded to students with disabilities assigned to a special education program who have not met the state assessment requirements referenced in State Rule 160-3-1-.07 Testing Programs - Student Assessment or who have not completed all of the requirements for a high school diploma but who have nevertheless completed their IEP.
13. Significant Cognitive Disabilities – 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).
14. Unit of Credit – evidence of course completion as demonstrated by a final course grade of C or better; or competency-based course credit as demonstrated by a predefined score on state-adopted or approved assessment instruments.



## **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 prior or subsequent classes.

Students who enroll from another state must 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 unit requirement for graduation. The same course cannot be used to satisfy a 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:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Courses</b>
<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/DE/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/DE/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/DE/IB courses</li><li>• 1 unit Biology 1</li><li>• 1 additional unit Science Core, including AP/DE/IB courses</li></ul>



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<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/DE/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 or <u>Personal Fitness Waiver</u></li> <li>• 0.5 unit Health</li> </ul>
<b>Personal Project (10<sup>th</sup>)/ Capstone Project (Senior Project, IB Diploma project, IB Career project)</b>		<p><i>Under extenuating circumstances, the Principal may waive the Personal Project or Senior Project requirement.</i></p> <p><i>Students enrolling into DHS after October 1st of their 10th grade year are exempt from the Personal Project requirement.</i></p> <p><i>Students enrolling in DHS after November 1st of their 12th grade year are exempt from the Senior Project requirement.</i></p>
<b>Electives</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>Total number of required units</b>	<b>25</b>	

Students may fulfill the required credits through dual enrollment options A or B by attending approved postsecondary institutions, including technical colleges, in accordance with SBOE rules 20-2-149.2, 160-4-2-.34 and 20-2-161.3

### Cohort Chart

High school students progress with their cohort regardless of the number of credits earned each year. Advisement courses will be reflective of the students cohort. Specific supports will be in place to monitor students who are off track for graduation to remediate and support them back to a path of timely graduation with their 9th grade cohort.

***Example for a student entering 9th grade in the 2020-2021 school year.***



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<i>School Year</i>	<i>Grade Level</i>	<i>Graduation Cohort</i>
<b>2020 - 2021</b>	<b>9th</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>2021 - 2022</b>	<b>10th</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>2022 - 2023</b>	<b>11th</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>2023 - 2024</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>2024</b>

### Special Education Considerations

The total number of required units of credit for the State of Georgia cannot be waived. Students with disabilities can complete the Senior Capstone Project (a condition of graduation in CSD), receiving the necessary accommodations and modifications per their IEP. Students with IEPs who are not taking the Georgia Alternate Assessment follow the CSD general education graduation requirements unless they are eligible for a change under the Special Education Math Rubric or CSD Special Education Credit Waiver.

#### Special Education Math Rubric:

CSD can 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 (SBOE). Students with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) who were identified as eligible for special education services 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 an IEP to earn 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. NOTE: This decision may impact the University System of Georgia or other 4-year post-secondary institution options for the student. 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



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graduation requirements. The IEP team must then convene to discuss the student's progress towards the graduation requirements and determine next steps. NOTE: This credit waiver may impact the University System of Georgia or other 4-year post-secondary institution options for the student.

### Students with significant cognitive disabilities:

**Students who entered 9th grade prior to fall 2020 and are students with significant cognitive disabilities** assessed on the Georgia Alternate Assessment may graduate and receive a *regular* high school diploma when the student's IEP team determines that the student has:

- 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*),
- participated in the GAA during middle school (8th grade) and high school, and
- reached the 22nd birthday or has transitioned to an employment/education/training setting in which the support needed is provided by an entity other than the school system.

**Students who enter 9th grade fall of 2020 or later and are students with significant cognitive disabilities** assessed on the Georgia Alternate Assessment may graduate and receive an *Alternate Diploma* as defined by the GaDOE when the student's IEP team determines that the student has:

- 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*),
- participated in the GAA during middle school (8th grade) and high school, and
- reached the 22nd birthday or has transitioned to an employment/education/training setting in which the support needed is provided by an entity other than the 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 four-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.

## **Credits**

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

CSD Grading Scale:

CSD Grade	Letter Grade
7	A+
6	A
5	B+
4	B
3	C
2	F
1	F

Units of 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



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Standards in content areas where applicable (GPS). High School courses offered that shall earn a unit of 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).

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

### Awarding Credit

Credits are awarded as follows:

- Students who meet attendance and course requirements (compulsory attendance for students ages 7-16 for 180 days each school year except when legally excused) and meet state assessment requirements earn units of credit in high school courses.
- Units of credit for graduation shall be awarded only for high school courses approved by the Georgia Department of Education.
- Units of credit for graduation shall be awarded to students or successful completion of courses of study based on instruction provided during the regular school year or in summer school.
- Units of credit shall be awarded to students participating in dual enrollment programs based on the requirements in SBOE Rule 160-4-2-.34.
- Units of 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 and align with the state curriculum standards.
- Students shall meet the graduation requirements in effect at the time of their enrollment in the 9th grade, regardless of changes in requirements affecting prior or 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) of credit earned in middle school shall be posted on the high school transcript as a numerical grade and shall be counted as elective credit. Parents/Guardians will





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have the opportunity to request the course(s) count as high school core credit in the subject area taken. Grades for these courses shall not be used to calculate grade-point averages for high school purposes including for HOPE scholarship eligibility in accordance with Georgia Student Finance Commission rules. For transfer students, middle school credit will remain as indicated on the official transcript from the previous school.

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 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 on the State of Georgia End of Course Assessment.

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

- Not currently or previously enrolled in the course;
- 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;
- 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
- Received parent/guardian permission if the student is less than 18 years of age.

To Note:

- Students are allowed only one opportunity per course to demonstrate subject area competency with a Distinguished Learner level of performance;
- 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.);
- Students who do not reach the performance level of Distinguished when attempting to



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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;

- 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;
- Families may be required to pay the \$50 fee per test associated with this test-out option;
- 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 Credit

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 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.



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### 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. Transfer elective course titles, when necessary, will be changed to broad categorical titles such as physical education, business education, and career/technical education. The number grade for such transfer courses will be converted to a letter grade using the grade conversion chart unless the previous system used a letter grading system that is the same as the City Schools of Decatur.

### Grade Conversion Chart

Number on Transcript	CSD	A-F Scale on DHS Transcript
97-100	7	A+
90-96	6	A
85-89	5	B+
80-84	4	B
70-79	3	C
65-69	2	F
60-64	1	F

Grade on Incoming Transcript	CSD Grade
A+	7
A/A-	6
B+	5
B/B-	4
C (of any kind)	3
D (of any kind)	3
F	2
F	1

### 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 earning course credit. The student will be tentatively scheduled in classes, pending verification, as indicated by records furnished to the school by the parent or guardian.



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The maximum number of units accepted from non-accredited institutions and home study programs 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 may 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 EOC course must take and pass the associated EOC examination 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 the course and the EOC examination.

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 specific courses tested.

Students who have been enrolled in a home study program or other non-accredited program 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 program 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



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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 input from 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.

### **Early Graduation**

City Schools of Decatur recognizes that our students may pursue a variety of paths to college and career. On rare occasions, this may include students completing their high school requirements in less than four years. This requires advanced planning and communication with the counseling office. This link will allow you to view the [DHS Early Graduation Process and Request Form](#)

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*

*Revision Public Comment Window: January 2021*

*Revision Approved by Cabinet:*