

The board recognizes the importance of setting rigorous graduation requirements in order to help ensure that students are receiving an education that will prepare them to be productive members of society.

In order to graduate from high school, students must meet the following requirements:

1. successful completion of all accountability standards for high school set out by the State Board of Education in policy GCS-N-003 and the local Board of Education, Student Accountability Standards, that are applicable for the year in which the student entered ninth grade for the first time and/or the student's course of study;
2. successful completion of 20 course credits (21 for students entering ninth grade on or after the 2009-10 school year, 22 for students in the Occupational Course of Study) in the chosen course of study and all other course requirements mandated by the State Board of Education; and
3. successful completion of all additional courses and other requirements mandated by the local board of education.

The principal shall ensure that students and parents are aware of all graduation requirements. Counseling program staff 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-graduate 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 for graduation. The principal shall consider the requirements of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children (G.S. 115C-407.5) and the requirements of subsection D.3 of this policy in determining the graduation requirements for children of military families.

**A. COURSE UNITS REQUIRED**

All students must meet the following course requirements for the specific course of study chosen by the student. Beginning with students entering the ninth grade in the 2009-10 school year, students must fulfill the requirements of the Future Ready Core Course of Study, unless they are approved for the Occupational Course of Study. Students entering the ninth grade before the 2009-10 school year must fulfill the requirements of the Career Prep, College Tech Prep, College/University Prep or Occupational Course of Study.

## 1. Future Ready Core Course of Study Credits Required

<b>Courses Required</b>	<b>State Requirements</b>	<b>Local Requirements</b>
English	4 sequential (English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	4 (either Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II and a fourth math course aligned with the student's post-high school plans OR Integrated Math I, II, and III and a fourth math course aligned with the student's post-high school plans) (A principal may exempt a student from this math sequence. The student will be required to pass either (1) Algebra I and either Algebra II or Geometry or (2) Integrated Math I and II. The student must also pass either Alternative Math I and II or two other application-based math courses.)*	
Science	3 (a physical science course, Biology, and earth/environmental science)	
Social Studies	3 (Civics & Economics, U.S. History and World History)	
Health/P.E.	1	
Electives	6 electives must be any combination of Career and Technical Education, Arts Education or Second Language; 4 must be from one of the following: Career and Technical Education, R.O.T.C., Arts Education or any other subject area or cross-disciplinary courses. A four-course concentration is recommended.)** need to add 7 additional elective credits	7
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>28</b>

\* Students seeking to complete minimum application requirements for UNC universities must complete four mathematic courses, including a fourth math course with Algebra II as a prerequisite.

\*\* Students seeking to complete minimum application requirements for UNC universities must complete two years of a second language.

## 2. Career Prep Course of Study Credits Required

Courses Required	State Requirements	Local Requirements
English	4 (including English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	3 (including Algebra I)	
Science	3 (including a physical science course, Biology, and earth/environmental science)	
Social Studies	3 (including Civics & Economics, U.S. History and World History)	
Health/P.E.	1	
Career/Technical	4 (courses appropriate for career pathway, including a second-level (advanced) course, or courses for an arts education pathway or for R.O.T.C.***)	
Foreign Language	0	
Electives	2 (arts recommended but not required)	8
Other Requirements		
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>

\*\*\*Four R.O.T.C. credits may be used.

## 3. College Tech Prep Course of Study Credits Required

Courses Required	State Requirement	Local Requirements
English	4 (including English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	3**** (including either Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II; Algebra I and Technical Math I & II; or Integrated Mathematics I, II, and III)	
Science	3 (including a physical science course, Biology, and earth/environmental science)	
Social Studies	3 (including Civics & Economics, U.S. History and World History)	
Health/P.E.	1	
Career/Technical	4 (courses appropriate for career pathway including a second-level (advanced) course)	
Foreign Language	0****	
Electives	2 (arts recommended but not required)	8
Other Requirements		
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>

\*\*\*\* A student pursuing this course of study may meet the requirements of a College/University Prep Course of Study by completing 2 credits in the same foreign language and one additional unit of math for which Algebra II is a prerequisite.

## 4. College/University Prep Course of Study Credits Required

Courses Required	State Requirements	Local Requirements
English	4 (including English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	4 (including either Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II and a higher course for which Algebra II is a prerequisite; or Integrated Mathematics I, II, and III and one course beyond Integrated Math III)	
Science	3 (including a physical science, Biology, and earth/environmental science)	
Social Studies	3 (including Civics & Economics, U.S. History and World History)	
Health/P.E.	1	
Foreign Language	2 (in the same language)	
Electives	3 (arts recommended but not required)	8
Other Requirements		
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>28</b>

## 5. Occupational Course of Study Credits Required (only available to certain students with disabilities who have an IEP)

Courses Required	State Requirements	Local Requirements
English	4 (including Occupational English I, II, III, and IV)	
Mathematics	3 (including Occupational Mathematics I, II, and III)	
Science	2 (including Life Skills Science I, II)	
Social Studies	2 (including Government/U.S. History and self-advocacy/problem solving)	
Health/P.E.	1	
Career/Technical	4 (vocational education electives)	
Foreign Language	0	
Occupational Preparation	6 (including Occupational Preparation I, II, III and IV, which requires 300 hours of school-based training, 240 hours of community-based training and 360 hours of paid employment)	
Electives	0	6
Other Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completion of IEP objectives</li> <li>• Career Portfolio required</li> </ul>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>28</b>

**B. HIGH SCHOOL EXIT STANDARDS**

1. Students, who (1) entered the ninth grade in the 2006-07 through 2008-09 school years and follow the Career Prep Course of Study, College Tech Prep Course of Study or College/University Prep Course of Study; or (2) entered ninth grade in the 2009-10 year or beyond and follow the Future Ready Core Course of Study, must score at Level III or above on all of the following end-of-course (EOC) tests:

Algebra I; Biology; English I; Civics and Economics; and U.S. History. Students who do not score at Level III or above on the first administration of EOC tests must be retested in accordance with State Board policy. The superintendent shall develop procedures, in accordance with State Board policy, for reviewing promotion requests for students who do not score at Level III or above on the retest.

The EOC test results will count as 25 percent of a student's final grade in each high school course for which an EOC test is available.

2. A student following the Occupational Course of Study, regardless of the year he or she entered ninth grade, must complete rigorous exit standards as outlined in State Board Policy GCS-N-004.

### **C. ADDITIONAL LOCAL REQUIREMENTS**

The board may require that students successfully complete additional graduation requirements, such as a high school graduation project or a community service project like that mentioned in policy 3530, Citizenship and Character Education. Students will be notified of any requirement no later than the beginning of their junior year.

### **D. Courses Taken in Middle School for High School Credit**

Courses taken in middle school for high school credit will fulfill graduation requirements, but will not count towards units of credit or count in the GPA. These courses include English I, Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Integrated Math I and II, Biology, Earth Science, Physical Science, Civics and Economics, US History, World Studies and first and second year of a second language.

### **E. SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

The board adopts the following policies with regard to graduation.

1. Honor Graduates

Honor graduates may be designated by principals on the basis of criteria established by the superintendent. A student who completes the requirements of the North Carolina Academic Scholars Program will receive recognition, including a seal affixed to his or her diploma. Recognition of honor graduates may be included in graduation programs.

2. Students with Disabilities

Accountability standards and graduation requirements must be applied to students with disabilities to the extent required by state and federal law and State Board policy.

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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 covered by the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children.

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 coursework so that graduation may occur on time.

b. Testing Requirements for Graduation

The superintendent shall accept the following in lieu of tests required for graduation in North Carolina: (1) exit or 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 transferring in his or her senior year, subsection c below will apply.

c. Transfers During Senior Year

If a child of a military family transferring 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 and the sending school system shall collaborate to ensure that the student will receive a diploma from the sending board of education.

4. Early Graduation Students may graduate early if they have satisfied all requirements for 4 years.

For those who would benefit from early graduation, the following requirements and procedures are established. The candidate must have satisfied all of the requirements of a four-year graduate and qualified by virtue of extenuating circumstances or special goals as approved by the superintendent or designee.

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5. Exception to Graduation Requirements for Highly At-Risk Students

As set forth above, in order to graduate from Carteret County's public high schools, students are required to pass 28 credit hours of coursework during their 8 semesters in high school. These graduation requirements exceed the State of North Carolina requirements, which provide that high school students must pass 21 credit hours in certain core courses. The board imposes these additional credit hour requirements in order to better prepare students for careers and higher education in today's challenging, competitive world.

Unfortunately, not all students meet these graduation requirements, and every year, a small percentage of students drop out of high school. For a very limited number of students, practical difficulties and hardships make it highly probable that they will not be able to achieve the required 28 credit hours, despite considerable and persistent efforts to do so. Such students encounter, due to circumstances beyond their control, a multitude of risk factors in their lives that make it practically impossible to meet all of the board's graduation requirements; however, such students may be able to achieve the 21 core credit hours required by the State of North Carolina, if they remain in school for a full 8 semesters. In order to provide an incentive for such highly-at-risk students to remain in high school, the board authorizes the superintendent, by administrative regulation, to establish a program to identify these students and give them the opportunity to graduate with a regular diploma if they are able to stay in high school for at least 8 semesters and pass the minimum 21 core credit hours required by the State of North Carolina.

The superintendent shall create a list of at-risk factors that are typically beyond the control of students and shall implement procedures for identifying and qualifying students for this limited program. In order to qualify, students must experience multiple at-risk factors and must demonstrate a willingness to exert persistent and significant effort to achieve the state-required core credits. To qualify, there must be clear and convincing evidence that the student will not be able to achieve 28 credit hours after 8 semesters, but that the student has achieved, or will likely be able to achieve, the 21 core credit hours. If such students are identified and accepted into this program, they will be given the opportunity to graduate with a regular diploma after a minimum of 8 semesters of high school if they complete, at a minimum, all of the State core curriculum graduation requirements.

The purpose of this program is to provide an incentive for highly at-risk students to remain in school and continue to exert themselves to pass their coursework in the face of an unusual combination of circumstances that place these students at a substantial risk of dropping out due to circumstances beyond their control. This policy is intended to be used under extremely limited circumstances and only for students who are identified and selected through the specific review process to be developed and implemented by the superintendent.

6. Graduation Certificates

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

Legal References: G.S. 115C-47, -81, -174.11, -276, -288, -407.5; State Board of Education Policies GCS-C-003, GCS-C-031, GCS-N series

Cross References: Goals and Objectives of the Educational Program (policy 3000), Student Promotion and Accountability (policy 3420), Citizenship and Character Education (policy 3530), Children of Military Families (policy 4050)

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