

High School Graduation History

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National Origins

Committee of Ten (National Education Association of the United States Committee on Secondary School Studies), 1892-94

- Recommended elementary school of 8 years, high school of 4 years (college degree 4 years).
- Same course of studies for all: "...every subject which is taught at all in a [secondary school](#) should be taught in the same way and to the same extent to every [pupil](#) so long as he pursues it, no matter what the probable destination of the pupil may be, or at what point his education is to cease."
- "College Prep" focus for students.
- Standardized high school curriculum AND teacher training.

National Origins

Carnegie Unit, Early 1900's

- Concept: 1 hour of study per day, five days per week, 24 weeks per year. Practically: 1 “class” per day for the school year or equivalent.
- Enforcement: colleges participating in Carnegie Foundation pension system must require this system.
- Standardized system for industrial age.
- Both secondary and postsecondary education adopted system that accountably for learning is based primarily on TIME.

National Origins

High school framework driven by college preparation

- In 1900, less than 10% of the 17-year-old population completed high school.
- By 1940, about 5% of the U.S. and Kansas population had completed a four-year college degree.
- Today approximately 90% of population has completed high school, approximately 33% have four-year degree; approximately 26% have postsecondary education but less than four-year degrees, including technical certificates, two-year degrees or some college credit with no degree.

Kansas: Earliest national report on state high school units required

	1980				
Total Units	17				

1983 “Nation At Risk” report recommendations

	1980	Nation At Risk			
Total Units	17				
English		4			
Social Studies		3			
Math		3			
Science		3			
Computer Science		0.5			
Foreign Language		2 if college-bound			

Kansas:1993 Requirements (Digest of Education Statistics)

	1980	Nation At Risk	1993		
Total Units	17		21		
English		4	4		
Social Studies		3	3		
Math		3	2		
Science		3	2		
P.E./Health			1		
Electives			9		
Computer Science		0.5			
Foreign Language		2 if college-bound			

Kansas: 2013 Requirements (Digest of Education Statistics)

	1980	Nation At Risk	1993	2013	
Total Units	17		21	21	
English		4	4	4	
Social Studies		3	3	3	
Math		3	2	3	
Science		3	2	3	
P.E./Health			1	1	
Fine Arts					
Electives			9	7	
Computer Science		0.5			
Foreign Language		2 if college-bound			

Kansas: Current High School Graduation Requirements

	1980	Nation At Risk	1993	2013	Current
Total Units	17		21	21	21
English		4	4	4	4
Social Studies		3	3	3	3
Math		3	2	3	3
Science		3	2	3	3
P.E./Health			1	1	1
Fine Arts					1
Electives			9	7	6
Computer Science		0.5			
Foreign Language		2 if college-bound			

Kansas: University Admissions

- Until 1990's all state universities were "open admissions" – only required high school diploma.
- Legislature adopted policy that students must qualify based on test scores, class rank or completing college preparation curriculum, with exception "windows."
- Applied only to state universities, not community colleges or private colleges.
- Modified this year to be based on test score or grade point average; college prep curriculum recommended by not required.

Kansas: Time and Funding

- Since 1993, Kansas requires minimum school term of 186 days or 1,116 hours (186 x 6).
- Since 1993, Kansas school funding has been based on the number of students, and on the hours enrolled on Sept. 20.
- Exception: two-year block grant system.
- As a result, students who graduate one year early or spend less than 6 hours per day in class result in less funding for school district.
- Legislature adopted new funding restrictions on remote learning this session.

Final thoughts

- Current system based on "college prep" model a century ago when only small percentage of students attended high school and fewer attended college.
- Over past 50 years, more requirements (time, subjects) have been added.
- Has it worked? High school and college attainment has steadily increased, as has the economic value of more education.
- But diploma alone does not mean college readiness; many students do not take college prep courses and require remediation; many who start postsecondary education do not finish; shortage of higher skill workers in many cases.
- State Board data says most Kansans and employers are more concerned about young people lacking skills NOT part of required Carnegie units.
- So: What does a high school diploma really mean and how it is really used?



Graduation Task Force Meeting – June 2021



Dr. Randy Watson, Kansas Commissioner of Education

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

Establishment of a Graduation Requirement Task Force



Purpose is to examine graduation requirements in Kansas from at least three different lenses:

- Additional courses or deletion of courses required for graduation (if any).
- Examination of competencies and multiple ways to show mastery of skills which allow students to move at their own pace and time.
- Examination of any additional requirements in addition to the high school diploma (Market Value Assets, Diploma Plus, etc.)

KAR 91-31-35 Kansas State Minimum Graduation Requirements



- (a) Each local board of education shall adopt a written policy specifying that pupils are eligible for graduation only upon completion of at least the following requirements:
 - (1) Four units of English language arts, which shall include reading, writing, literature, communication, and grammar. The building administrator may waive up to one unit of this requirement if the administrator determines that a pupil can profit more by taking another subject.
 - (2) three units of history and government, which shall include world history; United States history; United States government, including the Constitution of the United States; concepts of economics and geography; and, except as otherwise provided in S.B.R. 91-31-32, a course of instruction in Kansas history and government.

KAR 91-31-35 Kansas State Minimum Graduation Requirements



- (3) three units of science, which shall include physical, biological, and earth and space science concepts and which shall include at least one unit as a laboratory course.
- (4) three units of mathematics, including algebraic and geometric concepts.
- (5) one unit of physical education, which shall include health and which may include safety, first aid, or physiology. This requirement shall be waived if the school district is provided with either of the following:
 - (A) A statement by a licensed physician that a pupil is mentally or physically incapable of participating in a regular or modified physical education program; or
 - (B) a statement, signed by a lawful custodian of the pupil, indicating that the requirement is contrary to the religious teachings of the pupil.

KAR 91-31-35 Kansas State Minimum Graduation Requirements



(6) one unit of fine arts, which may include art, music, dance, theatre, forensics, and other similar studies selected by a local board of education.

(7) six units of elective courses

(b) A minimum of 21 units of credit shall be required for graduation.

KAR 91-31-35 Kansas State Minimum Graduation Requirements



(c) Any local board of education may increase the number of units of credit required for graduation. Any additional requirements of the local board of education that increase the number of units of credit required for graduation shall apply to those students who will enter the ninth grade in the school year following the effective date of the additional requirement.

(d) Unless more stringent requirements are specified by existing local policy, the graduation requirements established by this regulation shall apply to those students who enter the ninth grade in the school year following the effective date of this regulation and to each subsequent class of students.

K.A.R. 91-31-31(p) – Definition of Unit



- “unit of credit” is “a measure of credit that may be awarded to a student for satisfactory completion of a particular course or subject.
- A full unit of credit is credit that is awarded for completion of a course or subject that is offered for and generally requires 120 clock hours to complete. Credit may be awarded in increments passed upon the amount of time a course or subject is offered and generally requires to complete.
- Individual students may be awarded credit upon demonstrated knowledge of the content of a course or subject, regardless of the amount of time spent by the student in the course or subject.”



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KANSAS STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION www.ksde.org

High School Graduation Requirements



National Perspective

STATE LIAISON

Joel Moore

STATE RELATIONS STRATEGIST

Education Commission of the States





SPEAKER



Bryan Kelley

POLICY RESEARCHER

Education Commission of the States



Agenda

- National Landscape of Graduation Requirements
- COVID-19 Disruptions and Waivers
- Recent Trends

Large Range of Differences Across the States

A stylized, light brown icon of a school building with a central arched entrance and several rectangular windows, positioned behind the main title text.

- Units Required
- State Specified Minimums
- Non-course Requirements
- Alternate Diploma Types

Units

- Large range of total units required for a diploma, from 13 to 24.

UNITS REQUIRED:
13

Alaska



- 4 English Credits
- 3 Math Credits
- 3 Social Studies Credits
- 2 Science Credits
- 1 P.E. and Health Credit

UNITS REQUIRED:
24

D.C.



- 4 English Units
- 4 Math Units
- 3 Social Studies Units
- 4 Science Units
- 1.5 P.E. and Health Units
- 1 Arts Unit
- 2 Foreign Language Units
- 3.5 Elective Units

State Specified Minimums

A stylized, light purple icon of a school building with a central archway and several windows, positioned behind the main title text.

- 48 states and D.C. have minimum statewide high school graduation requirements.
- **Massachusetts** and **Pennsylvania** are the exceptions, and largely defer to local districts.

Non-course Requirements

- 17 states specify non-course requirements as a condition of graduation in state policy.

NON-COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Florida



- Florida requires a minimum 2.0 GPA (on 4.0 scale) for high school graduation.

NON-COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Idaho



- By the end of grade 11, complete a college entrance exam (including SAT or ACT).
- By the end of grade 12, complete a senior project with a written report and oral presentation.

Alternate Diploma Types

A stylized purple building icon with a central archway and several square windows, positioned behind the title text.

- At least 18 states offer some sort of alternate diploma type.

ALTERNATE GRADUATION PATHWAYS

Mississippi



- Traditional Diploma (24 Credit Minimum)
 - Can take additional course to add endorsement:
 - Academic
 - Distinguished Academic
 - Career and Technical Education
 - Seal of Biliteracy


ALTERNATE GRADUATION PATHWAYS

Louisiana



- University Diploma
 - 24 Specified Units
- Career Diploma
 - 14 Specified Units, AND:
 - Includes 9 required courses in: “Jump Start” course sequence, workplace experiences and approved credentials.
 - A minimum of one industry-based credential is required for graduation.
- Both diploma types require FAFSA completion.

COVID-19 Alterations and Waivers



- Waiving non-course graduation requirements.
- Waiving, delaying, or providing flexibility for course or year assessments.
- Authorizing local authorities to determine if students are academically prepared for graduation.

WAIVING NON-COURSE REQUIREMENTS

D.C.



- Extended a waiver of the volunteer community service graduation requirement.

ALTERING ASSESSMENTS

Pennsylvania



- Delayed administration of Keystone Exams, authorized replacements.

LOCAL DECISION

Ohio



- Allows principals, in consultation with teachers and counselors, to grant diplomas for those on track.

Recent Trends

- At least 29 graduation requirement bills have been enacted across 18 states between 2019 and 2021.
- Trends have emerged in:
 - Civics/naturalization tests.
 - CS/STEM credit substitutions.
 - New graduation pathways.
 - Financial literacy/FAFSA requirements.

CIVICS & NATURALIZATION TESTS

Oklahoma



- HB 2030 (2021) created a Naturalization Test graduation requirement.

COMPUTER SCIENCE & STEM CREDIT SUBSTITUTIONS

Alabama



- HB 216 (2019) allows the use of computer science course as the equivalent of a math course or science course graduation requirement.
- Also allowed to satisfy the math or science freshman admission requirement for Alabama public higher education.

NEW GRADUATION PATHWAYS

Washington



- HB 1599 (2019) created, beginning with the class of 2020, a requirement to follow one of eight graduation pathways.
- Pathways meant to “provide a meaningful high school diploma...tailored to the goals of the student.”
- Pathways include: ASVAB, CTE course sequence, college admission exam scores, dual credit courses (including AP/IB), statewide assessment scores.

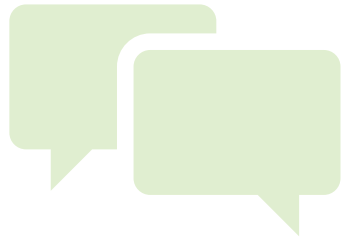
FINANCIAL LITERACY
CREDIT/FAFSA
COMPLETION

Arizona



- SB 1184 (2019) created a requirement for at least .5 course credit in economics.
 - Course must include financial literacy and personal financial management.

QUESTIONS?



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