

**POLICY REGARDING THE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION FROM THE  
BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*ORDERED*, that the School Committee hereby approves the attached Policy Regarding Graduation Requirements in the Boston Public Schools:

This policy, as well as Superintendents' Circulars authorized hereunder, will assist school leaders, administrators, teachers, and staff in carrying out their obligations with respect to ensuring students equitable access to rigorous coursework across the district.

On roll call, the Order was approved by the following vote:

YEAS –  
NAYS –  
ABSENT –

Attest:

Elizabeth A. Sullivan  
Executive Secretary

## POLICY REGARDING GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS IN THE BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Every student - regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, citizenship status, socioeconomic status, or zip code - deserves an excellent, culturally and linguistically relevant education and opportunities that help them achieve their full potential. BPS serves highly talented students who are impacted by social, systemic and social barriers, and racism in and outside of school. Nearly 30,000 BPS students (more than 50% of our student population) have specific needs as English Learners and/or students with disabilities, and/or experience economic disadvantage. Black and Latinx students comprise 76% of BPS enrollment. Historically, Black and Latinx boys, English Learners, and students with disabilities have been excluded from access to more rigorous coursework and inclusive general education settings at disproportionate rates.

Eliminating opportunity and achievement gaps, and affirming our students' infinite capacity to realize their hopes and dreams is central to the district's mission of ensuring that every child in every classroom in every school gets what they need. We will take bold, deliberate, and explicit action to eliminate opportunity and achievement gaps for our most vulnerable students.

Maintaining policies that propel students toward College, Career and Life Readiness and ensure that graduation requirements are uniform, transparent, rigorous, and consistent in the district and that ensure the ability of our stakeholders to trust the district's commitment to equity is pivotal to this responsibility. This policy affirms the district's commitment to providing a rigorous and equitable learning environment for all students, in particular at the secondary level, regardless of the school in which they are enrolled, and governs district-wide graduation requirements for all Boston Public School students.

The Boston Public Schools will at all times maintain Superintendent's Circulars that: (1) outline procedures for maintenance of systems to ensure that courses are rigorous and aligned to DESE standards; (2) explain the specific procedures for schools to obtain rigorous course waivers; (3) outline the specific forms, checklists, approvals and flexibilities allowable; (4) processes for evidencing completion of graduation requirements.

**Separately, as a companion to this policy, the district will develop and maintain detailed implementation processes in the form of Superintendent Circulars ensuring:**

- (1) school budgets and probable organizational processes are amended in order for the policy to be enacted;
- (2) schools meet key milestones toward implementation;
- (3) accountability to the School Committee and the community is made transparent;

- (4) multilingual and English Language Learner students can be credited for their previously acquired linguistic assets;
- (5) transcripting processes credit students for previously completed courses (including internationally);
- (6) definitions of processes for pathways to graduation for students eligible for the MCAS-Alt;
- (7) articulations of rigorous course waiver procedures to benefit students dually enrolled in higher education institutions, work and learn programs, or other accelerated pathways, including Chapter 74 career and technical education programs;
- (8) process for identifying middle-grade courses that are aligned to MassCore rigor and ensure students are appropriately credited for successful completion of those courses;
- (9) articulate the process and criteria for aligning course approval with DESE standards and requirements;
- (10) articulate and maintain processes for ensuring all students have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of content in order;
- (11) articulate a process to designate students with demonstrated fluency and literacy in language(s) other than English as meeting the MassCore recommendations;
- (12) articulate a process to ensure students can be awarded credit for demonstrated mastery of content, despite not having acquired “seat time” in a required course;
- (13) articulate a process for students enrolled in a state-approved Career and Technical Education program of studies to have the option of opting out of World Language and Art and still fulfill MassCore.

### Adoption of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s Recommended Course of Study as Boston Public Schools’ Graduation Requirement

The School Committee of the Boston Public Schools has a responsibility to create policies and practices that support the preparation of every student to be college, career and life ready and remove barriers that interfere with students graduating from BPS ready to succeed in the next stage of their lives. Accordingly, it is imperative that we adopt standards aligned graduation requirements across the district that will promote and ensure rigor and excellence in our schools, resulting in the elimination of opportunity and achievement gaps and ensuring that every student graduates prepared for life after high school. In addition, we must create consistent graduation requirements so that families and students have a clear understanding of what courses need to be completed in order for a student to receive a BPS diploma.

### MassCore Requirements

BPS will adopt the MassCore Recommended Course of Study as its Graduation Requirement for all students in the district. Specifically, the following credits, in various content categories are required for graduation from the Boston Public Schools.

The below figure visually represents the course requirements for graduation.

<i>Column 1</i>	<i>Column 2</i>	<i>Column 3</i>
Content Category	Units	Courses
English Language Arts	4	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
Mathematics	4	1. Algebra II -OR- Integrated Math (Algebra) 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____  <i>Students may also choose a MassCore aligned Computer Science course</i>
Laboratory-based Science	3	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____  <i>Students may also choose MassCore aligned STEM or Computer Science course, including AP CS</i>
History and Social Studies	3	1. World History 2. US History 3. Ethnic Studies (African American, Latinx, Asian-Pacific Islander, Native American Studies)
World Language	2	1. _____ 2. _____  <i>Both units are of the same language.</i>
Physical Education	1	Students will have one quarter course (or its equivalent) of PE per year or an equivalent.
Arts	1	Students will have one quarter course (or its equivalent) of Arts per year or a cumulative equivalent.
Core Electives	5	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____  Includes Career, Technical Education courses

Definitions

Units and “Seat Time”

A unit represents a full academic year of study or its equivalent in a subject that covers all the standards contained in a specific Curriculum Framework, but it does not mean that students must “be seated” in a class for specific number of hours to receive credit for the course; rather,

students demonstrate mastery of the knowledge and skills represented by a unit of instruction. Students may also earn credit for “testing out of,” recovering, or accelerating a course, as outlined in Superintendent Circulars.

### Competency-based Courses

Competency-based courses, in which students advance and earn credit upon demonstrated mastery, are eligible for consideration as MassCore credit eligible. This is inclusive of courses and mastery accumulated through dual enrollment.

### State Graduation Requirements

This policy does not and will not replace the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s graduation requirements. The state high school graduation requirements include aspects of U.S. history and civics, physical education, and earning a “competency determination” [passing scores on the Grade 10 English language arts and mathematics and high school level science and technology/engineering Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests]. For students who do not pass an MCAS test, educators develop an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP) for the subject(s). Students need to meet course requirements for their EPP in addition to meeting MassCore requirements.

### Physical Education

MassCore reflects the legal requirement that physical education be taught as a required subject in all grades. Students can meet the requirement through an organized program of instructional physical activity, including but not limited to: participation in interscholastic athletics, skating, hockey, dance, yoga, martial arts, capoeira, or swimming and any physical activity through school based or community programs, or independent study.

### Career and Technical Education

Students enrolled in a DESE approved Chapter 74 program can fulfill MassCore requirements without fulfilling arts and world language requirements. Arts and world language requirements may be waived yet students are strongly encouraged to take these courses.

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