A. Policy Purpose

To ensure the promotion and graduation of students are in accordance with criteria issued by the Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) and the Board of Education of Frederick County (Board) policy as set forth below.

B. Definitions

1. "High School Equivalency Test" is defined to mean an examination program authorized by the Maryland Department of Labor and the Maryland State Board of Education as a method for earning a high school diploma.

2. "Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program" or "MCAP" is defined to mean state-mandated assessments, that are aligned with and measure a student's skills and knowledge as set forth in the Maryland Standards for subjects identified in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR).

C. Policy Statement

The mission of a high school in the Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) system is to challenge and support all students regardless of race, ethnicity, language, gender and citizenship status to grow intellectually, personally, and socially so that each and every student is prepared for lifelong learning experiences, post high school education, and employment.

D. Implementation

1. **Graduation Requirements – 25 credits**
   a. **State Requirements – Students Entering Ninth (9th) Grade 2020-2021 or Sooner.** To be awarded a diploma, a student shall be enrolled in a Maryland public school system and shall have earned a minimum of twenty-one (21) credits that include the following specified credits:

Subject	Credits
English	4
Science	3 Lab based; must include Biology
Mathematics	3*
Social Studies	3 (Government, United States History & World History)
Fine Arts	1
Technology Education	1

Physical Education	½
Health	½
Advanced Technology ***OR*** World Language ***OR*** State-Approved CTE program	2**
Electives	3**
State Credit Requirements	**21**
Additional Local Requirements[1]	
Math	1 additional math course beyond the state minimum of 3
Electives	3 student selected career pathway electives
Total Local Additions	**4 credits**

* 1 must be Algebra & 1 must be Geometry; Mathematics is required for every year of attendance, up to 4 years.
** These 5 credits must include ½ credit for Personal Financial Literacy for students entering 9th grade for the first time during or after the 2012-2013 school year.

b. **State Requirements – Students Entering Ninth (9th) Grade 2021-2022 or Later.** A student shall be enrolled in a public school system and shall have earned a minimum of twenty-two (22) credits that include the following specified credits:

Subject	Credits
English	4
Science	3 Maryland State Science Standards aligned lab courses; must include Biology
Mathematics	4*
Social Studies	3 Government, United States History & World History
Fine Arts	1
Computer Science, Engineering or Technology Education	1
Physical Education	½

[1] Graduation requirements that are in addition to high school graduation requirements established by the State Board for a student in foster care or who is a homeless youth shall be waived if that student transfers into FCPS from a different local school system in the state in grade 11 or grade 12. Such waiver may not occur if the principal makes a determination that the student is reasonably able to complete graduation requirements in time to graduate from high school.

A student who enters a local school system during their senior year shall be granted a waiver from locally established graduation requirements unless the student chooses to fulfill the requirements.

Health	1
World Language (all credits in the same language) ***OR*** State-Approved CTE program	2
Electives**	2-½***
State Credit Requirements	**22**
Additional Local Requirements[2]	
Electives	3 (student selected career pathway electives)
Total Local Additions	**3 credits**

* 1 must be Algebra & 1 must be Geometry; Mathematics is required for every year of attendance, up to 4 years.
** These 2-½ credits must include ½ credit for Personal Financial Literacy through enrollment in applicable courses listed in the High School Course guide.
*** Up to 2 Electives credits may be satisfied by CTE program credits.

c. **State Assessment Requirements**
   i. Students meet the state assessment requirement as set forth in COMAR 13A.03.02.06 by completing courses identified in FCPS Regulation 416-03, *Grading and Reporting, Secondary* (formerly 416-01).
   ii. A student may meet the mandated assessment requirements in the following ways:
      1. By taking the requisite assessment aligned with the Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program and meeting end-of-course requirements;
      2. By meeting requirements for a substitute test;
      3. By receiving an exemption through award of course credit for a transfer student;
      4. By receiving a waiver from requirements as an out-of-state/private school second semester senior transfer; or
      5. By receiving a waiver of graduation requirements by the local superintendent.

d. **Total Requirements for Graduation from FCPS.** The total minimum number of credits required to graduate is twenty-five (25) credits.

e. **Completion of the Following Additional Programs**[3]
   i. Student Service Learning.
   ii. Environmental Literacy.

f. **Alternatives to High School Enrollment.** Students shall satisfactorily complete four years of approved high school study unless an alternative to the four-year enrollment requirement is satisfied in accordance with COMAR 13A.03.02.10 or COMAR 13A.03.02.11 and FCPS Regulation 400-34, *Alternatives to Four-Year High School Enrollment*.

g. **High School Diploma by Examination (*i.e.*, GED®)**
   i. With the exception of paragraph D(1)(g)(ii) below, an individual may obtain a high school diploma by examination if the individual:
      1. Has not obtained a high school diploma;

[2] Id. footnote 1.
[3] The curricular objectives identified in paragraphs D(1)(e)(i) and (ii) are embedded within the Frederick County Public Schools curriculum and may not represent specific courses.

2. Resides in the State of Maryland;
3. Is not subject to compulsory school attendance under Maryland law; and
4. Has withdrawn from a regular full-time public or private school program.

ii. An individual is not subject to the requirements of paragraph D(1)(g)(i) above if the individual participates in a GED® Option Program administered by the Maryland State Department of Education by examination for currently enrolled high school English learner students under the age of 21 years who have experienced interrupted education and have a lower level of English proficiency than their peers.

2. **Early Completion of State Requirements Graduation**
   a. Early graduation means the completion of all requirements for a Maryland high school diploma in less than the regular four-year senior high school program.
   b. Increasingly diverse learning opportunities for high school students now make it possible for some students to complete graduation requirements in less than four years.
      i. Both educational and personal considerations suggest that most students should remain in the public schools through twelfth grade. However, alternative plans may be approved including a waiver of the fourth year enrollment requirement if all credits, assessments, and student service requirements are met and the superintendent or designee determines the waiver is in the best interest of the student. A variety of factors will be considered when making determinations to allow a student to waive the fourth year including, but not limited to career skills, academic performance, and post-graduation plans.

3. **Commencement Exercises.** The Board acknowledges that commencement represents a ceremony of celebration and student participation is deemed a privilege and not a right. It is the expectation that schools conduct commencement ceremonies in accordance with budget allocations as determined by the Department of System Accountability and School Administration.

4. **Graduation Honors and Awards.** High schools recognize exemplary academic achievement using the designations of Honors, High Honors, and Highest Honors. Additionally, students who have met the necessary *Maryland Business Roundtable for Education* requirements will receive a Maryland Scholar designation.

5. **Annual Review.** The Board will annually review this Policy and staff will provide notification to the community of graduation requirements.

E. Related Information

1. **Board Policy**
   a. Policy 444, *Educational Equity and Excellence*
   (https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/444)
   b. Policy 511, *Assessments*
   (https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/511)

2. **Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)**
   a. COMAR 09.37.01, *Alternate Ways to Earn a High School Diploma* (https://fcps-md.info/COMAR_09-37-01)
   b. COMAR 13A.03.02, *Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland* (https://fcps-md.info/COMAR_13A-03-02)
   c. COMAR 13A.05.07, *Programs for Multilingual Learners* (https://fcps-md.info/COMAR_13A-05-07)

3. **External Resources**
   a. Maryland Student Records Systems Manual (2020) (https://fcps-md.info/MD_Student_Records_System_Manual)

4. **FCPS Regulations**
   a. Regulation 400-10, *Commencement Procedures and Ceremonies* (https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/400-10)
   b. Regulation 400-27, *Graduation Honors and Awards* (https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/400-27)
   c. Regulation 400-34, *Alternatives to Four-Year High School Enrollment* (https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/400-34)
   d. Regulation 400-94, *College and Career Readiness and College Completion* (https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/400-94)
   e. Regulation 444-01, *Educational Equity and Excellence* (https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/444-01)
   f. Regulation 416-03, *Grading and Reporting, Secondary* (formerly 416-01) (https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/416-03)
   g. Regulation 416-05, *Academic Support, Intervention, and Promotion* (formerly 500-10) (https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/416-05)
   h. Regulation 430-03, *Students Experiencing Homelessness* (https://apps.fcps.org/legal/documents/430-03)

5. **Maryland Statutes**
   a. Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 7-205 (https://fcps-md.info/MD_Educ_Code_7-205)
   b. Md. Code Ann., Educ. § 7-205.1 (https://fcps-md.info/MD_Educ_Code_7-205-1)
   c. Md. Code Ann., Labor & Emply. § 11-808 (https://fcps-md.info/MD_Labor_Emply_Code_11-808)

F. Policy History (Maintained by Legal Services)

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