

<b>POLICY</b>	<b>BOARD OF EDUCATION OF FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND</b>
<b>GRADUATION</b> <b>405.1 Graduation Requirements – 25 Credits</b> <b>405.2 Early Completion of State Requirements for Graduation</b> <b>405.3 Commencement Exercises</b> <b>405.4 Graduation Honors and Awards</b> <b>405.5 Annual Review</b>	<b>POLICY 405</b>

**Purpose:** To assure 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.

**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.

**Definitions:** GED® is defined as “General Equivalency Diploma” and used interchangeably with high school diploma by examination.

“HSA” means the high school assessments in science and government aligned with Maryland Standards.

"Maryland Comprehensive Assessments" means the HSA or other assessments in algebra, science, English, and government developed or adopted by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), including those assessments formerly known as the Maryland High School Assessments, that are aligned with and measure a student's skills and knowledge as set forth in the Maryland Standards for those subjects. (See COMAR 13A.03.02.02)

**405.1 Graduation Requirements – 25 credits**

A. State Requirements

1. To be awarded a diploma, a student who entered the 9<sup>th</sup> grade class in the 2020-2021 school year or earlier shall be enrolled in a Maryland public school system and shall have earned a minimum of 21 credits that include the following specified credits:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Credits</b>
▪ English	4
▪ Science	3 (laboratory based; must include Biology)
▪ Mathematics	3* (1 must be Algebra & 1 must be Geometry) * Mathematics is required for every year of attendance, up to 4 years
▪ Social Studies	3 (Government, United States History & World History)
▪ Fine Arts	1
▪ Technology Education	1
▪ Physical Education	1/2
▪ Health	1/2
▪ Advanced Technology <b>OR</b> World Language <b>OR</b> State-Approved CTE program	2**
▪ Electives	<u>3</u> **
	** These 5 credits must include 1/2 credit for Personal Financial Literacy for students entering 9 <sup>th</sup> grade for the first time during or after the 2012-2013 school year.
<b>State Credit Requirements</b>	<b>21</b>

Additional Local Requirements <sup>1</sup>

▪ Mathematics	1 (1 add'l elective beyond the state minimum of 3)
▪ Electives	<u>3</u> (student selected career pathway electives)
<b>Total Local Additions</b>	<b>4 credits</b>

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

2. Beginning with students entering the 9<sup>th</sup> grade class in the 2021-2022 school year, to be awarded a diploma, a student shall be enrolled in a public school system and shall have earned a minimum of 22 credits that include the following specified credits:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Credits</b>
▪ English	4
▪ Science	3 (laboratory based; must include Biology)
▪ Mathematics	4* (1 must be Algebra & 1 must be Geometry) * Mathematics is required for every year of attendance, up to 4 years
▪ Social Studies	3 (Government, United States History & World History)
▪ Fine Arts	1
▪ Computer Science, Engineering or Technology Education	1
▪ Physical Education	½
▪ Health	1
▪ World Language <b>OR</b> State-Approved CTE program	2**
▪ Electives	2.5**
	** These 5 4.5 credits must include ½ credit for Personal Financial Literacy for students entering 9 <sup>th</sup> grade for the first time during or after the 2012-2013 school year.
<b>State Credit Requirements</b>	<b>22</b>
Additional Local Requirements <sup>2</sup>	
▪ Electives	<u>3</u> (student selected career pathway electives)
<b>Total Local Additions</b>	<b>3 credits</b>

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<sup>2</sup> Id. footnote 2

B. State Assessment Requirements (review)

Students take Maryland High School Assessments (MHSA) if the student received credit for taking any of the following courses aligned with the Maryland High School Assessment. (See COMAR 13A.03.02.06)

To be awarded a Maryland High School Diploma, a student must meet the graduation assessment requirements. A student may meet the graduation assessment requirements in the following ways:

- (1) by taking the Maryland High School Assessments (MHSA) in English 10, Algebra I, science and government; or
- (2) by taking and passing approved alternative assessments for the MHSA; or
- (3) through a waiver of the MHSA graduation requirement in certain circumstances.

C. Total Requirements for Graduation from Frederick County Public Schools

<b>TOTAL REQUIRED CREDITS</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS</b>	

D. Completion of the Following Additional Programs

- Student Service Learning
- Environmental Literacy

Note: The curricular objectives in these areas are embedded within the Frederick County Public Schools curriculum and may not represent specific courses.

E. Alternatives to Four-Year Enrollment

Students shall satisfactorily complete four years of approved study beyond 8<sup>th</sup> grade unless one of the alternatives is satisfied in the COMAR State Board of Education Graduation Requirement Bylaw and Frederick County Public Schools Regulation 400-34 *Alternatives to Four-Year Enrollment*.

F. High School Diploma by Examination (i.e. GED®)

1. With the exception of Section F2 below, an individual may obtain a high school diploma by examination if the individual:
  - a. Has not obtained a high school diploma;
  - b. Resides in the State of Maryland;
  - c. Is not subject to compulsory school attendance under Maryland law; and
  - d. Has withdrawn from a regular full-time public or private school program.

2. An individual is not subject to the requirements of Section F1 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.

#### **405.2 Early Completion of State Requirements for 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.

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.

#### **405.3 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.

#### **405.4 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.

#### 405.5 Annual Review

The Board will annually review this policy and staff will provide notification to the community of graduation requirements.

**NOTE:**

Cross-reference FCPS Regulation 500-10 *Placement, Promotion and Grouping of Students*

Cross-reference FCPS Regulation 400-10 *Commencement Procedures and Ceremonies*

Cross-reference FCPS Regulation 400-27 *Graduation Honors and Awards*

Cross-reference FCPS Regulation 400-34 *Alternatives to Four-Year High School Enrollment*

Cross-reference FCPS Regulation 400-55 *Homeless Students – Enrollment Procedures*

Cross-reference FCPS Regulation 400-94 *College and Career Readiness and College Completion*

<b>Legal Reference</b>	§ 7-205 and § 7-205.1 Education Article, <i>Annotated Code of Maryland</i>		
	§ 11-808 Labor and Employment Article, <i>Annotated Code of Maryland</i>		
	COMAR 13A.03.02 Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland		
	COMAR 13A.05.07.02 and 13A.05.07.03 Programs for English Learners		
<b>Source Document</b>	Maryland Student Record Systems Manual		
<b>Policy History</b>	Reviewed 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021	Adopted 11/8/00	Revised 1/12/22