High School Graduation Requirements and Participation in Commencement

Publication of Graduation Requirements

Prior to registering in high school, and each year thereafter, each student and his/her parents or guardians will be provided access to the graduation requirements in effect for that student (those in effect when the student enrolled in ninth grade). Graduation requirements for freshmen enrollment year remain in effect for 10 years after the graduation cohort year. Graduation requirements shall also be included in each high school’s student handbook.

Graduation Requirements Bulletin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Class of 2015 Required Credits (Entered Freshmen Year September, 2011)</th>
<th>Class of 2016* &amp; 2017 Required Credits (Entered Freshmen Year September, 2012 &amp; 2013, respectively)</th>
<th>Class of 2018* Required Credits (Entered Freshmen Year September, 2014)</th>
<th>Class of 2019 and Beyond* Required Credits (Entered Freshmen Year September, 2015 or after)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>2 (1 must be laboratory credit)</td>
<td>2 (1 must be laboratory credit)</td>
<td>2 (1 must be laboratory credit)</td>
<td>3 (2 must be laboratory credit**)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career and Technical Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health must include training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and use of automatic external defibrillators (AED)</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitness</td>
<td>1.5 or 1 fitness and .5 health</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 (1 can be PPR)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Language (or) Personalized Pathway Requirement</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2 (both can be PPR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Electives</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Credits</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24.0****</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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* Students who take Career & Technical Education (CTE)-equivalent courses may satisfy two graduation requirements while earning one credit for a single course; hence, “two-for-one”. The “two-for-one” policy is a rule change beginning in effect for students in the graduating class of 2016. The purpose of this is to create flexibility for students to choose more elective courses or to address other graduation requirements. Students are still required to earn the total number of required credits.

** "Laboratory science" means any instruction that provides opportunities for students to interact directly with the material world, or with data drawn from the material world, using the tools, data collection techniques, models and theories of science. A laboratory science course meeting the graduation science requirement identified above may include courses conducted in classroom facilities specially designed for laboratory science, or coursework in traditional classrooms, outdoor spaces, or other settings which accommodate elements of laboratory science as identified in this subsection. (WAC 180-51-068(15))

*** Personalized Pathway Requirements (PPR) are related courses that lead to a specific post high school career or educational outcome chosen by the student based on the student’s interests and High School and Beyond Plan, which may include Career and Technical Education, and are intended to provide a focus for the student’s learning.

**** Principals may waive up to 2.0 credits based on “unusual circumstances” on a case-by-case basis where the principal determines that the unusual circumstances is primary cause of the student’s failure to meet all graduation credit requirements and the waiver is consistent with the requirements of WAC 180-51-068(12). Unusual circumstances may be presented in a number of ways. Examples of unusual circumstances include (but are not limited to) where a student:

(1) Has moved multiple times among multiple states or school districts with differing graduation requirements over the course of the student’s high school career;
(2) Has lived outside of the country for a portion of the student’s high school career and fulfillment of the graduation requirement at issue cannot be achieved through a method identified in Policy 2000;
(3) Has been homeschooled for a portion of the student’s high school career, does not have a transcript from an accredited home school program, and fulfillment of the graduation requirement at issue cannot be achieved through a method identified in Policy 2000;
(4) Has experienced homelessness or multiple changes in family living structure during the student’s high school career that have significantly impacted school attendance or academic success;
(5) Is a student with a disability and the student’s Section 504 or Individualized Educational Program (IEP) team has made specific determinations related to the needs of the student at issue that include waiver or modification of graduation requirements; or
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(6) Is not a student who qualifies as a student with a disability under either Section 504 or the IDEA who experiences a health event over the course of the student’s high school career that impacted the student’s ability to fulfill a specific graduation requirement.

High School and Beyond Plan

Each student shall have a High School and Beyond Plan for their high school experience, including what they expect to do the year following graduation.

Students with Special Educational Needs

No student shall be denied the opportunity to earn a high school diploma solely because of having a disability. Students who are eligible for special education and who are in need of continuing educational services may remain in school up to and including the school year in which such student reaches twenty-one years of age to continue to attempt to meet graduation requirements or to participate in a special education program in accordance with chapter 28A.155 RCW if the student is eligible. Additionally, special accommodations for individual students or exemption from any graduation requirement may be made, if such requirement impedes the student's progress toward graduation and there is a direct relationship between the failure to meet the requirement and the student's limitation. Students who are eligible for special education services and will be continuing to access special education services after their fourth year of high school shall be allowed to participate in commencement with their peer cohort without that impacting the students ability to continue to access special education services.

Approved Dropout Reengagement Program

When an individual 11th or 12th grade student enters into a state approved dropout reengagement program administrated by the District; in which all conditions outlined in RCW.175.100 are met by subject program, the student may be permitted to graduate from the program/district with a lesser number of credits; provided that minimum state requirements for courses, credits and assessments are satisfied.

Physical Education Requirement – Waiver and Credit Attainment

(1) An individual student may be excused from participation in physical education on physical disability, employment, or religious belief, or because of participation in directed athletics or military science and tactics or for other good cause. Students and parents must complete the “Application of Waiver to Meet High School Physical Education Requirement” form by May 1 for students who would like to waiver their physical education requirement in the first semester or by January 1 for students, who would like to waiver their physical education requirement in the second semester.
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(2) Students may pursue credit for physical education by demonstrating proficiency/competency consistent with Policy 2000. This could include passage of a Classroom-Based Assessment to demonstrate competence in health and fitness and/or Participation directed athletics, which includes both Tacoma Public Schools athletics programs and community-based organized athletics.

Credit for Worksite Learning

The use of work experience as a part of the educational program of students should be regarded as part of the secondary school curriculum providing learning opportunities outside of the school day, and not as a function to relieve a manpower shortage. The following are the bases upon which credit may be granted for work experience:

(1) The training agreement shall be reviewed and approved by the school district’s coordinator of worksite learning in advance of counting hours of work experience for credit.

(2) Registration of worksite learning class will be arranged through the district’s worksite learning coordinator and occur at the student’s assigned school.

(3) The work experience shall be related to the school program of the student.

(4) Credit earned for worksite learning shall represent growth in the student, and the type of work done should have definite educational value.

(5) The job in which experience is gained shall provide varied experience.

(6) A worksite learning experience shall be supplemented by an adequate program of guidance, placement, follow-up and coordination between the employer and the Worksite learning coordinator.

(7) Work experience as a planned part of a school subject may be included in the credit given for that subject (e.g., sales training class).

(8) One work credit may be granted for not less than 360 hours of work experience related to a student’s school program.

(9) A student participating shall be legally employed and must have passed his/her 16th birthday.

(10) An employer’s report of the student’s work record, indicating satisfactory progress on the job, shall be filed with the school.

(11) The regular state apprenticeship program, where the training is worked out cooperatively with the school and meets the standards for graduation requirements, is acceptable.
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Home-Based Instruction

The District has the authority to determine the appropriate grade and course level placement of students entering the District from a period of home-based instruction after consultation with the parent and a review of the student’s records. With respect to credit attainment, transcripts from accredited home school programs will be treated in the same manner as transcripts from transferring schools. Credit for completion of Online Courses or Online School Programs will be handled consistent with Policy 2024 and Regulation 2024R. Students who are entering the District may obtain credit via demonstration of competency and any other method identified in Policy 2000.

Online Learning

Credit for completion of Online Courses or Online School Programs will be handled consistent with Policy 2024 and Regulation 2024R

Participation in Commencement

A student who fulfills all graduation requirements by the end of the last term of his/her senior year may participate in the graduation ceremony unless the student’s misconduct warrants his/her exclusion from the ceremony. Each student shall be awarded a diploma and/or transcript after satisfactorily completing local and state requirements. However, a student’s diploma and/or transcript may be withheld until the student pays all outstanding fines for any school property that has been lost or willfully damaged. Upon payment of fines for damages, or the equivalency through voluntary work, the diploma and/or transcript will be released. The principal will provide a list to the superintendent of all students participating in formal graduation ceremonies clearly identifying which students have met all graduation requirements and which students have outstanding state assessments.

Graduation ceremonies will be conducted in the following manner:

(1) Each participating student must participate in the graduation ceremony rehearsal. Each student who participates will purchase or rent the proper cap and gown as designated by the school administration and the class advisor and officers.

(2) Caps and gowns will be worn in the proper manner, as designated by the school administration and class advisor. No additional adornments other than those authorized by the district may be worn during the ceremony.

(3) Students who participate will be expected to demonstrate proper decorum.

(4) Each student who participates will be expected to cooperate with the class advisor and to participate in all parts of the graduation ceremonies.
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(5) Failure to comply with the above requirements may forfeit a student’s privilege of participation in the graduation ceremonies.

Approved 3/5/02
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Revised 5/30/14
Revised 9/1/15