

# High School Academic Policy Guide



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## I. KEY SHIFTS FROM PREVIOUS YEARS – **UPDATED AUGUST 2024**

The following updates and clarifications have been added to this guide for the 2024-25 school year. These policies are also addressed in their corresponding sections of this guide.

### Transition to 2016 New York State Science Learning Standards (NYSSLS)

- Schools must align their commencement-level Biology courses and Earth & Space Science courses, including accelerated middle school science courses, to the 2016 NYSSLS. See the [Transition to NYSSLS \(2016\) and New Science Regents Exams](#) for the limited scenarios in which students may be programmed for Living Environment or Earth Science courses in 2024-25.
- Students' science lab grades must reflect successful completion of the 1,200 required laboratory minutes and the three required NYSED Investigations for courses aligned to the 2016 NYSSLS.

### Arts Education

- Schools with grades 6–12 must accurately identify performing groups in STARS using the “performing group” section property to identify courses that meet the definition of performing group. For additional guidance, refer to the [STARS Programming Related to Class Size wiki](#).
- Schools must use the new course codes in STARS to program students for music, dance, and theater courses.

### World Language Exams

- Schools must capture on transcripts any third-party/vendor world language exams where students earned the equivalent of a passing score to meet diploma requirements.

### Virtual/Blended Courses

- Students are no longer required to pass the culminating Regents exam in order to earn course credit for virtual/blended courses that commence on or after September 1, 2024.
- Schools are required to obtain parental consent for students to participate in virtual/blended courses.

### Media Arts Course Flexibility

- Students taking specific [NYSED-approved media arts](#) courses taught by either a visual arts- or CTE-certified teacher may use that credit toward the Carer and Technical Education (CTE) or Individual Arts Assessment (IAAP) pathways. See [NYSED-Approved Alternatives and the 4+1 Policy](#) for details.

### 21+ Students

- Students with IEPs who turned 21 within the 2023-24 school year may remain enrolled or re-enroll for 2024-25 to meet graduation requirements and/or transition to adult/postsecondary programs. See the section on [Transition Services for Students with Disabilities](#) for more information.

### Financial Education

- Schools must indicate in STARS Classroom when students receive instruction in financial education topics. See the [Electives](#) section of this guide for more information.

### Children of Active-Duty Military Personnel

- This guide now contains important information about identifying children of active-duty military personnel and recording their status in ATS. Eligible students may use exam and credit flexibilities toward graduation. See the [Policies for Special Populations](#) section of this guide for more information.

**NOTE:** In 2019, the New York State Board of Regents established the Blue Ribbon Commission on Graduation Measures (BRC) to reevaluate New York's graduation requirements with the goal of ensuring educational excellence and equity for all students in the state.

In November 2024, NYSED's implementation plan will be presented to the Board of Regents with projected timelines, affected regulations, and other considerations. The Board must approve any changes to the State's graduation requirements; until such time, the existing graduation requirements described in this guide remain in effect for all NYCDOE students.

## II. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

[New York State Education Department \(NYSED\) Commissioner's Regulations Part 100.5](#) establishes the requirements for earning a high school diploma in New York State. To meet diploma requirements, students must earn [specific course credits](#) and pass [specific assessments](#), typically Regents exams or NYSED-approved alternatives. These regulations and additional local policies from New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) are described in this guide.

High schools also serving elementary and middle school grades should refer to the [Elementary](#) and [Middle School](#) Academic Policy Guides for information applicable to these grade levels.

For academic policy and systems questions, schools can refer to the [academic policy](#) and [systems](#) resource webpages, or contact their [OPE Lead \(formerly known as 'APPA'\)](#).

The [STARS](#) suite of applications is the NYCDOE's official record of students' programs, grades, and progress toward completing academic requirements.<sup>1</sup> STARS reflects academic information for all NYCDOE public school students in grades K–12. All high schools must use STARS to enter information about the instruction and supports students are receiving throughout the school day; to reflect student-teacher-subject relationships; and to enter student grades and credits earned. To ensure that STARS data accurately captures students' academic programs and outcomes, high schools must follow the guidelines described in the [High School Course Code Directory](#) and on the [STARS wiki](#). STARS is managed by the NYCDOE's Office of Academic Policy and Systems (OAPS). See the section of this guide on [scheduling in STARS](#) and visit the [STARS wiki](#) for more information.

### A. Diploma Types

[NYSED's Part 100.5](#) defines the minimum program requirements for students to earn a high school diploma. There are three diplomas offered in New York City and State: advanced Regents, Regents, and local diplomas. All of these diplomas are valid within and outside the State. Students can use these wherever a high school diploma is required. To earn a high school diploma, students are required to:

- Earn 44 credits, distributed across specific subjects<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The STARS Suite includes three platforms across grades K–12: STARS Classroom, STARS Client, and STARS Admin.

<sup>2</sup> [Part 100.5](#) requires students to earn at least 22 units of credit to earn a diploma. The NYCDOE calculates credits towards graduation using a semester-based model, in which the State's requirement of 22 units of credit equates to 44 credits. Throughout this guide, the NYCDOE semester-based credit model is used in reference to the graduation requirements. Students who entered grade 9 prior to 2007 may have varying requirements, as outlined in [Part 100.5](#).

- Pass assessments in the subjects of English language arts (ELA), math, social studies, and science

[Credit](#) and [assessment](#) requirements for each type of diploma are summarized in the tables below. This information is also available in the form of graduation requirements cards, which are published on the [NYCDOE website](#). In special circumstances, some students may graduate with lower exam scores and earn a local diploma.

The table below outlines specific eligibility requirements and exam flexibilities. All students should be encouraged to meet the requirements for the most rigorous option possible. To support college and career readiness, schools may communicate more rigorous academic expectations than those defined by New York State graduation requirements; however, schools may not withhold diplomas from students who have completed the minimum New York State and City graduation requirements.

Diploma Type	Eligibility	Credits Requirements	Assessment Requirements
<b>Advanced Regents</b>	All students	Earn <a href="#">44 required credits</a> , including at least six credits in World Languages	Pass with scores of 65 or higher or receive Regents waivers or Special Appeals on <a href="#">nine specific assessments</a>
<b>Regents</b>	All students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with one successful Low Score appeal on a Regents exam</li> </ul>	Earn <a href="#">44 required credits</a>	Pass with scores of 65 or higher or receive Regents waivers or Special Appeals on <a href="#">five specific assessments</a>
<b>Local</b>	All <a href="#">Safety Net</a> -eligible students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with <a href="#">Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)</a></li> <li>• Students with Section <a href="#">504 Plans</a> that specify Safety Net eligibility</li> <li>• Students with disabilities who were declassified while in grades 8–12 whose last IEP specified Safety Net eligibility</li> </ul> <p>Students with specific Regents appeals, including students who are not Safety Net-eligible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students with two successful Low Score appeals on Regents exams, including students without disabilities</li> <li>• Students with a successful New Arrival ELA appeal</li> </ul>	Earn <a href="#">44 required credits</a>	Pass with scores of 55 or higher or receive Regents waivers or Special Appeals on <a href="#">five specific assessments</a> ; or utilize any of the Safety Net or Regents appeals flexibilities to graduate with lower scores, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Appeals</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Compensatory Score option</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Superintendent’s Determination of Graduation for students with current IEPs</a></li> </ul> <p>(Many of these options may be combined with one another. See the <a href="#">Appendix</a> of this guide and the <a href="#">Safety Net Flexibilities</a> section for details.)</p>

Students can also earn endorsements or designations to their diplomas for specializing in particular subjects or earning certain Regents exam scores; these are outlined further in the [Diploma Endorsements](#) section of this guide.

Students who are unable to earn diplomas may earn a non-diploma commencement credential. The requirements are outlined further in the [Commencement Credentials](#) section of this guide.

### 1. *Minimum Credit Requirements*

Students must earn at least 44 credits in specific subjects to graduate with a local, Regents, or advanced Regents diploma. See the Course Credits section of this guide for subject-level policies and flexibilities.

Subject Distribution Area	Local & Regents Diplomas	Advanced Regents Diploma
<b><u>English Language Arts (ELA)</u></b>	8	8
<b><u>Social Studies</u></b>		
<b>Global History</b>	4	4
<b>U.S. History</b>	2	2
<b>Participation in Government</b>	1	1
<b>Economics</b>	1	1
<b><u>Math</u></b>		
<b>Including at least 2 credits of math aligned to standards above Algebra 1, such as Geometry or Algebra II</b>	6	6
<b><u>Science (including labs and Investigations)</u></b>		
<b>Life Science</b>	2	2
<b>Physical Science</b>	2	2
<b>Life Science or Physical Science</b>	2	2
<b><u>World Languages<sup>3</sup></u></b>	2	6
<b><u>Visual Art, Music, Dance, and/or Theater</u></b>	2	2
<b><u>Physical Education (PE)</u></b>		
<b>In every year, distributed in specific patterns</b>	4	4
<b><u>Health</u></b>	1	1
<b><u>Electives</u></b>	7	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>44 credits</b>	<b>44 credits</b>

<sup>3</sup> Students who successfully complete a 10-credit sequence in the Arts or CTE are not required to complete six credits of World Languages in order to earn an advanced Regents diploma; they must still earn two World Languages credits and 44 total course credits to graduate.



## 2. Minimum Assessment Requirements <sup>4</sup>

Students must pass at least five assessments (Regents exams or NYSED-approved alternatives) to graduate. This includes one assessment in English language arts (ELA), math, social studies, and science, and a +1 pathway option. Students fulfill the requirement in a variety of ways. Students may use NYSED-approved alternatives (indicated with ‘WX’ marks) to fulfill the +1 option or replace a required Regents exam, as described in the [NYSED-approved alternatives](#) and [Performance Based Assessment Tasks](#) sections of this guide. Also, students completing an Arts or CTE endorsement for the advanced Regents diploma and students whose IEPs indicate a disability that affects their ability to learn a language are not required to take the World Language Comprehensive exam.

In some cases, students do not pass all five exams and are able to meet the requirement via low score appeals (indicated with ‘WG’ marks) and/or waived exams (indicated with ‘WA’ marks). See the following sections for details: [Appeals to Graduate with Low Scores on Regents Exams](#), [Safety Net Flexibilities](#), and [Regents Exam Waivers](#).

In addition, the following flexibilities apply for transfer students:

- Students who enter a NYSED registered high school for the first time in grades 11 or 12 may be exempt from the Global History II Regents exam.
- Students who enter a NYSED registered high school for the first time in grade 12 may be exempt from the science Regents exam requirement.

All five exams used to meet graduation requirements (including waived exams, appealed exams, and NYSED-approved alternatives) must be clearly documented on the transcript.

Regents subject area	Local Diploma (Safety Net)	Regents Diploma	Advanced Regents Diploma
<b>English Language Arts</b>	<b>55+</b>	<b>65+</b>	<b>65+</b>
<b>Social Studies</b>	<b>55+</b> on one social studies exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. History OR</li> <li>• Global History &amp; Geography II</li> </ul>	<b>65+</b> on one social studies exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. History OR</li> <li>• Global History &amp; Geography II</li> </ul>	<b>65+</b> on one social studies exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• U.S. History OR</li> <li>• Global History &amp; Geography II</li> </ul>
<b>Math</b>	<b>55+</b> on one math exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Algebra I,</li> <li>• Geometry, OR</li> <li>• Algebra II</li> </ul>	<b>65+</b> on one math exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Algebra I,</li> <li>• Geometry, OR</li> <li>• Algebra II</li> </ul>	<b>65+</b> on three math exams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Algebra I,</li> <li>• Geometry, AND</li> <li>• Algebra II</li> </ul>
<b>Science</b>	<b>55+</b> on one science exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biology</li> <li>• Living Environment,</li> <li>• Earth &amp; Space Science,</li> <li>• Earth Science,</li> <li>• Chemistry, OR</li> <li>• Physics</li> </ul>	<b>65+</b> on one science exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Biology</li> <li>• Living Environment,</li> <li>• Earth &amp; Space Science,</li> <li>• Earth Science,</li> <li>• Chemistry, OR</li> <li>• Physics</li> </ul>	<b>65+</b> on one life science exam (Biology OR Living Environment) AND one physical science exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earth &amp; Space Science,</li> <li>• Earth Science,</li> <li>• Chemistry, OR</li> <li>• Physics</li> </ul>
<b><u>+1 option</u></b>	<b>55+</b> on any additional Regents exam or a passing score on <a href="#">NYSED-approved +1 option</a>	<b>65+</b> on any additional Regents exam or a passing score on <a href="#">NYSED-approved +1 option</a>	<b>65+</b> on any additional Regents exam or a passing score on <a href="#">NYSED-approved +1 option</a>

<sup>4</sup> Students should be encouraged to work toward higher scores to demonstrate college and career readiness.

Regents subject area	Local Diploma (Safety Net)	Regents Diploma	Advanced Regents Diploma
<b>World Languages</b>	None required	None required	<b>65+</b> on one World Language Comprehensive exam or <a href="#">NYSED-approved World Language exam</a> OR Successful completion of a 10-credit sequence in the Arts OR Career and Technical Education (CTE)
<b>Total</b>	<b>5 assessments</b>	<b>5 assessments</b>	<b>9 assessments</b>

## B. Course Credits

In order to graduate, students must earn 44 credits distributed across specific academic subjects and aligned to specific NYSED commencement-level [learning standards](#). All high schools must provide students with the opportunity to take credit-bearing courses in grades 9–12 that satisfy the requirements for a high school diploma.

Students’ programs may be composed of both credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing units of study. A unit of study is defined as 180 minutes of instruction per week throughout the school year or the equivalent. This is the equivalent of 108 hours per year, which is 54 hours of instructional time per credit awarded during the school year and 45 hours of instructional time per credit awarded during the summer term. Schools must provide courses that afford students the full instructional time per credit.

In July 2020, NYSED amended the definition of unit of study to include instruction delivered through “alternative instructional experiences, including but not limited to through digital technology or blended learning, that represents standards-based learning under the guidance and direction of an appropriately certified teacher. Instructional experiences shall include, but not be limited to: meaningful and frequent interaction with an appropriately certified teacher; academic and other supports designed to meet the needs of the individual student and instructional content that reflects consistent academic expectations as in-person instruction. Any alternative instructional experience must include meaningful feedback on student assignments and methods of tracking student engagement.”

Students must then demonstrate competency of the learning outcomes outlined in a course syllabus in order to receive credit. These policies are described further in the section of this guide on [credit-bearing courses](#). Schools must provide all students with opportunities to complete the credit requirements and must cover any costs associated with participating in and making up required courses.<sup>5</sup>

All credit-bearing courses in NYCDOE schools must address NYSED commencement-level (high school) [learning standards](#), meet instructional time requirements, and be taught by a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher with NYSED secondary certification in the course subject area. See the section of this guide on [credit-bearing courses](#) for additional information.

NYSED has commencement-level [learning standards](#) in the following departments: English language arts; social studies; mathematics; science; technology; arts education (including visual arts, music, dance and theater); world languages; health, physical education, family and consumer sciences; and career development and occupational studies. Commencement-level learning standards and assessments reflect the knowledge, skills, and understandings all students are expected to know and be able to do upon receiving a high school diploma.

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<sup>5</sup> Students do not have to pay to take any courses that are offered by their school, including online courses, nor do they have to pay to receive diplomas. See also [NYCDOE Chancellor’s Regulation A-610](#).

Courses that do not align to these high school-level standards, including elective courses, may not bear credit. There are no standards in guidance or advisory; such courses generally should not bear credit.

It is the policy of the NYCDOE to maintain a safe and supportive learning and educational environment that is free of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying and free of discrimination because of actual or perceived race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, or weight. See the [Guidelines on Gender Inclusion](#) for help implementing gender-inclusive curricula, programs, activities, and practices that are consistent with this policy and with the NYCDOE's commitment to equity and access. Schools must be mindful that inappropriate gender segregation may result in isolating students, hindering diversity, and/or perpetuating gender stereotypes.

Schools with questions or concerns about students' progress toward meeting credit requirements should contact their [OPE Lead](#).

## 1. *English Language Arts*

Students must earn a minimum of eight credits in English language arts (ELA) to graduate. NYSED does not define a specific sequence; instead, schools must define a four-year ELA sequence aligned to NYSED's commencement-level [learning standards for ELA](#), spanning grades 9–12 and progressing in rigor. Schools may also offer “selectives” (meaning, courses that students may choose between which address ELA standards in the ELA course sequence) or offer electives in other areas in the English department that support learning in ELA. Many schools offer [Advanced Placement \(AP®\) courses](#) in English language, literature, and composition to help students prepare for college. Students can use credits that do not duplicate courses they have already taken previously to fulfill elective requirements. Students may use specific AP exams to substitute for Regents exams; see the section of this guide on [NYSED-approved alternatives](#).

Schools must indicate that courses are aligned to ELA standards (as evidenced by a syllabus) and part of their core ELA sequence by coding them with the first two characters of 'EE' in STARS.<sup>6</sup> Courses coded with any other letter than 'E' in the second character (for example, 'EJ', 'ES', etc.) are English electives and do not fulfill the eight-credit requirement.

English as a New Language (ENL) courses should be coded to reflect the content being taught. This may include English language arts or elective English areas. ENL courses may be coded as 'EE', per the [High School Course Code Directory](#), if they address commencement-level ELA standards in addition to ENL standards, as evidenced by a syllabus. Schools must use the [section property in STARS](#) to identify that the course integrates ENL content. [CR Part 154](#) addresses how schools must identify and serve English Language Learners (ELLs) in detail; see the [ELLs](#) section of this guide and the [Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs](#) for more information.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Schools must not edit historical course codes. If a course previously coded as an English elective addressed ELA standards and fulfilled core English requirements for graduation, as evidenced by a course syllabus or other course documentation, the school should retain the documentation in case requested; however, they must not alter the historical course codes.

<sup>7</sup> NYSED and NYCDOE refer to English Language Learners (ELLs) as Multilingual Learners/English Language Learners (MLs/ELLs) except in instances referring to state and federal policy.

## 2. *Social Studies*

In social studies, students must earn a minimum of eight credits to graduate with a diploma. NYSED defines specific subjects and [learning standards](#).<sup>8</sup> These credit requirements apply to all students, regardless of the social studies assessment(s) students use to graduate:

- Four Global History credits (reflected in STARS with codes beginning with ‘HG’)
- Two U.S. History credits (‘HU’)
- One Participation in Government credit (‘HV’ or ‘HF’)
- One Economics credit (‘HE’ or ‘HF’)

All students in New York State must pass a one-credit course (the equivalent of 54 hours of instruction) in Participation in Government and a one-credit course in Economics in the same way they must pass their other required courses. A year-long advanced two-credit Advanced Placement Economics course cannot substitute for both the Economics and Participation in Government requirements unless the syllabus is supplemented to incorporate both the Economics and Participation in Government [learning standards](#). Likewise, a year-long two-credit Advanced Placement Government course cannot substitute for both Economics and Participation in Government requirements unless the syllabus is supplemented to incorporate both the Economics and Participation in Government [learning standards](#). In both of these cases, the course must be coded in STARS as ‘HF’ and titled to indicate that it is a combined, year-long economics and government course, as described in the [High School Course Code Directory](#). These courses may not fulfill both requirements unless the syllabus is supplemented to incorporate both sets of standards, and students receive enough instructional time in each content area to merit a full credit of each. For more information on how this policy relates to Advanced Placement® (AP) economics and government courses, see the [AP Courses FAQ](#).

Students who enter a New York State registered high school for the first time in grade 11 or 12, or who reenter a New York State registered high school in grade 11 or 12 after having been enrolled in a New York State registered high school for three or fewer semesters, may be exempted from the four Global History and Geography credit distribution requirement. These students have flexibility to use other social studies courses to substitute for some or all of their four Global History credits. This exemption does not apply to students who remained residents of New York State while participating in hospital instruction, home schooling, or any other type of schooling in their high school years prior to grade 11 or 12 entry or re-entry. However, students must still earn eight total credits of social studies and 44 total credits to graduate with a diploma.

This credit flexibility applies to students who entered a New York State registered high school for the first time in grade 11 during the 2018-19 school year or in grades 11 or 12 during the 2019-20 school year and beyond. This policy excludes students who have been home-schooled and students who have been enrolled in a registered or non-registered public or nonpublic New York State high school. For example, students who have been home schooled for two years in New York State, enroll in a school outside of New York State, then enroll in an NYCDOE high school are not eligible for these waivers.

Schools must ensure that students substituting other social studies credits for Global History due to this policy have the Global History exam code ending in ‘W’ clearly indicated on their transcripts as waived, using the mark of

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<sup>8</sup> The [New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework](#) is designed to prepare students for college, careers, and civic life with courses that are rigorous and aligned to the New York State Learning Standards for Social Studies. This Framework consists of a single three-part document--the Introduction to the Framework, Grades K-8 and Grades 9-12. The original Framework was published in 2014. Subsequently the K-8 document was revised in 2016 and the 9-12 document was revised in 2017.

'WA,' when they enter in grade 11 or 12. At the point of discharge in [GRDT](#) or [DISC](#), schools must enter credit override code 'D'. See the [Transfer Student Toolkit](#) for more details.

### 3. *Math*

Students must earn a minimum of six credits in mathematics, including at least two credits of advanced math (that is, math aligned to standards above Algebra I such as Geometry, Algebra II, Calculus), to graduate. However, to be college-and-career ready, it is strongly recommended that students receive four years and eight credits of high school-level math, including instruction in:

- Algebra I ([reflected in STARS](#) with codes beginning with 'ME')
- Geometry ('MG')
- Algebra II ('MR')

Many schools offer [Advanced Placement \(AP®\) courses](#) in Statistics, Calculus, or other areas to help students prepare for college. Students can use additional math credits that do not duplicate courses they have already taken previously to fulfill elective requirements. Students may use specific AP exams to substitute for Regents exams; see the section of this guide on [NYSED-approved alternatives](#).

NYSED allows math courses designed to culminate in a [Regents exam](#) to extend up to four credits. However, no more than a total of four credits may be awarded for high school-level coursework in any of the following subjects: Algebra I, Geometry, or Algebra II. Students participating in an extended Algebra I course must earn at least two commencement-level math credits beyond Algebra I. These courses help students prepare for post-secondary living.

Courses that do not align to high school-level standards (for example, pre-algebra, math fundamentals) may not bear credit and cannot be used to fulfill the math or elective requirements. Students may not receive credit for retaking a course they have already passed or courses that duplicate content in courses previously passed, even if they are using it to help prepare to take the [Regents exam](#). Regents-preparatory courses may not be credit-bearing. See the [non-credit-bearing courses](#) section of this guide for additional information.

A high school technology education course may be used to fulfill two credits in mathematics or science, but not both. The course should be coded in the math department ('MK'), in alignment with the [High School Course Code Directory](#), to fulfill math distribution requirements.

### 4. *Science – Updated August 2024*

Students must earn a minimum of six credits in science to graduate, including:

- Two life science credits ([reflected in STARS](#) with codes beginning with 'SB', 'SL', or 'SW')
- Two physical science credits ('SJ', 'SE', 'SC', 'SP', 'SD', or 'SR')
- Two additional science credits in life science or physical science

Only courses that fully align to life science learning standards may fulfill the life science requirement (e.g., Biology or school-developed courses derived from the 2016 NYSSLS life science standards). Likewise, only courses that fully align to physical science learning standards may fulfill the physical science requirement (e.g., Earth & Space Science, Chemistry, Physics, or school-developed courses derived from any of the 2016 NYSSLS physical setting standards). Schools may determine which of these courses culminate in Regents exams. Courses that include a combination of life and physical science learning standards may only count toward the two-credits of "Life Science or Physical Science" requirement.

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) adopted the [New York State Science Learning Standards \(NYSSLS\)](#) in 2016. The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) began [transitioning to the new standards](#) in the 2019-20 school year with elementary and middle schools.

**Beginning September 2024**, schools must align their commencement-level Biology courses (previously Living Environment) and Earth & Space Science courses (previously Earth Science), including accelerated middle school science courses, to the 2016 NYSSLS.

Refer to the [Transition to NYSSLS \(2016\) and New Science Regents Exams](#) for the limited scenarios in which students may be programmed for Living Environment or Earth Science courses in 2024-25.

To be college- and career-ready, it is strongly recommended that students receive four years and eight credits of high-school level science, including Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. Many schools offer [Advanced Placement \(AP®\) courses](#) in Biology, Physics, and other areas to help students prepare for college. Students can use additional science credits that do not duplicate courses they have already taken previously to fulfill elective requirements. Students may use specific AP exams to substitute for Regents exams; see the section of this guide on [NYSED-approved alternatives](#).

Some course titles may represent courses designed as either life or physical science courses, depending on the [learning standards](#) they address (for example, Environmental Science). A course may only be used to fulfill the life or physical science requirement if it primarily aligns to the respective standards of that requirement. A school must clearly name and [code the course](#) as either life or physical science based on the learning standards the course addresses, and reflect the alignment through the course content documentation.

Completing a year-long, two-credit science course supports students in thoroughly demonstrating their understanding of the course content; however, students are not required to complete three, year-long science courses to earn six science credits. For example, a student who completes one credit of Earth & Space Sciences and one credit of Chemistry meets the minimum physical science credit requirements. Schools should consider students' post-secondary goals in designing science sequences and programming students.

NYSED allows any science course that culminates in a [Regents exam](#) to extend up to four credits. No more than four total credits may be awarded for the following high school-level science courses: Biology, Earth & Space Sciences, Chemistry, and Physics. A high school technology education course may be used to fulfill two credits in mathematics or science, but not both. The course should be coded in the science department ('SK'), in alignment with the [High School Course Code Directory](#), to fulfill science distribution requirements.

### a. Science Labs and Investigations

All science courses incorporate curriculum-aligned lab experiences. Students in science courses designed to culminate in a Regents exam must successfully complete 1,200 minutes of hands-on or virtual<sup>9</sup> lab experiences, including the three required NYSED Investigations for that course.

Schools can provide the 1,200 minutes of hands-on or virtual lab experiences in a single term or across multiple terms. Students must complete this laboratory across the length of the course, in accordance with the school's practice for scheduling labs to prepare for the corresponding Regents exam in science.

Further, students are required to complete the NYSED Investigations to sit for the new Science Regents exams based on the 2016 NYSSLS. These Investigations are authentic, hands-on scientific and engineering experiences. The Investigations are designed to be embedded into classroom instruction and assessment and can be scheduled any time within the course, prior to the Regents exam.

The three required Investigations for [Life Science: Biology](#) and the primary performance expectation measured by each are:

- Structure and Function: Balancing Act – Exploring Feedback and Homeostasis (PE: HS-LS1-3)
- Inheritance and Variation of Traits: Unraveling the Mystery of Lactose Intolerance (PE: HS-LS3-3 & HSLS1-1)
- Interdependent Relationships in Ecosystems: For the Birds – Designing Solutions (PE: HS-LS-2-7)

The three required Investigations for Earth & Space Science and the primary performance expectation measured by each are:

- Space Systems: Unearthing Mars – A Historical Perspective (PE: HS-ESS1-4)
- Earth's Systems: The Ripple Effect – The Work of Water Across New York State Surfaces (PE: HS-ESS2-5)
- Weather and Climate: The Sky is the Limit – Decoding Weather Conditions (PE: HS-ESS2-8)

See the [Transition to NYSSLS \(2016\) and New Science Regents Exams](#) for additional information about the Investigations. Labs must be recorded on student transcripts and indicated separately in STARS using the appropriate code ('L' in the seventh character) as described in the [High School Course Code Directory](#). The lab component of the course must not be credit-bearing, and it must be provided in addition to the 54 hours required for each science credit.

**Starting in 2024-25**, students' science lab grades must reflect successful completion of the 1,200 required laboratory minutes **and** the three required NYSED Investigations for courses aligned to the 2016 NYSSLS. For example, a student's final science lab grade of 'P' (pass), or the equivalent per the school's grading policy, means the student successfully completed the allotted labs and required Investigations in that subject for that term.

If students complete the required science lab minutes and NYSED Investigations but fail the Regents exam, it is recommended, but not required, that they redo the labs and Investigations to retake the Regents exam.

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<sup>9</sup> In September 2022, NYSED amended Part 100.5(b) to allow the 1,200-minute requirement to be met through a combination of hands-on and simulated laboratory experiences; virtual lab experiences to meet this requirement were not permissible prior to COVID-19. For more information, see New York State's [FAQ Related to Virtual Laboratory Experiences and the 1,200-minute Laboratory Requirement](#).

## 5. *World Languages*<sup>10</sup>

To graduate with a Regents or local diploma, students must earn at least two credits in World Languages. To graduate with an advanced Regents diploma, students must earn at least six credits in World Languages and pass the corresponding exam. For the advanced Regents diploma, students must earn World Languages credits in the same language, except in extremely limited situations involving transfer students.

The following policies apply:

- Students must earn all six of their World Languages credits in the same language and pass the corresponding exam to earn an advanced Regents diploma.
  - The only exception is if a student transfers in grades 11 or 12, and the new school does not offer the language that the student previously studied in grades 9 and 10; students may then earn their World Languages credits in two languages.
- While there is no minimum credit requirement to take the World Language Comprehensive Exam (aligned to Checkpoint B instruction<sup>11</sup>), it is designed to be completed after students complete three units of study or six NYCDOE credits of World Languages coursework, aligned to Checkpoint B of the New York State Learning Standards for World Languages.
  - Students graduating with a local or Regents diploma are only required to earn two credits of World Languages and are not required to take the World Language Comprehensive exam; however, they are encouraged to continue their language study as they wish, even pursuing the [New York State Seal of Biliteracy \(NYSSB\)](#).
  - For students planning to use a [State-approved World Language exam](#) as a +1 option for a local or Regents diploma, schools should determine whether students have acquired the proficiency necessary to be successful on the exam. Some students may need to complete more than six credits of world languages to be prepared for the exam, while others (for example, native or heritage speakers) may need to complete fewer or possibly no credits to be prepared for the exam. However, students must earn at least two credits of World Languages to graduate, except those with an IEP indicating the World Languages exemption.
- NYSED does not permit credits to be earned through credit by exam for World Languages. Students may not earn World Languages credits by passing the World Language Comprehensive exam.
- As outlined in the [World Languages FAQ](#), a student with a disability is exempt from meeting the World Languages requirement only if the IEP indicates that the requirement is not appropriate because the disability adversely affects the student’s ability to learn a language; this must be indicated in the “Participation with Students without Disabilities” section of the IEP. The student must still earn 44 course credits required for graduation through elective credits earned in other subject areas. The student may still earn an advanced Regents diploma as well, provided all of the other requirements for the advanced Regents diploma are met.
- Students who successfully complete a 10-credit sequence in the Arts or CTE are not required to complete six credits of World Languages in order to earn an advanced Regents diploma; they also do not need to pass the World Language exam.<sup>12</sup> They must still earn two World Languages credits and 44 total course

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<sup>10</sup> The Board of Regents adopted the revised New York State Learning Standards for Languages Other Than English (LOTE)/World Languages on Monday, March 15, 2021. For more information on the changes, implementation timeline, and proficiency ranges aligned to the World Language Checkpoint exams, see [NYSED’s World Languages Standards and Guidelines](#).

<sup>11</sup>The [World Languages Infohub page](#) contains updates and describes in detail the World Language Comprehensive exam.

<sup>12</sup> Students may be required to earn more than 44 total credits in order to complete the full CTE sequence and meet graduation requirements.



credits to graduate. See [NYSED’s Diploma Types webpage](#) and the [Diploma Endorsement](#) section of this guide for more information.

- Students may be awarded up to 10 credits in World Languages for documented residence and school attendance in an other-than-English-speaking environment, provided that the experience occurred at age 10 or older and that the residence resulted in direct contact with that environment, its language, and people. The student should be 10 years or older at the start of the school year for which credit is sought. See the [World Languages FAQ](#) and [Transfer Credit](#) section of this guide for more information.

High schools are encouraged to offer the [New York State Seal of Biliteracy \(NYSSB\)](#) as a diploma endorsement for their students as a way to affirm students’ identities and language learning experiences. The NYSSB recognizes high school graduates who attained a high level of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages, in addition to English. The NYSSB is available to any graduating senior in any language, and our Multilingual Learners are encouraged to work towards this endorsement over their high school experience.<sup>13</sup>

For more information on World Languages and the status of the [World Languages Standards Review Process](#), see the [World Languages FAQ](#).

## 6. Physical Education

[Part 135.4](#) defines the minimum requirements for schools to provide physical education (PE) in grades 7–12. Students must earn at least four credits in physical education to graduate. High school students must participate in an instructional physical education (PE) program using either the traditional model (90 minutes per week using the “3/2 model” or other patterns) or the daily model (minimum of 180 minutes and five days per week, in all but one term).<sup>14</sup> See the table below and the [PE FAQ](#) for more about these PE models.

### a. Summary of PE Time and Frequency Requirements

High School PE Model	Minimum required PE time	Minimum required PE frequency	Credits <sup>15</sup>
Traditional model	90 minutes per week	Every term	0.5 per semester, totaling 4.0 credits
Daily model	180 minutes per week	Daily, for 7 semesters	0.58 per semester, totaling 4.06 credits

PE programs must be designed to meet [NYSED learning standards](#) for physical education and the [NYC Grades 6-12 PE Scope and Sequence](#). PE courses must be taught by a certified, licensed PE teacher. Class size must follow the UFT contract and [class size law](#). For additional information and guidance about providing students with PE, please refer to [Office of School Wellness Programs's Physical Education Guide](#) and the [PE FAQ](#).

As in all other courses, grading for PE must be based primarily on content area knowledge and skills and not on non-competency measures. Schools may not factor attendance into students’ grades or grade students predominantly on participation or preparedness. See the [Grading Policy Toolkit](#) for more details.

<sup>13</sup> To learn more about the program models that can prepare students for the New York State Seal of Biliteracy, please review the [Pathways to Multiliteracy](#). To learn about the process and how to participate this year, please see the "[NYSSB: What and How](#)" webinar as well as guiding documents for NYCDOE public schools on the [Multilingual Learners InfoHub](#) page.

<sup>14</sup> The traditional PE scheduling model set by Part 135.4 is known as the “3/2 model,” in which students are scheduled for three days per week in one semester and two days per week in the other semester, or for a comparable time when the school is organized in other term models. See the guidance on [PE](#) for more information.

<sup>15</sup> Other credit values apply, based on the term model. See the guidance on [PE](#) for details.

NYCDOE sports and physical education programs, including physical education classes and school teams, are educational opportunities. Participation in these activities is integral to developing a student's fitness and health, self-esteem, and general well-being. Transgender and gender expansive students must be given the same opportunities to participate in physical education as all other students.

Schools must follow the [Guidelines to Support Transgender and Gender Expansive Students](#) when programming students for physical education and provide access to facilities such as locker rooms and restrooms consistent with the student's gender identity asserted at the school. Schools also may not separate students by gender for physical education classes or activities except for contact sports as outlined in the [Guidelines on Gender Inclusion](#).

[NYC FITNESSGRAM](#) is the City's annual health-related fitness assessment. PE teachers complete this assessment for all eligible students each year as part of their PE program. Schools use NYC FITNESSGRAM assessments to help students identify the importance of healthy fitness zones, set goals, and create long- and short-term fitness plans. Schools may not use performance on this assessment to determine students' grades.

Students with chronic or temporary medical conditions or disabilities must participate in physical education. Students with temporary medical conditions must provide the school with a medical certificate of limitation provided by a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner that indicates the area of the PE program in which the pupil may participate. Students with chronic medical conditions or disabilities documented by a Section 504 Plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP) must participate in PE in the least restrictive environment, as indicated on their 504 Plans or IEPs, which could include an [Adapted Physical Education](#) (APE) program if necessary.

APE is specially designed physical education instruction suited to the interests, capabilities, and challenges of students with disabilities who may not safely or successfully engage in the activities of the general physical education program without adaptations. APE instruction must be captured in STARS. APE must be taught by a NYCDOE certified PE teacher and counts toward the student's PE requirement. Please see the [Adapted Physical Education FAQ](#) and [Special Education Standard Operating Procedures Manual](#) for additional information.

The following policies also apply to physical education in high school:

- Students may take more than one PE course per term, to use for elective credit or to make up failed/missing PE credit. Students may not accelerate or "bank" PE credits in order to not take PE in later grades.
- Students who meet all diploma requirements and are eligible to graduate high school in fewer than four years do not need to complete the full four PE credits in order to graduate. In this case, all PE credits must have been earned up to the point of early graduation, but the student is not required to return to school to complete the PE requirement for any remaining semesters not completed due to early graduation. See the guidance on [PE](#) for more information.
- Transfer students are not required to complete PE credits that would have occurred in terms during which they were enrolled in a high school outside of New York State or in a court-ordered setting or state-run residential program. Instead, schools can waive PE courses equivalent to the number of terms the student was enrolled in a high school outside of New York State. This reduces the number of remaining terms of PE the student must complete to meet graduation requirements. Schools must [update the student's transcript](#) in STARS to reflect all waived terms of PE, as outlined in the [Transfer Student Toolkit](#), and must document these decisions using the [Transfer Credit Equivalency Form](#). The waived terms must be recorded on the student's transcript with 'NW' as the course mark.

- Additionally, a student who has completed four full years of high school and has accumulated at least 4.00 credits in PE (including waived courses due to out-of-state enrollment), but who has not yet met graduation requirements in other areas, no longer needs to continue to take PE in addition to required coursework during additional terms.

For more information on academic policies and STARS programming for physical education courses, schools should review the [PE FAQ](#) guidance or contact their [OPE Lead](#); for guidance on the implementation of physical education instructional programs, schools may contact the [Office of School Wellness Programs](#).

## 7. Health Education – **Updated August 2024**

[Part 135.3](#) defines the minimum requirements for schools to provide health education instruction, including required annual HIV and AIDS lessons for students in grades K-12.

All high school students are required to complete a one-credit (equivalent to 54 hours) comprehensive health education course that includes mandated sexual health education and mental health education. Like all credit-bearing experiences, the high school health education course must align to NYSED health education commencement-level [learning standards](#) and must be taught by a NYCDOE certified health education teacher. It is strongly recommended that this course take place during grades 9 or 10 to adequately prepare students to make healthy and informed choices throughout high school.

Comprehensive health education emphasizes skill development around multiple dimensions of health, including social, emotional, mental, and physical health. It also includes these essential content areas: nutrition and physical activity; alcohol, tobacco, and other drug-use prevention (including heroin and opioids); sexual health (including HIV prevention); safety and injury prevention; violence prevention; and other required health areas. The NYCDOE offers free health education [training](#), curricula, and instructional resources for educators Citywide. For more information, schools should see [NYSED’s guidance, information, and resources for health education](#), [the National Health Education Standards](#), the [New York City 9-12 Health Education Scope and Sequence](#), or contact the [Office of School Wellness Programs](#).

The required sexual health education lessons provide students with medically accurate information and skills to avoid risky behaviors. Teachers are encouraged to include a condom demonstration as part of instruction; parents/guardians may opt their student out of this lesson if they wish. Parents/guardians may also opt their student out of any lessons having to do with methods of HIV and sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention and pregnancy prevention, other than abstinence. The NYCDOE provides schools with a [sexual health education notification letter](#) from the Chancellor to distribute to parents/guardian prior to sexual health education instruction.

In addition to one credit in comprehensive health education, schools must provide annual lessons on HIV and AIDS for every student every year. In grades 9–12, the NYCDOE requires six lessons each year using [Growing Up and Staying Safe: New York City K-12 HIV Education Curriculum](#), which is available through [WeTeachNYC.org](#). Schools must send each parent/guardian a [notification letter](#), signed by the principal, prior to their child receiving HIV lessons. Parents/guardians may opt their student out of only the specific lessons that include methods of HIV and STI prevention. Lessons that include abstinence but no other methods of prevention do not qualify for this exemption.

Students in their fifth or sixth year of high school who have earned the required one credit of health are not required to continue to receive HIV lessons.

For more information on academic policies and STARS programming for health education courses, schools may contact their [OPE Lead](#); for guidance on the implementation of health education instructional programs, schools may contact the [Office of School Wellness Programs](#). See also the section of this guide on [section properties](#) in STARS.

## 8. *Arts Education – Updated August 2024*

As specified in NYSED Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, [Part 100.5](#), students must earn at least two credits in the arts to graduate. Students may take courses in any of the following subject areas: dance, music, theater, and/or visual arts. Arts courses can be theoretical (for example, art history) and/or applied (for example, ceramics), but they must align to NYSED commencement-level [arts standards](#). In addition to NYSED’s learning standards, schools should align their arts coursework to the [NYC Blueprints in the Arts \(Dance, Music, Theater, Visual Arts\)](#) the New York City Public Schools (NYCPS) foundational curricular framework.

Students may fulfill the arts requirement through courses in the same discipline or in different arts disciplines.

**Beginning 2024-25**, new course codes are available for music, dance, and theater. Schedule these courses for 2024–25 and beyond as applicable.

A student may obtain arts credits in any arts discipline by participating in a school’s major performing groups, including band, chorus, orchestra, dance, and theater groups. These must be scheduled as arts instruction in STARS using the [High School Course Code Directory](#).

Starting 2024-25, to support implementation of the class size law, schools with grades 6–12 must accurately identify performing groups in STARS using the “performing group” section property to identify courses that meet the definition of performing group. For additional guidance, refer to the [STARS Programming Related to Class Size wiki](#).

Students may also specialize in a particular arts discipline and earn a Chancellor’s Diploma Endorsement in the Arts; see the [Diploma Endorsements](#) section of this guide for additional information. Students who successfully complete a 10-credit sequence in the Arts or CTE are not required to complete six credits of World Languages in order to earn an advanced Regents diploma; they also do not need to pass the World Language Comprehensive exam.<sup>16</sup> These students must still earn two World Languages credits and 44 total course credits to graduate.

## 9. *Electives – Updated August 2024*

Students must earn at least 44 total credits to graduate with a Regents or local diploma, including seven elective credits. Electives are credit-bearing courses not used to fulfill subject-specific credit requirements for graduation (for example, a ninth ELA credit or seventh science credit).

Students who earn an advanced Regents diploma need only three elective credits. The remaining four are used to meet the [World Languages](#) requirement, by studying one specific language, earning six total credits, and passing the culminating Checkpoint B language assessment in that same language.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Students may be required to earn more than 44 total credits in order to complete the full CTE sequence and meet graduation requirements.

<sup>17</sup> The following exceptions apply: (a) Students whose IEPs indicate a disability that affects their ability to learn a language are not required to take World Languages credits. The World Languages credits are replaced with elective courses, such that the students still earn 44 total credits; see the [World Languages section](#) of this guide. (b) Students who successfully complete a 10-credit sequence in the Arts or CTE are

Electives offer students a unique opportunity to explore academic disciplines not required for graduation, to specialize in a given subject, or advance to more challenging coursework. For example, students may pursue advanced coursework in statistics, participate in a credit-bearing internship at a local law firm or animal shelter, or take an independent study course in digital photography or Shakespeare. Schools may also choose to offer any of the following experiences:

- Advanced Placement® courses, as outlined in the [AP Courses and Exams](#) guidance
- Career and Technical education experiences, as outlined in the [CTE courses](#) guidance
- Computer science offerings, as described on the [Computer Science for All](#) website.

Schools should strongly consider students' previous experiences, post-secondary plans, and academic abilities and interests when programming elective coursework. Students who are programmed for math and science beyond the minimum requirements for graduation can use these courses as their elective credits, as long as they do not duplicate content already taken and passed.

Elective courses, like all other credit-bearing courses, must align to NYSED high school [learning standards](#), be taught by a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher, and meet instructional time requirements.

Schools must have a syllabus aligned to the requirements in the [Documenting Course Content](#) guidance for every course offered.

NYSED has commencement-level [learning standards](#) in the following departments: English language arts; social studies; mathematics; science; technology; the arts (including visual arts, music, dance, and theater); world languages; health; physical education; family and consumer sciences; and career development and occupational studies. NYSED does not have commencement-level learning standards in guidance. Per [UFT contracts](#), guidance counselors may not cover classes or perform other duties normally performed by classroom teachers.

Schools that wish to award elective credit(s) for courses in the [guidance department](#) must ensure that these courses align to commencement-level learning standards and meet all policies outlined in the section of this guide on [credit-bearing courses](#). Generally, these courses should not bear credit; if they are aligned to NYSED's learning standards and taught by a subject-certified teacher, they should be coded to accurately reflect the commencement-level learning standards present in the course content documentation. Additionally, students may not receive elective credit for retaking a previously passed course or by exceeding the four-credit maximum in math or science subjects designed to culminate in a [Regents exam](#).

Schools may use the [Course Review Form](#) as an additional tool when reviewing new and existing courses for alignment with learning standards and academic policies.

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not required to complete six credits of World Languages in order to earn an advanced Regents diploma; they also do not need to pass the World Language Comprehensive exam. They must still earn two World Languages credits and 44 total course credits to graduate. See [NYSED's Diploma Types webpage](#) and the [Diploma Endorsement](#) section of this guide for more information. (c) A student transferring between high schools in grade 11 or 12 may be permitted to combine World Languages credits in two languages if the language they started is not available in the school they are transferring to and may still earn an advanced Regents diploma. All other students must earn the full six credits in a single language.

#### a. Financial Education - **New August 2024**

All high schools are encouraged to provide students with opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills needed to develop healthy mindsets and strong habits around personal finance in order to build economic security. Schools are encouraged to offer courses covering personal finance topics such as earning income, spending, saving, investing, managing credit, managing risk, and saving for postsecondary opportunities. These courses should align with NYSED CDOS-commencement learning standards found in the [Career and Financial Management](#) course and the [National Standards for Personal Financial Education](#).

Schools participating in the FutureReadyNYC (FRNYC) initiative must provide at least one cohort of students in grades 9-12 with a minimum of 54 hours of financial education instruction. FRNYC schools may fulfill this requirement through:

- Embedding financial education within one or more courses, without awarding additional credit for the financial education content. When financial education is embedded in multiple courses, the course syllabi must clearly state the financial education content is addressed within each course.
- Offering a stand-alone financial education course aligned to NYSED CDOS-commencement learning standards found in the [Career and Financial Management](#) (CFM) framework. Stand-alone financial education courses aligned to CFM standards must be taught by NYCDOE CTE-certified teachers. Schools without CTE-certified teachers may be eligible for incidental teaching flexibilities. For more information on incidental teaching, please refer to the NYSED [Incidental Teaching](#) guidance and follow up with the Superintendent team's HR director.

Schools participating in Career Ready Modern Youth Apprenticeships (CRMYA) that offer the Career Development course, as well as CTE schools that include Career and Financial Management (CFM) in their approved sequence, meet the FRNYC financial education requirement.

All credit-bearing financial education courses, whether stand-alone or embedded in other courses, must meet the general requirements for credit-bearing courses including alignment with NYSED commencement-level learning standards, instruction by a NYCDOE teacher certified in relevant subject areas, and proper scheduling in STARS.

Schools must indicate in STARS when students receive instruction in financial education topics. For more information and resources on providing financial education instruction, please refer to the [Financial Education page](#) on the STARS wiki.

### C. Assessments

In addition to fulfilling course credit requirements, students must pass specific culminating assessments, typically Regents exams, in order to meet graduation requirements. Students must pass New York State [Regents exams](#) or other [NYSED-approved alternatives](#) in English language arts (ELA), social studies, mathematics, and science in order to earn a diploma. [See this table](#) for a brief description of the exam requirements by diploma type.

The minimum passing scores vary according to the diploma type and student eligibility criteria; in some cases, students can [appeal to graduate](#) with lower exam scores or, in limited circumstances, [waive specific assessment requirements](#). Schools must accurately reflect all appeals and waived exams on transcripts prior to graduation. Other assessments not required for graduation are described in this section as well; these include the [NYSITELL](#) and [NYSESLAT](#).

All attempted Regents exams and all NYSED-approved alternatives must appear on the STARS transcript. It must be evident on each and every graduate’s transcript that the student passed five exams, including at least one exam in ELA, math, science, social studies, and the +1 option. However, students fulfill the requirement in a variety of ways. In some cases, students do not pass all five exams, but they do meet the requirement via appeals (indicated with ‘WG’ marks), waived exams (indicated with ‘WA’ marks), and/or NYSED-approved alternatives (indicated with ‘WX’ marks). Schools must clearly document all five exams being used to meet graduation requirements on the transcript.

## 1. Regents and World Language Exams – Updated August 2024

NYSED Regents exams assess a student’s competency of NYSED [commencement-level \(high school\) learning standards](#) in a given subject area. All students who have enrolled in a course of study leading to a Regents exam have the right to take that exam. Students may not be barred from an exam for disciplinary reasons or because their achievement or attendance in the course is considered unsatisfactory.<sup>18</sup> Schools should accommodate and administer exams to students not currently enrolled, students over 21 years of age, or walk-in students who wish to sit for a Regents exam. See the [Regents Scanning Handbook](#) for more information on printing answer documents for walk-in students.

Below is a list of Regents exams, by department, that NYSED currently offers:<sup>19</sup>

### English

- English language arts (Common Core)—*first admin. June 2014*

### Social Studies

- U.S. History and Government (Framework)—*first admin. June 2023*<sup>20</sup>
- Global History and Geography II Regents exam (new Framework)—*first admin. June 2019*

### Math

- Algebra I (NYS Next Generation Learning Standards)—*first admin. June 2024*
- Geometry (NYS Next Generation Learning Standards)—*first admin. expected June 2025*
- Algebra II (Common Core)—*first admin. June 2016*

### Science<sup>21</sup>

- Living Environment—*last admin. expected June 2026*
- Earth Science—*last admin. expected June 2026*
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Life Science: Biology (2016 NYS Science Learning Standards)—*first admin. expected June 2025*
- Earth & Space Science (2016 NYS Science Learning Standards)—*first admin. expected June 2025*

<sup>18</sup> See page 9 of the [School Administrator’s Manual for Secondary Level Examinations](#).

<sup>19</sup> Many NYCDOE World Language exams, unlike Regents exams, are locally administered by the NYCDOE. See the [World Language FAQ](#) for more information.

<sup>20</sup> See the [Cancelled Regents Administrations](#) section of this guide for information about the postponed administration of the US History and Government (Framework) Regents exam.

<sup>21</sup> To sit for a science Regents exam, students must successfully complete 1,200 minutes of lab experiences, including the three required NYSED Investigations in the subject. See the [Science](#) section of this guide and the [Transition to NYS Science Learning Standards \(2016\) and New Science Regents Exams](#) for additional information.

**World Language Comprehensive** exams (aligned to Checkpoint B) are available in the following languages:

- American Sign Language (ASL)
- Albanian
- Arabic
- Bengali
- Chinese, Simplified
- Chinese, Traditional
- French
- German
- Greek
- Haitian Creole
- Hebrew
- Hindi
- Italian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Latin
- Polish
- Portuguese
- Punjabi
- Russian
- Spanish
- Urdu
- Vietnamese

For World Language Comprehensive exams that are approved as +1 options, see the [World Language Requirements FAQ](#) and [NYSED’s World Languages Approved Assessments](#).

Starting in 2024-25, high schools must capture on transcripts any third-party/vendor world language exams where students earned the equivalent of a passing score to meet diploma requirements. Schools can add third-party/vendor world language exams to transcripts using grade entry or transcript updates. Further guidance on the exam codes and marks to use will be provided in the World Language Requirements FAQ.

Schools should continue to use the current world language codes for NYCDOE exams and OHM-BOCES exams.

## 2. *NYSED-Approved Alternatives and the 4+1 Policy – Updated August 2024*

The 4+1 option describes the exam requirements for graduation in New York City and State.<sup>22</sup> To earn a local or Regents diploma, students must pass at least a Regents exam or [NYSED-approved alternative](#) in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and social studies.

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<sup>22</sup> Historically, students were required to pass Regents exams in ELA, U.S. History, Global History, math, and science to earn a local or Regents diploma. In spring of 2015, NYSED removed the requirement that students had to pass two social studies exams and instead afforded students greater choice in their fifth assessment requirement. The 4+1 option is available for all students eligible to receive a high



For their fifth assessment—their +1 option—students may use:

- Another Regents exam
- A different [NYSED-approved alternative](#) exam in ELA, math, science, or social studies
- A [Career and Technical Education \(CTE\) assessment](#), following the completion of a NYSED-approved CTE program<sup>23</sup>
- An approved assessment in [the arts](#) or the Individual Arts Assessment Pathway (IAAP)
  - The IAAP in Dance, Music, Theater, or Visual Arts consists of a portfolio review process of students select artistic work and reflections, in addition to earning at least six credits in their respective art form. For more information, contact the Arts Office team.

**Effective March 27, 2024**, students taking specific [NYSED-approved media arts](#) courses taught by either a visual arts- or CTE-certified teacher may use that credit toward the CTE or IAAP pathway. This flexibility does not change who can instruct arts courses to satisfy the required arts credit for a diploma.

- An approved [World Language Comprehensive exam](#)<sup>24</sup>
- The experiences that count for the [Career Development and Occupational Studies \(CDOS\) credential](#).
  - These students must complete all the requirements for the CDOS as outlined in the [CDOS FAQ](#).<sup>25</sup>
- The requirements for the [Seal of Civic Readiness](#)<sup>26</sup>
  - Students may use the Seal of Civic Readiness as their +1 option or as a standalone Seal of Civic Readiness endorsement; see the [Seal of Civic Readiness](#) section for specific requirements.

All attempted Regents exams and all NYSED-approved alternatives must appear on the STARS transcript. For NYSED-approved alternatives, schools must perform a transcript update with a using the mark ‘WX’ (see the [Course and Exam Marks Tables](#) for information about this mark). For students using the [4+1 option](#), schools should document this via the [GRDT](#) screen in ATS by using the [exam override code](#) ‘S’. See the [4+1 FAQ](#) guidance for additional examples and guidance.

In addition, [NYSED-approved alternatives](#) may not be included in the calculation to determine whether the student has achieved an average of 90 or above on the required exams. These students may use up to two NYSED-approved alternatives toward the honors designation; see the section on [diploma endorsements](#).

Schools must provide students of active-duty military personnel additional flexibility for meeting exam graduation requirements. Schools are required to accept all possible exam alternatives, including Regents-like state exit examinations, national norm-referenced achievement tests, and local end-of-course assessments, to help eligible students meet exam graduation requirements. See the section in this guide on [Children of Active-Duty Military Personnel](#) as well as the [Guidance for Children of Active-Duty Military Personnel](#) for information about these flexibilities.

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school diploma in June 2015 and thereafter. This option does not change the existing course requirements for earning a diploma or existing flexibilities for Regents exams; students must continue to earn 44 credits across specific subject areas.

<sup>23</sup> Students who successfully complete any State-approved CTE program and pass the culminating three-part technical assessment may use that assessment as their +1 option. Previously, students could only use State-approved exams as +1 options.

<sup>24</sup> See the [World Language FAQ](#) or the [4+1 FAQ](#) for more information.

<sup>25</sup> Students who use the CDOS as part of a Superintendent’s Determination for graduation may not use the CDOS as their +1. See the [CDOS FAQ](#) for more information.

<sup>26</sup> NYCDOE schools interested in offering the Seal of Civic Readiness must complete an [application](#) and register with Civics for All at [civicsforall@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:civicsforall@schools.nyc.gov).

### 3. Appeals to Graduate with Low Scores on Regents Examinations – Updated August 2024

NYSED allows a student who has met specific eligibility requirements to appeal to graduate with a lower score on Regents exams and receive a diploma. The Regents exam appeal options described below are designed for students who are unable to achieve a passing Regents exam score despite multiple attempts and support to achieve a higher score. There are currently four types of low score Regents appeals that are available to students: Low Score Appeal, New Arrival ELA Appeal, Safety Net Appeal, and Special Appeal (for Regents exams taken from June 2022 to August 2023). For more information on each appeal type, see the [Appeals to Graduate with Low Scores on Regents Examinations](#).

	<b>Low Score Appeal</b> Appeal to graduate with a score of 60–64 on Regents exams <sup>27</sup>	<b>New Arrival ELA Appeal</b> Appeal to graduate with a score of 55–59 on the ELA exam for newly-arrived ELLs only	<b>Safety Net Appeal</b> Appeal to graduate with a score of 52–54 on Regents exams for Safety Net-eligible students	<b>Special Appeal</b> Appeal to graduate with scores of 50-64 on Regents exams
<b>Eligible Students</b>	All students who meet the criteria listed below	Only for ELL students who arrived in the US for the first time in grades 9–12 and who meet the additional criteria listed below	Only for Safety Net-eligible students who meet the additional criteria listed below	All students who earn credit in the subject and earn an eligible score on a Regents exam taken from June 2022 through, and including, August 2023 in the same subject
<b>Test Score Requirements</b>	60–64 on up to two of any of the required Regents exams	55–59 on an ELA Regents	52–54 on up to two of any of the required Regents exams	50–64 on the exam under appeal
<b>Type of Diploma</b>	One successful appeal results in a Regents diploma Two successful appeals result in a local diploma	A New Arrival ELA appeal always results in a local diploma (student may also appeal one other Regents score of 60–64)	A Safety Net appeals always result in a local diploma	Any diploma type (local, Regents, advanced Regents)  There is no limit on the number of Special Appeals a student may apply to a diploma type
<b>Process</b>	Request in ATS using the <a href="#">RQSA-RGT option</a>	Request in ATS using the <a href="#">RQSA-ELL option</a>	Request in ATS using the <a href="#">RQSA-SFN option</a>	Request in ATS using the <a href="#">RQSA-SPC option</a>

<sup>27</sup> Adopted as an [amendment to Part 100.5\(d\)\(7\)](#) in March 2016.

To be eligible for the Low Score, New Arrival ELA, and Safety Net appeals, students must have:

- Taken the exam(s) under appeal at least two times
- Scored within the point range on the exam(s) under appeal
- Earned or be on track to earn a [passing grade](#) in all courses required for graduation in the subject area of the exam under appeal
- Been provided academic intervention services in the subject area of the exam under appeal
- Been approved by a school committee for the exam under appeal; a letter of recommendation is no longer required for low score Regents appeals

To be eligible for the New Arrival ELA appeal, students must have earned a score of 55–59 on the ELA Regents exam, enrolled in any United States school for the first time in grades 9–12, and be a current ELL student or have been an ELL student at time of the ELA Regents administration.

To be eligible for the Safety Net appeal, students must have earned a score of 52–54 on the Regents exam and must have an active Individualized Education Program (IEP), a 504 Plan specifying Safety Net-eligibility, or be a student with a disability who was declassified in grades 8–12 and whose last IEP specifies Safety Net-eligibility.<sup>28</sup>

The Special Appeal (applicable only to Regents exams taken from June 2022 through August 2023) is different from traditional low score appeals in that the student does not need to have taken the exam under appeal twice, nor participated in academic assistance provided by the school in the same subject of the Regents exam under appeal. Additionally, there is no limit to the number of Special Appeals that can be applied to specific diploma types. The Special Appeal does not apply to Regents exams taken in January 2024 and beyond, but some students may be eligible based upon subsequent completion of coursework. See [Appeals to Graduate with Low Scores on Regents Examinations](#) for more details.

Schools must submit all appeals to graduate with a lower score on the Regents exam to the superintendent for approval using the [RQSA](#) functions in ATS. Once an appeal is approved in ATS by the superintendent, the [transfer/appeal exam code ending in 'W'](#) will automatically appear on the student's transcript with a score of 'WG', in alignment with the schedule on the [wiki](#). For discharged students, schools must [update the student's transcript](#) with a new instance of the exam, using the [transfer/appeal exam code ending in 'W'](#) and 'WG' as the score, in order to represent a successful appeal. The original examination score may not be changed.

#### 4. *Safety Net Flexibilities*

[Students with disabilities](#), like all students, should be encouraged to pursue the most rigorous diploma option available and to achieve high scores on Regents exams when possible. The “Safety Net” provides additional flexibilities to support students with disabilities in earning a diploma. The following students are Safety Net-eligible:

- Students with an active Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Students with an active Section 504 Plan specifying Safety Net-eligibility
- Students who were declassified in grades 8–12 and whose last IEP specifies Safety Net-eligibility<sup>29</sup>

As part of the Safety Net, these students have the following options to earn a local diploma if they cannot meet or exceed the requirements for a Regents or advanced Regents diploma:

- Graduate with exam scores of 55 or higher
- Qualify for the [Safety Net appeal](#), provided they meet the other eligibility requirements

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<sup>28</sup> A student whose parent or guardian revoked consent for IEP services is not eligible for the Safety Net.

<sup>29</sup> A student whose parent or guardian revoked consent for IEP services is not eligible for the Safety Net.

- Use the [compensatory score option](#) to graduate, provided they meet the other eligibility requirements
- Use [Regents Competency Tests \(RCTs\)](#) to graduate, provided they meet the other eligibility requirements<sup>30</sup>
- Qualify for a [Superintendent’s Determination of Graduation](#), provided they meet the other eligibility requirements. Note that this review is only for students with current, active IEPs.

The following sections of this guide describe these flexibilities in more detail and outline the ways in which they may and may not be combined for individual students. See also the summary of graduation options in the [Appendix](#) of this guide.

#### **a. Safety Net Appeal**

Safety Net-eligible students may earn a local diploma by appealing a score of 52–54 on up to two of the required Regents examinations, provided that they pass the remaining Regents exams with a score of 55 or above and meet the additional criteria.<sup>31</sup> See the [Appeals to Graduate with Low Scores on Regents Examinations](#) section for more information.

#### **b. Compensatory Score Option**

The [compensatory score option](#) allows eligible students to earn a local diploma with one or two Regents exam scores of 45–54 by compensating each low score with a score of 65 or higher on another required Regents exam. To be eligible for the compensatory score option, students must:

- Be Safety Net eligible
- Earn a score of 55 or higher or receive Regents waivers or low score appeals on the ELA and a math Regents exam<sup>32</sup>
- Earn or be on track to earning a passing grade in all courses required for graduation in the subject area of the exam being compensated
- Have satisfactory attendance rate, as defined by their school

Schools may use the [compensatory score calculator](#) to determine if a student meets the eligibility requirements and calculate if a student fulfills exam requirements using the compensatory score option. The compensatory score option may also be used in conjunction with the Safety Net appeal. See the guidance on the [Compensatory Score Option](#) and the [Appeals to Graduate with Low Scores on Regents Examinations](#) for examples.

Regents exam waivers due to COVID-19 cannot be used to compensate for scores of 45–54 on another Regents exam.

#### **c. Superintendent Determination of Graduation – Updated August 2024**

Superintendents may award the local diploma to students with current, active IEPs who do not meet graduation assessment requirements through the existing Safety Net options (such as the compensatory score option or Safety Net appeal). To be eligible for the superintendent’s determination of graduation, students must:

- Have written consent from a parent or guardian

<sup>30</sup> Students who entered high school prior to September 2011 are eligible to use [Regents Competency Tests \(RCTs\)](#) to graduate, provided they meet the other eligibility requirements. The last administration of RCTs was in August 2018.

<sup>31</sup> [Amendment to Part 100.5\(d\)\(7\)](#)

<sup>32</sup> Safety Net-eligible students may appeal a score of 52–54 on up to two Regents exams, including the ELA and math Regents.

- Have a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) and actively be receiving special education services and/or related services
- Be enrolled in their fourth year of high school or beyond
- Have earned all credits required for graduation
- Have met exam requirements for English Language Arts (ELA) and math by:
  - Earning a score of 55+ or appealable score of 52–54 or a Regents waiver on the ELA Regents exam(s), and
  - Earning a score of 55+ or appealable score of 52–54 or a Regents waiver on one math Regents exam(s)
    - Since January 2018, students who are unable to meet the ELA Regents exam requirement and/or the math Regents exam requirement can complete the requirements for the [Career Development and Occupational Studies \(CDOS\) commencement credential](#).<sup>33</sup>

Students pursuing the superintendent determination of graduation may not use approved Special Appeal scores of 50 and 51 to meet the ELA and/or math Regents eligibility criteria. For more information, see [Superintendent's Determination of Graduation with a Local Diploma](#).

- Have attempted all Regents exams required for graduation (ELA, math, social studies, science and +1 option)
- Have demonstrated proficiency of content in the subject areas of the failed the Regents exams, including, but not limited to having final passing grades in the subject areas.

Since January 2019, schools must submit all requests for a superintendent's determination of graduation, including for students who are using the CDOS credential to meet the ELA and/or math Regents exam eligibility requirement, using the [RQSA–SUP](#) function in ATS. Schools simultaneously submit the request in ATS and email supporting documentation to the superintendent for review. For students who are using the CDOS to fulfill ELA and/or math Regents exam eligibility requirements, schools must submit the [CDOS Attestation Form](#) to the superintendent as evidence that the student met the requirements for the CDOS. See the [Superintendent's Determination of Graduation for Students with IEPs](#) for detailed instructions.

## 5. *Regents Exam Waivers*

Some students may be eligible for Regents exam waivers based upon the date they enroll in a New York State registered high school and/or the cancellation of Regents exam administrations. The following sections explain the circumstances under which students may be eligible for Regents exam waivers. See the section on Diploma Endorsements for details on how Regents waivers affect a student's eligibility for the honors endorsement and the mastery in math/science designations.

### a. **Students transferring to a New York State registered high school**

Students who enter a New York State registered high school for the first time in grade 11 or 12, or who re-enter a New York State registered high school in grade 11 or 12 after having been enrolled in a New York

<sup>33</sup> For students who are using the CDOS to fulfill ELA and/or math Regents exam eligibility requirements, schools must submit the [CDOS Attestation Form](#) to the superintendent as evidence that the student met the requirements for the CDOS.

State registered high school for three or fewer semesters,<sup>34</sup> may be exempted from certain Regents exam and distribution requirements.<sup>35</sup>

- Students who meet the criteria above and transfer in grade 11 are exempt from the Regents exam in Global History II and Geography. These students may graduate by passing the following exams: one math, one science, ELA, and U.S. History.
- Students who meet the criteria above and transfer in grade 12 are exempt from the Regents exams in science and in Global History II and Geography. These students may graduate with a combination of three exam passes: one math, ELA, and U.S. History.

Students who receive transfer waivers for Global History II and Geography are required to take and pass the U.S. History Regents exam and may not use another +1 option to fulfill the social studies exam requirement. All exams used to meet graduation requirements must be clearly indicated on the transcript.

Schools must [update the transcript](#) in STARS when a student is utilizing a Regents waiver to support the fulfillment of diploma requirements; waived exams must be clearly evident on students' transcripts. The exam(s) must be recorded on the student's transcript with 'WA' as the exam mark (see the [Course and Exam Marks Tables](#) and the [Transcript Update](#) guidance), using the comparable Regents exam code ending in 'W'. The student's NYCDOE transcript and original transcript from their previous school serve as documentation for the transcript update.

If a student transfers into the NYCDOE with a preliminary grade 11 or 12 placement, but the school subsequently adjusts the student's grade level based on the transcript evaluation, the new grade level must be used to determine whether the student is eligible for Regents exam waivers.

Further, schools must provide students of active-duty military personnel additional flexibility for meeting exam graduation requirements. Schools are required to accept all possible exam alternatives, including Regents-like state exit examinations and national norm-referenced achievement tests, to help eligible students meet exam graduation requirements. See the section in this guide on [Children of Active-Duty Military Personnel](#) as well as the [Guidance for Children of Active-Duty Military Personnel](#) for information about these flexibilities.

#### **b. Cancelled Regents Administrations**

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) cancelled the administration of Regents exams scheduled for June 2020, August 2020, January 2021, and August 2021, January 2022, as well as most exams in June 2021 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The U.S. History and Government (Framework) Regents exam was further postponed until June 2023. For each of the cancelled Regents exam administrations, NYSED provided guidelines to award Regents waivers to eligible students. These waivers represent a passed exam (equivalent to a score of 65) for the purposes of fulfilling exam graduation requirements.

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<sup>34</sup> This includes home schooling or enrollment in a registered or non-registered public or non-public New York State high school. For example, students who have been home schooled for two years in New York State, enroll in a school outside of New York State, then enroll in an NYCDOE high school are not eligible for these waivers.

<sup>35</sup> See [Part 100.5\(d\)](#). The 4+1 flexibility cannot be applied for students who are utilizing these waivers. For example, a grade 11 transfer student cannot substitute Global History for U.S. History. Additionally, see the section on [credit requirements for social studies](#) or the [Transfer Student Toolkit](#) for more information on the Global History credit distribution exemption. See the section on [Physical Education](#) for applicable PE credit exemptions for transfer students.

Schools must inform parents of their right to decline use of Regents exam waivers for use toward graduation requirements. See the [Regents Exam Waivers wiki](#) for more information and letter templates (including translations).

## 6. *Schools using Performance-Based Assessment Tasks (PBATs) in lieu of Regents Exams*

All students must earn required course credits in specific subjects and must pass specific assessments to meet diploma requirements. [Specific schools](#) within the NYCDOE have permission to use performance-based assessment tasks (PBATs) in lieu of certain Regents examinations. Students enrolled in schools that administer PBATs are still required to pass the ELA Regents exam, and, depending on the school, any math Regents exam. Students must also earn credits in the specific subject areas required for graduation regardless of whether or not they are required to pass Regents assessments, NYSED-approved alternatives, or PBATs in that subject area.

All schools must follow the standardized code deck conventions, rules, and programming practices outlined in the [High School Course Code Directory](#). The PBATs being used to fulfill graduation requirements must be [reflected on the STARS transcript](#).

To support college and career readiness, schools may communicate more rigorous academic expectations than those defined by State and City graduation requirements. However, schools may not withhold diplomas from students who have completed the minimum graduation requirements. See this guidance on policies affecting [Schools Administering PBATs in lieu of Regents Exams](#) for more information.

### D. **Diploma Endorsements**

Students may obtain one or more designations or endorsements to certain diploma types as follows:

#### 1. *Arts Endorsement*<sup>36</sup>

Eligible students	Eligible diploma	Requirements
Students enrolled in schools with approved arts sequences	Advanced Regents, Regents, and local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earn 10 credits in a single art form (dance, theater, music, or visual arts), which may include those required to meet the 44 credits for graduation</li> <li>• Pass the NYCDOE assessment in that art form/discipline<sup>37</sup></li> <li>• For the advanced Regents diploma, only two World Language course credits instead of six credits are required, and a World Language Comprehensive exam is not required               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Students completing six credits of World Languages to fulfill the advanced Regents diploma requirement only need to earn nine arts credits in a single art form to meet the credit requirements for the advanced Regents diploma with an arts endorsement.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>36</sup> Students may earn a Certificate of Arts Achievement by completing a 6-credit arts sequence in dance or visual arts and passing the NYCDOE assessment in that art form. The Certificate of Arts Achievement is not a diploma endorsement.

<sup>37</sup> Contact the [Arts Office team](#) about ordering arts assessments for eligible students.

## 2. Seal of Biliteracy – Updated August 2024

High schools are encouraged to offer the [New York State Seal of Biliteracy \(NYSSB\)](#) as a diploma endorsement for their students as a way to affirm students’ identities and language learning experiences; schools must [register](#) with the Office of Multilingual Learners. The NYSSB recognizes high school graduates who attained a high level of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages, in addition to English. The NYSSB is available to any graduating senior in any language, and Multilingual Learners are encouraged to work towards this endorsement over their high school experience.

Eligible students	Eligible diploma	Requirements
All students	Advanced Regents and Regents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Earn three points for demonstrating proficiency in English and earn three points for demonstrating proficiency in a world language from the criteria. See the <a href="#">NYSED Seal of Biliteracy Handbook</a> for details or contact <a href="mailto:multilinguallearners@schools.nyc.gov">multilinguallearners@schools.nyc.gov</a> with questions.</li> </ul>

## 3. Career and Technical Education (CTE) Endorsement

Eligible students	Eligible diploma	Requirements
Students enrolled in <a href="#">New York State-approved CTE programs</a>	Advanced Regents, Regents, and local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Earn course credits in NYSED-approved <a href="#">Career and Technology Education (CTE)</a> sequence (number of credits varies by sequence but must be a minimum of seven, including one course credit in Career and Financial Management [CFM]) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CFM can be embedded to fulfill a distribution requirement or can be offered as a stand-alone course</li> <li>Students may be required to exceed 44 total credits</li> <li>For the advanced Regents diploma only, if a student fulfills a course sequence that extends to 10 credits or more, only two World Language course credits are required (instead of six) and the World Language Comprehensive exam is not required.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Pass the 3-part CTE technical assessment that corresponds to the New York State-approved sequence in which the student earns credits</li> <li>Complete work-based learning (WBL) experiences as part of the approved program</li> <li>Complete an <a href="#">employability profile</a></li> </ul>



#### 4. *Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Endorsement*

Eligible students	Eligible diploma	Requirements
All students who participate in standard State assessments	Advanced Regents, Regents, and local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete and successfully pass 216 hours (or four, 54-hour units of study) in CTE and/or work-based learning courses;               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This must include, at minimum, 54 hours of supervised work-based learning experiences related to career awareness, exploration, or preparation. These experiences may be completed in conjunction with CTE courses or as other work-based learning experiences.</li> <li>○ The remaining three units (162 hours) may be completed through CTE courses, work-based learning experiences, or other career preparation activities such as internships, service-learning, community service, school-based enterprise, or job shadowing.</li> <li>○ All 216 hours must be reflected on the transcript.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Demonstrate achievement of the commencement-level <a href="#">CDOS learning standards</a></li> <li>• Complete and annually review a <a href="#">career plan</a>; and</li> <li>• Complete an <a href="#">employability profile</a> detailing the student’s attainment of the <a href="#">CDOS learning standards</a> through work-related and academic experiences within one year prior to the student’s exit from high school. This must be maintained in the student’s permanent record.</li> </ul>

#### 5. *Seal of Civic Readiness – Updated August 2024*

The NYS Seal of Civic Readiness (NYSSCR) was piloted in select schools in the 2021-22 school year and is now available in schools that have completed an [application](#) and registered with Civics for All. Students may use the Seal of Civic Readiness as a +1 option or as a stand-alone endorsement to a NYS diploma. Students must demonstrate proficiencies in civic knowledge and civic participation as measured in the Seal of Civic Readiness criteria.

Eligible students	Eligible diploma	Requirements
All students	Advanced Regents, Regents, and local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earn a total of six points with at least two points in Criteria for Demonstrating Civic Knowledge and at least two points in Criteria for Demonstrating Civic Participation. Prior to high school, students may earn one point in middle school by completing the Middle School Capstone. See the <a href="#">NYCDOE Seal of Civic Readiness Handbook</a> for more information.</li> </ul>

6. Honors Designation – **Updated August 2024**

As long as Regents exam waivers continue to influence students’ ability to graduate, the calculation for the honors endorsement will be dependent upon the number of scored Regents exams the student has completed (applicable to their diploma type). In instances where students have more earned scores and/or exemptions than required for the diploma type, schools may use the combination most beneficial to the student.

Eligible students	Eligible diploma	Requirements
All students	Advanced Regents and Regents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Achieve 90+ average on all required Regents exams for the diploma the student is earning; averages below 90 may not be rounded up.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Students may use up to two NYSED-approved alternative assessments toward an Honors Designation.</li> <li>○ For students pursuing a diploma with honors and using a NYSED-approved alternative assessment and/or a waiver, as appropriate in accordance with <a href="#">Part 100.5</a>, the alternative exam and/or exam waiver (including Regents waivers due to COVID-19) should not be included in the calculation to determine whether the student has achieved an average of 90 or above on their exams.</li> <li>○ The calculation for the designation depends upon the number of Regents exams applicable to the diploma type.                   <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In instances where students have <b>at least three scored Regents exams applicable to the diploma type</b>, exam waivers should be removed from the calculation. If the computed average of the Regents exam scores required for the diploma (not including waivers) equals 90 or above, the student earned the honors endorsement.</li> <li>● When students have <b>fewer than three scored Regents exams applicable to the diploma type</b>, the student’s final course grade for each exempted Regents exam is substituted in the calculation for honors. If the computed average of the scored Regents exams and the final course grades for courses for which waivers were granted equals 90 or above, the student earned the honors endorsement.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### 7. *Mastery in Math Designation*

Eligible students	Eligible diploma	Requirements
All students	Advanced Regents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve a score of 85+ on each of the three required math Regents exams (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II)</li> <li>• The calculation for the designation depends upon the number of Regents exams applicable to the diploma type.</li> <li>• Students who received math Regents waivers due to cancelled Regents exam administrations may earn the mastery endorsement in math as long as they meet the requirements for an advanced Regents diploma and:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Passed 3 Regents exams in math with a score of 85 or higher; or</li> <li>○ Passed 2 Regents exams in math with a score of 85 or higher and received a Regents waiver for a third Regents exam in math; or</li> <li>○ Passed 1 Regents exam in math with an 85 or higher and earned a final course grade of 85 or higher in 2 additional math courses culminating in a Regents exam for which a Regents waiver was granted.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### 8. *Mastery in Science Designation*

Eligible students	Eligible diploma	Requirements
All students	Advanced Regents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achieve a score of 85+ on any three science Regents exams. While two science Regents exams are required for the Advanced Regents diploma, three are required for the Mastery in Science endorsement.</li> <li>• The calculation for the designation depends upon the number of Regents exams applicable to the diploma type.</li> <li>• Students who received science Regents waivers due to cancelled Regents exam administrations may earn the mastery endorsement in science as long as they meet the requirements for an advanced Regents diploma and:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Passed 3 Regents exams in science with a score of 85 or higher; or</li> <li>○ Passed 2 Regents exams in science with a score of 85 or higher and received a Regents waiver for a third Regents exam in science; or</li> <li>○ Passed 1 Regents exam in science with an 85 or higher and earned a final course grade of 85 or higher in 2 additional science courses culminating in a Regents exam for which a Regents waiver was granted.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## 9. *Service Seal*

Eligible students	Eligible diploma	Requirements
All students	Advanced Regents, Regents, or local; may also be added to commencement credentials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meet a minimum of <u>100 hours</u> of independent service, service-learning, and/or a school-led service program over the students' high school years. See the section of this guide on <u>Service Learning</u> and the <u>Service Seal Worksheet</u> for more information.</li> </ul>

In addition, schools may award merit, citizenship, and other school-based endorsements in accordance with their school policies. Schools utilizing these endorsement options should clearly document their policies for awarding such endorsements and communicate the policies to students and families. School-based endorsements entailing additional coursework or exams may be offered to students; however, schools may not withhold diplomas from students who have completed the minimum New York State and City graduation requirements.

### E. **Commencement Credentials**

In lieu of a high school diploma, students who meet specific criteria may be eligible to earn the Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) commencement credential or the Skills and Achievement commencement credential. These exiting credentials are not equivalent to a high school diploma and do not have credit or exam requirements. They do not guarantee qualification in situations where a high school diploma is required. Students who earn these credentials must receive written assurance of their eligibility to return to high school through the year in which they turn 21.

#### 1. *Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential*

The Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) commencement credential is available to all students in New York State, including students with disabilities who participate in standard assessments and meet the requirements. It is designed to recognize students' proficiency in the career-readiness skills defined in the Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) learning standards.

The CDOS commencement credential is not equivalent to a high school diploma. All students, including students with disabilities, must receive the opportunities and support needed to earn a high school diploma. Unlike a diploma, the CDOS credential does not require students to earn credits or pass exams. As a standalone credential earned in place of a high school diploma, the CDOS does not guarantee employment where a diploma is required and does not qualify students to enter the military or enter many post-secondary institutions. For these reasons, schools should offer students CDOS-aligned work-based learning and CTE experiences alongside the academic coursework required for a diploma.

Commencement Credential	Student Eligibility	Requirements
<p><u><a href="#">Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential</a></u></p> <p>The CDOS may be awarded as an endorsement to an advanced Regents, Regents, or local diploma; as a +1 option in lieu of a fifth Regents exam; as the student’s sole exiting credential from high school; or to meet the ELA and/or math Regents exam requirements for the superintendent’s determination of graduation.</p>	<p>Students who participate in standard assessments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete and successfully pass 216 hours (or four, 54-hour units of study) in CTE and/or work-based learning courses;               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This must include, at minimum, 54 hours of supervised work-based learning experiences related to career awareness, exploration, or preparation. These experiences may be completed in conjunction with CTE courses or as separate and distinct work-based learning experiences.</li> <li>○ The remaining three units (162 hours) may be completed through CTE courses, work-based learning experiences, or other career preparation activities such as internships, service-learning, community service, school-based enterprise, or job shadowing.</li> <li>○ All 216 hours must be reflected on the transcript.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Demonstrate achievement of the commencement-level <u><a href="#">CDOS learning standards</a></u></li> <li>• Complete and annually review a <u><a href="#">career plan</a></u>; and</li> <li>• Complete a <u><a href="#">work skills employability profile</a></u> detailing the student’s attainment of the <u><a href="#">CDOS learning standards</a></u> through work-related and academic experiences within one year prior to the student’s exit from high school. This must be maintained in the student’s permanent record.</li> <li>• Written notice of the student’s right to return to pursue a high school diploma until the year in which they turn 21.</li> </ul>

Students who earn the CDOS credential without earning a high school diploma must receive written assurance of their right to return to high school and work towards earning a diploma. Students remain eligible through the end of the full school year in which they turn 21, or until they have earned a diploma, whichever comes first.

## 2. Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential – Updated August 2024

The Skills and Achievement credential can only be awarded to students with IEPs who participate in [the New York State Alternate Assessment \(NYSAA\)](#) in place of standardized assessments; it is the sole exiting credential available to NYSAA-eligible students.<sup>38</sup> Students who earn this credential must receive written assurance of their eligibility to stay in high school through the school year in which they turn 21. The Skills and Achievement commencement credential should be awarded in alignment with the transition planning process for students with IEPs. For more information, see this guidance on the [Skills and Achievement commencement credential](#) and consult the section of this guide on [NYSAA](#).

Students with IEPs who turned 21 within the 2023-24 school year may remain enrolled or re-enroll for 2024-25 to meet graduation requirements or transition to adult/postsecondary programs. See the section on [Transition Services for Students with Disabilities](#) for more information.

Commencement Credential	Student Eligibility	Requirements
<a href="#">Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential</a>	<p>Students with severe cognitive disabilities who participate in <a href="#">NYSAA</a>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upon reaching the end of the school year in which the student turns 21; or</li> <li>• Upon application of the student or their parent or guardian at the completion of at least 12 years of schooling, excluding kindergarten</li> </ul>	<p>The credential must be issued together with a summary of the student’s academic achievement and functional performance and must include documentation of the student’s:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievement against the <a href="#">Career Development and Occupational Students (CDOS) learning standards</a>;</li> <li>• Level of academic achievement and independence as measured by <a href="#">NYSAA</a>;</li> <li>• Skills, strengths, interests; and</li> <li>• As appropriate, other achievements and accomplishments.</li> <li>• Schools should use the <a href="#">exit summary</a> and <a href="#">directions</a> provided by NYSED.</li> </ul>

<sup>38</sup> These credentials supersede the IEP diploma; the last IEP diplomas were issued in June 2013.

## F. Graduation Policies and Procedures

Below are policies and procedures relevant to high school graduation requirements; refer to the [academic policy resources page](#) for the most up-to-date guidance and resources on specific policies.

### 1. Promotion and Grade Level

[Chancellor’s Regulation A-501](#) specifies promotion standards for all NYCDOE students. Promotion decisions for students in grades 9–12 are based on credit accumulation and passing of Regents exams.

Through the promotion in doubt (PID) process, schools formally notify families through promotion in doubt letters that their student is at risk of not meeting promotion standards and being retained in the same grade for the upcoming school year. This mid-year notification, which occurs in January and February, enables schools and families to plan for the needed supports and interventions to help students achieve promotion standards by June.

The table below outlines the minimum promotion criteria for high school promotion. Principals must make promotion decisions for all students in mid-June. Schools must communicate promotion decisions to students and families before the end of the school year. High school students who do not meet promotion requirements in June have the right to attend summer school to make up course credits and attempt Regents exams.

Grade	Coursework/Exams	Minimum Credits
9	Successful completion of standards in academic subject areas	8 credits
10	Successful completion of standards in academic subject areas	20 credits (including 4 in ELA and/or ENL and 4 in social studies)
11	Successful completion of standards in academic subject areas	30 credits
12	Successful completion of standards in academic subject areas	44 credits in required subject areas

Schools should accurately reflect students’ progress toward graduation by adjusting their grade levels and identifying students’ promotion standing in January, as part of the promotion in doubt identification process, and in June as part of the June promotion process, in accordance with the [NYCDOE promotion policy](#). Students’ grade levels must align to the promotion criteria above and should not be adjusted mid-year unless assigned in error, or the student meets promotion criteria.

As part of the promotion process, schools are responsible for adjusting students’ grade levels in ATS within the current school year using the [Interclass-Intergrade Transfer \(SIGT\)](#) function and as part of their end of year work using either the [Future Grade Promotion Placement \(GPPL\)](#) or [High School Reorganization \(CFHS\)](#) functions. Unlike schools serving grades 3–8, high schools cannot promote students at the end of August. Instead, schools should adjust a student’s grade level as necessary after receiving summer course work.

Grade level placements must be indicated in ATS for operational and accountability purposes. However, depending on the culture and instructional model of a school, schools may choose how to communicate grade placements to students and families in other ways, outside of the student’s ATS grade level. For example, transfer schools may follow an “un-graded” approach, where students track progress based on credits earned and exams passed, but do not associate students to particular grade levels. Even if a school does not choose to communicate

grade levels with students and families, they must update students and families with information regarding the student's progress to graduation each year.

For information on how grade level placement affects a student's cohort assignment, review the [Graduation Cohort Policy](#) section of this guide and the [Graduation Accountability FAQ](#).

## 2. *Graduation Cohort Policy*

Students' graduation accountability for New York State and [New York City reporting](#) is determined by three factors:

- Cohort year
- Accountability status ("report status")
- Accountable DBN ("grad cohort DBN")

These variables are displayed in the ATS [HEOY](#) function and are determined as described below. The [Graduation Accountability FAQ](#) describes each of these factors and how they are reported in greater detail.

### a. Cohort year

A student's cohort year corresponds to the year in which a student enters grade 9 for the first time, anywhere in the country or world. A student's cohort year is not based on credit accumulation or progress toward graduation.

Because cohort year reflects the year in which a student first entered ninth grade, it may determine which graduation requirements apply to the student. For this reason, schools must ensure that the student's cohort year accurately reflects the year in which the student first entered ninth grade.

ATS infers the proper cohort year assignment based on a student's grade level at the end of their first school year in a NYCDOE school in grade levels 9, 10, 11, or 12. Students with disabilities who participate in alternate assessments (such as NYSAA) are assigned cohort years differently.<sup>39</sup>

Schools have the ability to adjust the cohort year within the first year, if it is inaccurate, by changing the student's grade level in accordance with the promotion policy, as outlined in the section of this guide on [promotion and grade level](#). These corrections must be made so that cohort year and grade level are accurate within the first year of enrollment in a NYCDOE high school.

After a student's first year of enrollment in NYCDOE, schools may make a one-time request to change a student's cohort year using the [UGNO](#) function in ATS. In order for the request to be reviewed, [UGNO](#) entries must include a reason for the request in the comment field. Cohort change requests must fall into one of the two categories listed below:

1. **The student's cohort year does not accurately reflect their true first year of ninth grade entry due to error.** For example, the student was assigned to an incorrect grade level during their first year of enrollment in the NYCDOE, and, as a result, the cohort year does not accurately reflect the student's real first year of ninth grade entry anywhere in the world. In this case, the school must submit an

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<sup>39</sup> As an exception, students with disabilities who are eligible for the New York State Alternate Assessment ([NYSAA](#)) at non-District 75 high schools or in District 75 inclusion programs are assigned cohorts on their ninth grade entry year or their seventeenth birthday year, whichever comes first. All other NYSAA-eligible students in District 75 programs are assigned cohorts based on their seventeenth birthday year. See the [Graduation Accountability](#) guidance for more information on cohort assignments for NYSAA-eligible students, the [Alternate Assessment](#) guidance, and the section of this guide on [students with disabilities who participate in alternate assessments](#).



[UGNO](#) request, indicate the reason in the comment field, and retain supporting documentation to demonstrate the student’s true first year of ninth grade.

2. **The student is an English Language Learner (ELL) who fulfills all of the specific criteria below.** In this case, the school may make a one-time request to move the student to the cohort corresponding to the year prior to their ninth grade entry year, provided that all of the following are true:
  - The student has never had such a request granted before
  - The student was newly arrived to the United States in their first year of high school and placed directly into ninth grade
  - The student is in exactly their second year of enrollment in high school
  - The student is an English Language Learner and has a low level of literacy in their native language
  - The school has determined, before the end of the second year of enrollment, that the proper grade level of the student is still ninth grade

Schools may not adjust students’ cohort year because of factors not described above, including, for example, a student is struggling to meet graduation requirements, has tested at a lower proficiency level or below grade level in one or more subjects, or because they disagree with a previous NYCDOE school’s assessment of a transfer students’ records.

Schools cannot request cohort year adjustments for students in cohort years whose four-year graduation rate has already been reported to NYSED as part of the graduation rate and/or are included on the NYCDOE School Quality Report (SQR).

#### **b. Accountability Status (“Report Status”)**

A student’s report status— “accountable” or “non-accountable”—indicates whether the student is included in graduation rate calculations. Accountable students include those who are active in the NYCDOE, have dropped out, or have graduated. Non-accountable students are those who were discharged with a cohort-removing code and students who were never enrolled in a diploma-granting high school. Per the [Transfer, Discharge, and Graduation Code Guidelines](#), the cohort-removing discharge codes are 8, 10, 11, 15, and 25. Students discharged with codes 8 or 11 with documentation or reason code of ‘X’ remain accountable. For additional guidance on cohort removing discharges, see the [Graduation Accountability](#) guidance and [Transfer, Discharge, and Graduation Code Guidelines](#).

Report status locks in ATS on June 30 of a student’s fourth year of high school. Schools must submit cohort change requests for closing cohorts (meaning those that are coming to the end of the fourth year of high school), by June 1 of that school year to allow for sufficient time for review.

#### **c. Accountable DBN (“Grad Cohort DBN”)**

The “accountable DBN” or “grad cohort DBN” is the last diploma-granting school where the student was enrolled for one day or more within the first four years of a student’s high school enrollment, regardless of their attendance. This school is accountable for the student’s graduation for NYSED and School Quality Report accountability purposes.

If a student transfers between NYCDOE schools, the student’s grad cohort DBN changes if both of the following are true:

- The new school is a regular diploma-granting high school, and
- The effective date of the transfer occurs before June 30 of the fourth year of high school. Like report status, grad cohort DBN locks on June 30

Once June 30 of the fourth year of high school passes, the grad cohort DBN does not change in ATS and will not change for the NYCDOE School Quality Reports. However, transfers between accountable schools occurring before June 30 of a student’s fifth year will result in changes to the grad cohort DBN for NYSED five-year graduation rate. For the purposes of calculating the six-year graduation rate, accountability status and accountable DBN are determined outside of ATS. For additional information on how the six-year graduation rate is calculated, including how accountability is determined for students who enroll in transfer schools and YABC programs, see the [Graduation Accountability](#) guidance.

### 3. *Tracking Student Progress Toward Graduation*

It is important for school leaders, counselors, and other staff to examine data and students’ transcripts to determine which students are on track to graduate this term or year, which students may need extra support to graduate this term or year, and which students may need further conversations about their graduation timeline. It is critical to determine which category applies to each student. You can use the [Senior Certification Guide](#) to help you think through this process.

Schools may use their existing graduation tracking tools to support their planning, provided they align with DOE academic policies. Schools may use [Insight](#) as a resource for reviewing student progress toward graduation and identifying disproportionality by subgroups. Insight displays data from various DOE systems so you can see the academic progress of individual students and groups of students to support academic planning. There are two main tools in Insight that schools can use to support students in their journey toward graduation: Graduation Progress and Downloader.

- The [Graduation Progress](#) feature allows you to review an individual student’s credit and exam progress, including the courses they are currently taking.
- The [Downloader](#) feature allows you to create a CSV file that includes data points you need to inform conversations about individual student progress and identify groups of students who may need additional support.

Due to the cancellation of the Regents exams between June 2020 and January 2023, parents have the right to decline Regents waivers for use toward graduation requirements and have their students remain enrolled in high school beyond four years. Schools must monitor the progress of these students closely so that they remain on track to graduate and are college- and career-ready. Review [Insight: Tips to Identify and Support Students in Earlier Cohorts to Graduate](#) for instructions on how to identify and review the graduation progress of students in earlier cohorts using Insight.

#### 4. *College and Career Advising and Awareness – Updated September 2024*

In order to ensure that every student graduates with a [strong plan and on a path toward long-term economic security](#), all students must have access to ongoing, personalized college and career advising and career connected learning experiences throughout their educational journey.

Advising supports must focus on facilitating student progress through the following evidence-based milestone experiences for developing a strong plan for the future, aligned with the [Career Navigation Roadmap](#):

- **Examine:** Exploration of postsecondary options and career pathways to develop an initial plan that aligns to their passion, purpose and skills
- **Explore:** Gain transferable workplace, financial, and digital literacy skills through career-connected coursework and work-based learning experiences
- **Engage:** Connection to [opportunities to earn early college credit and credentials](#)
- **Experience:** Generation of a list of postsecondary options aligned with students' career interests and passions; completion of postsecondary applications, including FAFSA, TAP and DREAM Act for students who plan to enroll in college; and navigation of decision and transition processes for a strong launch into higher education, apprenticeship, workforce training, public service or employment, accounting for students' independence, safety, belonging, and ability to persist and thrive

Schools are required to assign a college and career advisor to individual students and document students' planning experiences and postsecondary plans in the [STARS College and Career Planning Tracker](#), as part of the official record of students' programs, grades, and progress in completion of academic requirements. Specifically:

- Students' current career interests must be documented and updated annually from grades 9 through 12.
- Students in grades 9 through 12 must be assigned a dedicated advisor before the end of fall semester to ensure access to key planning experiences ahead of graduation.
- Students' attainment of key milestones and experiences such as career exploration activities, work-based learning participation, early college/industry credentials must be documented.
- Students' confirmed postsecondary plan (college, training, apprenticeships, public service, employment, etc.) must be documented at exit from high school.
- Schools must also use the [STARS College and Career Planning Tracker](#) to assign a college and career advisor to individual students. Students in grades 9 through 12 must be assigned a dedicated advisor before the end of fall semester to ensure access to key planning experiences ahead of graduation

To support development of strong, personalized plans, students at all grade levels in high school must participate in individualized college and career advising sessions with trained staff. Annual Individual Progress Reviews (IPRs) conducted with students by a certified school counselor as specified in [NYSED comprehensive school counseling program regulations](#) meet requirements for individual college and career advising sessions and must also be documented in the STARS College and Career Planning tracker. In addition to the annual IPR, students in grades 11 and 12 must participate in at least one additional individualized college and career advising session each year to ensure they have the support needed to successfully navigate the postsecondary planning and transition process.

Requirements for delivery and documentation of individualized planning supports are as follows:

Grade level	Frequency	Mode	Timeline (recommended)
11, 12	At least twice per year	One individual progress review (IPR) and One individualized college and career advising session	By January and by June
9, 10	At least once per year	One individual progress review	By June

High schools may use [College and Career Advising SAM funding](#) to support staffing and to build staff capacity for delivering high quality, personalized advising experiences. Staff can consult the [Postsecondary Planning Toolkit](#) for resources to support facilitation of individual college and career advising sessions, and the [Postsecondary Readiness Journey Map](#) for advising Multilingual Learners and immigrant youth.

## 5. *Certifying Students for Graduation*

Schools must have clearly defined procedures for regularly tracking student progress toward meeting diploma requirements. These procedures should begin in grade 9 to ensure that students have opportunities to take the courses and exams needed to earn the most rigorous diploma possible and achieve college-and career-readiness.

Certifying high school seniors for graduation is one of the most important procedures performed by high schools. In certifying a student for graduation, the principal is attesting that the student has completed all New York State and City requirements for graduation, has a postsecondary plan, and should receive the designated high school diploma from that school. Every high school must have clearly defined procedures for certifying students for graduation. Schools should consult the [Senior Certification Guide](#) or contact their [OPE Lead](#) for support in developing or refining school-based certification processes.

Principals and their designated staff must still review all graduating students' transcripts themselves (and not just a program that interprets the transcripts) for completion of all specific requirements. The principal remains responsible for certifying students as graduates.

The [Transfer, Discharge, and Graduation Code Guidelines](#) outline the appropriate discharge code for each diploma type. Each diploma type has a 'reason code' where schools can indicate diploma designations and endorsements as applicable. A summary of graduation codes is included in the [Appendix](#).

### a. **Graduating Students in GRDT**

ATS uses [discharge codes](#) and data from STARS and ATS to flag students who may not meet standard credit or exam requirements for graduation. After a review of student transcripts to confirm all graduation requirements have been met, where appropriate, schools may override these flags in ATS to indicate how the student met graduation requirements. Schools may use a credit or exam [override code](#), as appropriate, once approved by the principal. Override codes must be submitted to and approved by the principal using the [Override Code Review Form](#) before they are entered into ATS. Schools should retain this form for their records.

**b. Students Returning from Non-Diploma Granting Programs**

NYCDOE high schools are responsible for awarding diplomas to students, including previously enrolled students who complete diploma requirements at other non-diploma granting programs. These programs include Young Adult Borough Centers (YABC), District 79 involuntary programs, and District 75 non-diploma granting programs, such as medically necessary instruction (MNI) or hospital instruction. In these instances, the student’s high school should collaborate with guidance counselors and other staff from the non-diploma granting institution to ensure a smooth transition and graduation certification process for each student. Specific roles and responsibilities for graduating the student are outlined below:

- The non-diploma granting institution at which the student is enrolled is responsible for:
  - “Pre-certifying” the student, meaning reviewing the student’s transcript to ensure that the student has met all credit and exam requirements for the relevant diploma and that these are reflected in STARS.
  - Submitting any low score appeals and updating the student’s transcript if an appeal is approved.
  - Returning the student to their previous high school with the “January/June/August Graduate” indicator using the [HSRE](#) screen in ATS; in the case of medically necessary instruction (MNI) or hospital instruction, the program must end shared instruction using in ATS using the [SIGS](#) screen.
- The student’s previous NYCDOE high school is responsible for:
  - Certifying the student for graduation.
  - Entering the student as a graduate in ATS using the appropriate [diploma code](#).
  - Awarding the student a high school diploma from the school.

The responsibilities of the previous high school that are outlined above apply regardless of the length of time the student has been enrolled at the non-diploma granting institution. In most cases, the previous high school is accountable for the graduate for City, State, and Federal accountability purposes.<sup>40</sup>

In cases where a student has no prior enrollment in a NYCDOE high school or a student previously attended a NYCDOE high school that has since closed, the non-diploma granting institution should follow the steps outlined above and refer to the guidance on [Supporting Students Who Have Met Graduation Requirements at YABCs When Their Home Schools Have Closed](#). The [HSRE](#) screen in ATS automatically transfers the student to a central location (02M972). Once a school has pre-certified a graduate and transferred the student to ‘02M972’ in ATS, the school must notify their [OPE Lead](#) to coordinate the certification process with Central.

**6. Early or Late Graduation – Updated August 2024**

Any student who has not yet received a high school diploma is entitled to a [free, appropriate public education](#) (FAPE) through the end of the school year in which they turn 21.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> The previous high school is accountable for the graduate if they were the last diploma-granting school before June 30 of the student’s fourth year of high school.

<sup>41</sup> Per [New York State Education Law, Section 3202](#). This does not include summer school. Schools may choose to allow students who have already turned 21 continue to attend summer school.

Students with IEPs who turned 21 within the 2023-24 school year may remain enrolled or re-enroll for 2024-25 to meet graduation requirements and/or transition to adult/postsecondary programs. See the section on Transition Services for Students with Disabilities for more information.

A student who meets graduation requirements in fewer than four years may choose to receive a diploma and leave school early, provided all graduation requirements are completed. Students eligible for early graduation do not need to remain in school for the sole purpose of completing the full four years of PE requirements; see the [PE](#) guidance for additional information. Schools cannot require students who have met graduation requirements in fewer than four years to remain enrolled. Likewise, a school is not required to extend a student's enrollment or delay their meeting graduation requirements at a parent's request. The principal must discuss with the parent and student post-secondary plans. A student who meets graduation requirements after four years in high school may be awarded a diploma upon completing graduation requirements.

If a student in the fifth or sixth year of high school completes the requirements mid-year, the school can discharge the student as a graduate using the [DISC](#) function in ATS. The school does not need to wait until the normal graduation periods in January, June, or August. Schools cannot require students who have met graduation requirements in more than four years to remain enrolled through the end of the year.

## 7. *Student Participation in Commencement Ceremonies*

Per NYCDOE policy, high school students must meet graduation requirements to participate in their school's graduation ceremony. Students who have not yet met graduation requirements at the time of the ceremony may not participate in the ceremony.<sup>42</sup> Schools must clearly communicate expectations for participating in commencement ceremonies to students and families.

**Important:** Students are not graduates until they have met all New York State high school credit and exam requirements. Schools must not update students' academic records in ATS to reflect their graduation status or issue students their diploma until after verifying the students have met all credit and exam requirements.

Schools may prohibit a student from attending commencement-related activities or graduation ceremonies when the student poses a real threat of violence or disruption to the event. Schools may also bar students with particularly egregious conduct from participation, as long as students are previously advised in writing. Students on suspension at the time of the commencement ceremonies also may be prohibited from attending these events, but the exclusion must be proportionate to the infraction committed. Students who earn [commencement credentials](#) in lieu of a diploma are equally entitled to participate in graduation ceremonies; schools may not exclude these students from walking in their ceremonies.

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<sup>42</sup> In years when the June Regents exams are administered close to the last day of school, some students may not receive their June Regents exam scores before graduation ceremonies. In June 2024 the NYCDOE granted an exception to this policy and schools were required to provide students in grade 12 who met the credit requirements for graduation and were awaiting June Regents exams scores to meet the assessment requirements for graduation, the opportunity to participate in their graduation ceremonies. Students who were awaiting superintendent approval of pending appeals or determinations to graduate at the time of their graduation ceremonies also had the opportunity to participate.

## **G. City University of New York (CUNY) Proficiency and Admissions Requirements**

### *1. CUNY Four-Year Colleges*

Most candidates for freshman admission to a bachelor's degree program must show proficiency in English and math to be admitted. Students may demonstrate proficiency by achieving benchmark scores on Regents exams, the SAT, or ACT. Applicants who do not meet proficiency benchmark scores will be assessed by CUNY's Proficiency index, which combines available test scores and high school grades to determine the likelihood that a student will succeed in regular credit-bearing courses. Note that submission of SAT or ACT scores is optional for admissions through 2027.

Simply meeting proficiency requirements in English and math is not a guarantee of admission to a CUNY bachelor's program. Each CUNY college has its own admissions requirements. For a sense of the average academic profile of the students admitted to each CUNY campus, consult the [CUNY Freshman Profile](#).

To improve post-secondary readiness and prospects for college admission, students should complete coursework and earn Regents exam scores above the minimum required for graduation. The following course sequences can support students in successfully transitioning to college and the workplace:

- Math: 8 Regents-level credits, including a sequence that consists of at least the following: Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II.
- Science: 8 Regents-level credits, including a sequence that consists of at least three of the following: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and an AP science course.
- Advanced Courses: [Advanced Placement \(AP\)](#)<sup>®</sup> courses, International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, and courses for college credit such as College Now or CUNY Early College.

Some colleges may require admitted students, particularly those interested in more math-intensive majors, to take placement tests in math to determine the appropriate math course (e.g., College Algebra, Pre-Calculus, or Calculus).

See the [CUNY website](#) details on the scores required to demonstrate proficiency through various exams.

For general information on how to apply to CUNY, please consult the [CUNY Application website](#).

### *2. CUNY Community Colleges*

Candidates for freshman admission to an associate program do not have to demonstrate the skills proficiencies as outlined on the [CUNY website](#). However, entering students who are not proficient based on these criteria may be required to complete developmental interventions before enrolling in or while enrolled in credit-bearing college courses. In the past, students who did not meet proficiency benchmark scores were required to take the CUNY assessment tests to determine if they required remedial coursework to build their skills in any areas.

Starting with the spring 2020 admissions term, CUNY no longer administers additional tests to determine whether students are proficient. Instead, CUNY will use students' high school grades, Regents exam scores, and SAT scores, if submitted, on their freshman application to determine whether they are proficient or assigned to complete developmental education. See the [CUNY Testing website](#) for up-to-date information and frequently asked questions about proficiency and developmental education.

Students who have attended part of high school in a non-English instructional environment and not demonstrated proficiency in reading and writing may be required to take a diagnostic test to determine if they would benefit from English as a Second Language (ESL) services.

Developmental supports or interventions do not bear credit towards a degree and tuition may be charged for them. Students are strongly advised to demonstrate proficiency before admission to CUNY to avoid developmental education. Given the gap between the requirements for a high school diploma and the requirements for college-and-career-readiness, schools are urged to encourage students to attempt courses and exams beyond the minimum requirements for graduation.

### III. COURSE CREDIT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### A. Credit-Bearing Courses – Updated August 2024

All credit-bearing courses must meet the following requirements:

- Address NYSED commencement-level learning standards;
- Offer students sufficient instruction per credit earned; and
- Be taught by a NYCDOE teacher with a NYSED secondary certification in the course subject area.
  - In the 2024-25 school year, a certified teacher may be assigned to teach a subject out of their certification area for up to two classroom hours per day, not to exceed ten classroom hours a week, when no certified or qualified teacher is available and after extensive and documented recruitment. Schools should contact their HR Director for more information about the incidental teaching policy and process.

The following definitions and policies apply:

- A unit of study is the equivalent of at least 180 minutes of instruction per week throughout the school year, or the equivalent of 54 hours per semester of instructional time (or 45 hours of instruction during the summer school term).

In July 2020, NYSED amended the definition of unit of study to include instruction delivered through “alternative instructional experiences, including but not limited to through digital technology or blended learning, that represents standards-based learning under the guidance and direction of an appropriately certified teacher. Instructional experiences shall include, but not be limited to: meaningful and frequent interaction with an appropriately certified teacher; academic and other supports designed to meet the needs of the individual student and instructional content that reflects consistent academic expectations as in-person instruction. Any alternative instructional experience must include meaningful feedback on student assignments and methods of tracking student engagement.”

- A unit of credit is awarded after students demonstrate competency of the learning outcomes in the course, as defined in the course syllabus, equivalent to 180 minutes of instruction per week throughout the school year or 54 hours per semester.
- Learning experiences that take place outside the traditional classroom and school day may count towards the instructional time required to bear credit (180 minutes per week, or 54 hours per credit), provided



they are under the guidance and direction of a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher and the content is aligned to NYSED’s commencement-level [learning standards](#). This includes:

- Courses using online vendors (see the section of this guide on [virtual and blended learning](#))
- Supervised, instructional experiences overseen by teachers from the school that occur off-site (for example, courses taken at a college, internships). See this section of this guide on [internships and service learning](#).
- The principal must evaluate all courses and experiences (including those that occur virtually and/or non-virtually inside and/or outside the classroom and school day) and attest that the course meets the requirements stated above to bear credit. Schools may use the [Course Review Form](#), an optional tool, to evaluate new and existing course offerings.

Students who meet the learning outcomes of the course by meeting the expectations outlined in the syllabus must receive credit for the course. When students miss class time, teachers should give students reasonable chances to make up missed work before final grades are entered in STARS. They may not be denied credit based on lack of “seat time” alone. Grading policies must clearly detail exactly how non-competency measures of performance contribute to the overall grade and might therefore impact whether students earn credit. Schools must communicate these academic expectations to students and families at the beginning of the school year. Schools should consult the [Grading Policy Toolkit](#) for additional guidance around using non-competency measures, such as attendance and participation.

## **B. Non-Credit-Bearing Courses**

Per NYSED policy, students may not receive credit for the following:

- **Courses that repeat standards or lead to more than four credits in a Regents subject area:** Schools may not allow students to earn credit for the same course content multiple times or for a course that exceeds the four-credit limit in a Regents subject area. Students may not receive credit for re-taking a course they have already passed, even if they are using it to help prepare to take the [Regents exam](#). Regents-preparatory courses may not be credit-bearing. See the section of this guide on [earning credit after previously failing a course](#) for guidance on ways to support students who need additional time to meet the learning outcomes of the course content.
- **Courses that do not align to high school learning standards:** Schools may not award credit for courses that do not align to NYSED commencement-level [learning standards](#).<sup>43</sup> This includes courses that meet middle school standards, guidance courses that do not align to NYSED commencement-level learning standards, and SAT and ACT prep courses. Guidance or advisory courses generally should not bear credit. NYSED does not have commencement-level learning standards in guidance. If credit-bearing, these courses should be coded more accurately to align with the NYSED commencement-level learning standards being taught. The teacher of record’s certification must correspond with the standards and content of the course. See the section of this guide on [electives](#).
- **Academic Intervention Services (AIS), Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) (previously called “Resource Room”), or Related Services:** These services may be provided as stand-alone periods or integrated into general classroom instruction, depending on the needs of the student and as specified in the student’s IEP, as appropriate. While the services may not be credit-bearing and should not be graded, they may be integrated into other credit-bearing courses as appropriate. See the [STARS wiki](#) for guidance on programming special education services.

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<sup>43</sup> NYSED has commencement-level [learning standards](#) in the following departments: English language arts; social studies; mathematics, science, and technology; the arts (including visual arts, music, dance and theater); world languages; health, physical education, family and consumer sciences; and career development and occupational studies.

- **Science laboratory:** Schools may include a lab within a science course as long as the course meets seat time requirements for both the course and the lab (at least 180 minutes per week for the science course and 1,200 minutes for the lab).<sup>44</sup> Credit may not be awarded for the lab itself and the 1,200 minutes of lab work must be in addition to, not included in, the 180 minutes per week of the science course. However, schools may count time for required the Investigations toward the 1,200 minutes of labs. Regardless of inclusion within credit-bearing science courses, lab courses must be coded separately, denoted by an ‘L’ in the seventh character, as outlined in the [High School Course Code Directory](#).

## C. Additional and Fractional Credit for Courses

Schools should award credit in whole-credit (1.0) or half-credit (0.5) increments whenever possible.<sup>45</sup> Circumstances for awarding either additional or fractional credit are limited, and the amount of credit awarded for any course must be consistent with the amount of content delivered. See guidance on [credit-bearing courses](#) for more information.

### 1. Additional Credit

Schools may award additional credit in the following circumstances:

- Accelerating or extending a course up to the total number of credits in the sequence, when supported by both additional learning standards and instructional time
  - For example, a semester-long course that meets for 90 minutes per day, four days per week (360 minutes per week) and covers Global History 1 of 4 and Global History 2 of 4 learning standards may be worth two credits.
- [Interdisciplinary courses](#) that cover both additional learning standards and instructional time
  - For example, an interdisciplinary course that covers Global History I learning standards as well as arts education standards and meets for 108 hours over the course of a semester may be worth two credits.

Schools may not award additional credit for increasing the rigor of a course alone (for example, honors or AP courses); a course also must address additional learning standards to be worth additional credit. However, schools can choose to weight more rigorous courses more heavily in a student’s GPA; see the [Calculation of GPA](#) section of this guide. Additionally, schools may not award credit by exceeding the total number of credits in a Regents course sequence as outlined in NYSED regulations.

### 2. Fractional Credit

Credit requirements for graduation are almost entirely in full credit units; it rarely benefits students to accumulate partial or fractional credits. Schools should consider students’ progress toward meeting graduation requirements when programming credits in fractional increments. However, due to differences in term models and programming, there are limited situations where fractional credit values are appropriate. Schools may award fractional credit in the following circumstances:

- Utilizing required PE credit values, according to the policies in the [PE](#) guidance

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<sup>44</sup> See the [Science](#) section of this guide for more information on the science lab policy.

<sup>45</sup> Schools using trimester or cycle term models may need to lengthen their periods or reduce the number of courses offered in a term to ensure students are progressing meaningfully toward meeting the diploma course credit requirements. For more information, see the [High School Programming](#) guidance.

- Dividing a course sequence into a trimester- or cycle-based program, in meaningful units where one credit continues to correspond to the equivalent of 54 hours of instructional time. See the [High School Programming Guide](#) for guidance on trimester and cycle programming.
- Establishing a course that meets for significantly fewer than 180 minutes per week, but is still aligned to commencement-level [learning standards](#) and is taught by a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher
  - For example, a health course that provides 90 minutes of instruction per week over two semesters may be worth 0.5 credits per semester.

Outside of these scenarios, schools should avoid awarding fractional credit when possible, as it rarely benefits students and can create further problems when a student transfers to a new school.

## D. Interdisciplinary Courses

An interdisciplinary course combines [learning standards](#) from two different subject areas in a single course. A NYCDOE teacher certified in at least one of the subject areas must teach interdisciplinary courses. Additionally, total credit awarded may not exceed the equivalent of one credit per 54 hours of instruction. Schools may choose to award credit for an interdisciplinary course in the following ways:

- **Option 1 - Awarding fractional credit in two subject areas:** The total credit awarded must reflect the equivalent of one credit per 54 hours of instruction. Schools may divide this credit across both subject areas. Upon successful completion of an interdisciplinary course that meets for 180 minutes per week throughout one semester or the equivalent, for a total of 54 hours, students may receive 0.5 credits in one subject area and 0.5 credits in the other. Schools should avoid awarding credit in less than half-credit (0.5) increments whenever possible.
- **Option 2 - Awarding full credit for one subject area and fulfilling a distribution requirement for the other subject area(s):** The total credit awarded must reflect the equivalent of one credit per 54 hours of instruction. Schools may award this full credit in one subject area and fulfill a distribution requirement in another subject area. Fulfilling a distribution requirement does not count toward a student’s total credits earned, only the subject-specific requirement. Students must still earn 44 total credits to meet diploma requirements.
  - **Example:** A school offers an interdisciplinary course that covers both English and Economics learning standards. The course covers 180 minutes per week worth of content throughout the semester and is taught by a NYCDOE teacher certified in English. At the end of the semester, students who meet the learning outcomes of the course earn one credit of English and meet the one-credit distribution requirement for Economics (as indicated on the transcript with the mark ‘ND’). While students have fulfilled the Economics distribution requirement, students still must earn 44 total credits to meet diploma requirements.
  - **Example:** A school offers an interdisciplinary course that covers the learning standards for math and physical science and is taught by a certified science teacher. At the end of the semester, students who demonstrate proficiency in the course and earn a passing grade earn one credit in math and meet the distribution requirement for science. Students will need to earn one more physical science credit and a total of five science credits to meet the science distribution requirement for a diploma.
  - **Non-example:** A school offers an interdisciplinary course that covers Geometry and Architecture (a visual art). The course meets for the equivalent of 180 minutes per week throughout the semester and is taught by a math-certified teacher. At the end of the semester, students who meet the learning outcomes of the course earn one credit of Geometry and one credit of Visual Arts. This is a **non-example** because the total credit awarded must reflect the equivalent of one credit per 54 hours of instruction. The school can either award one credit for one subject area and

students fulfill a distribution requirement for the other or award 0.5 credits for each subject area (as described in Option 1).

Schools must enter actual marks in accordance with their grading policy in one of the two areas and a mark of 'ND' in the other subject area. This indicates that the student met the distribution requirement in both areas, but only earned one credit for the course. See this guidance on [Interdisciplinary Courses](#) for more information.

- **Option 3 - Awarding additional credit for extended time and learning standards:** An interdisciplinary course that meets for additional time and addresses sufficient learning standards in two subject areas may award credit in both subject areas in increments of 0.5. For example, a semester-long interdisciplinary art history course that includes history content through the lens of art and meets daily for the equivalent of 55 minutes (275 minutes per week) may award one credit in social studies and 0.5 credits in art, as long as the credits reflect the instructional time and learning standards addressed in the course. See discussion of fractional credits in the [Additional/Fractional Credit](#) section above.

See the [STARS wiki](#) for information on how to set up and award grades in interdisciplinary courses.

## E. Additional Ways to Earn Credit

Schools may design experiences that incorporate alternative mechanisms for delivering course content and providing instruction aligned to NYSED commencement-level [learning standards](#). Offering such courses requires careful planning and adherence to specific policies in addition to the requirements described in the [credit-bearing courses](#) section of this guide.

### 1. *Virtual and Blended Courses* – **Updated August 2024**

In April 2024, NYSED voted to define virtual learning<sup>46</sup> and explain the conditions under which virtual/blended instruction may be delivered.<sup>47</sup> High schools may choose to offer virtual and blended learning experiences and may incorporate virtual or blended courses into their academic programs. In a virtual or blended course, students receive instruction entirely through internet-connected devices (i.e., a virtual course) or partially through internet-connected devices (i.e., a blended course).

Virtual/blended courses are regular courses and must meet the same academic policies required of traditional classroom courses. A virtual/blended course can be credit-bearing, provided it meets all of the following requirements:

- The course aligns with New York State commencement-level learning standards for the subject area, as outlined in the course syllabus;
- Instruction is provided or supervised by a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher;
- The course satisfies instructional time requirements (specifically, 180 minutes per week throughout the semester or the equivalent of 54 hours<sup>48</sup> of instruction per credit). Students may be on site or off site during the required instructional time. Both synchronous and asynchronous learning can fulfill course instructional time requirements provided that the following conditions are met:
  - All courses must have at least one synchronous learning period per week that is programmed in STARS. This period can occur on any day of the week.

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<sup>46</sup> Part 100.1(y)

<sup>47</sup> Part 100.2(u)

<sup>48</sup> Or 45 hours of instruction per credit during the summer term.

- **Schools must not offer fully asynchronous courses**, but asynchronous learning time can account for a portion of the course instructional time. In order to count asynchronous learning time toward course instructional time requirements, schools must have mechanisms in place to track student engagement, and they must clearly document the expected time for students to complete asynchronous activities.
- The course includes regular and substantive interaction between the student and the teacher providing direction and/or supervision.
  - “Regular and substantive interaction” means schools must ensure that students receive meaningful, intentional, and teacher-initiated instruction in the subject matter area provided under the direction and/or supervision of a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher.
    - This interaction can occur in-person (for example, during a scheduled period at school) and/or virtually through various media (for example, by email or interaction through the virtual platform).
  - The required, weekly synchronous learning period provides one opportunity for students to receive regular and substantive interaction, but courses must be designed so that regular and substantive interaction between students and teachers takes place throughout the course. The NYCDOE subject-certified teacher supervising virtual/blended instruction must frequently interact with, observe, and measure students’ progress through course content, and they must provide meaningful feedback on student work.
  - Interaction between the NYCDOE subject-certified teacher and the student must be frequent enough to allow many opportunities for students to receive instructional support and meaningful feedback on their progress.
    - The teacher must be consistently available to meet students’ needs. Allowing the student access to a subject-certified teacher for support without ongoing, regular interaction is not sufficient, just as it would not be in any other course.
- The student demonstrates proficiency of the learning outcomes for the subject.

Students are no longer required to pass the culminating Regents exam in order to earn course credit for virtual/blended courses that commence on or after September 1, 2024.

#### a. Parent Opt-In

**Effective September 1, 2024**, schools are required to obtain parental consent for students to participate in virtual/blended courses. Parents<sup>49</sup> have the final say in this determination; schools must not make the decision on behalf of the parent. Students whose parents do not opt their student in to the offered virtual/blended course must be scheduled for a traditional, in-person program. The parent opt-in policy applies to all virtual/blended courses, including those that are part of SBVL and VLC.<sup>50</sup>

Schools must complete the Parent Opt-In Form (see Appendix B of [Virtual and Blended Courses](#)) so that it contains all the details about the course that a parent would need to know to make their decision (e.g.,

<sup>49</sup> The term “parent” means the student’s parent(s) or guardian(s), or any person(s) in a parental or custodial relationship to the student, or an emancipated minor, or a student that is 18 years of age or older and does not have an IEP.

<sup>50</sup> The parent opt-in process described in this guidance does not apply for School Without Walls (02M395) or Virtual Innovators Academy (08X636) as parents opt into a virtual/blended program as part of the admissions process.

which days the course meets on site and off site, the specific meeting times, the assigned teacher of record, the days students are expected to participate using an internet-connected device, etc.). Schools must distribute the Parent Opt-In Form at least one month prior to each term in which virtual/blended courses are offered. Parental consent for participation in a virtual/blended course in a previous term must not be considered consent for participation in future virtual/blended courses. Schools must take affirmative steps to ensure that Multilingual Learners/English Language Learners (MLs/ELLs), students with IEPs, and students with 504 plans can meaningfully participate virtual/blended learning.

Virtual and blended courses are coded in STARS the same way as traditional, in-person courses, using the standardized [High School Course Code Directory](#) to reflect the academic content. The STARS schedule must include all synchronous learning associated with the course, regardless of whether students are on- or off-site. Asynchronous learning is not scheduled in STARS, as students are learning independently and may be working at different times. Schools must select the appropriate section properties for all virtual/blended courses; this information is used for compliance and reporting purposes. See the [scheduling in STARS](#) section of this guide and the [Virtual and Blended Courses](#) guide for additional information on programming students for virtual/blended courses in STARS.

Virtual Learning Classrooms (VLC) offers NYCDOE middle and high schools the opportunity to enroll students in virtual classes that are not offered at their school, including world language, Advanced Placement (AP), and elective courses. These classes are taught synchronously by centrally-hired and trained teachers before, during, and after the regular school day. See the [Virtual and Blended Courses](#) guide for more information on programming students participating in VLCs.

School Based Virtual Learning (SBVL) is another way NYCDOE high schools can offer virtual learning courses. In this model, schools establish virtual learning models created by and for their school communities. SBVL courses are taught by current teachers and are attended by current students. Schools apply to participate, and all policies described in the [Virtual and Blended Courses](#) guide apply to courses that are part of SBVL.

Students may occasionally choose to pursue online courses independently of their school, and without school involvement or approval. Such courses can be evaluated as transfer credits; the decision to award credit for these experiences is at the discretion of the principal in accordance with the policies outlined in the section of this guide on [transfer credit](#). See also the [Transfer Student Toolkit](#).

## 2. *Internships and Service-Learning*

Schools can choose to award credits for internships and service-learning experiences that meet specific criteria. Internships and service-learning courses that bear credit must align with the following policies:

- The experience must align to NYSED commencement-level [learning standards](#) for the subject area, as outlined in the [course syllabus](#).
  - Syllabi for internships and service-learning must clearly delineate what is taught in the classroom component, when and where the classroom component takes place, expectations for students when they are off-site, and how the teacher will assess student learning and expectations for students in both the classroom and off-site components of the course.

- The experience must include a classroom/seminar/workshop component, in addition to learning time spent in an educational internship, as part of the minimum instructional time (equivalent of 180 minutes per week throughout the school year).
  - Schools may determine the structure and content of the classroom/seminar/workshop component, including the instructional time provided. While there is no required minimum time for the classroom/seminar/workshop component, the component should provide sufficient time for meaningful teacher-student interaction.
- A NYCDOE subject-certified teacher must oversee the experience, in collaboration with a supervisor at the internship site.
  - The subject-certified teacher overseeing the internship course is responsible for overseeing the syllabus, monitoring and assessing student progress, instructing the classroom/seminar/workshop component, and awarding the course grade. Teachers do not need to accompany students to off-site course components, but they should work closely with individuals at the site to monitor student performance and the alignment of off-site activities to the expectations defined in the syllabus.
- The classroom/seminar/workshop component and educational internship/service experiences must be scheduled in STARS.

Internships that are part of [New York State-approved CTE sequences](#) or [work-based learning programs](#) have specific requirements. For guidance on implementing internships and service-learning courses, see the [Off-Site Courses](#) guidance. Also see the [CTE](#) guidance.

Schools should maintain systems and structures (such as an accreditation committee) for regularly reviewing course offerings, including existing courses and new course proposals, course sequences, and course credit values. Schools may use the [Course Review Form](#) to review existing and new courses.

All service-learning experiences may count toward the diploma [Seal of Recognition for Service](#). The requirements for service learning to bear credit are more stringent than those for the service seal. Therefore, although all hours of credit-bearing service learning may count toward the seal, not all hours counted toward the seal may necessarily bear credit. For example, a student participating in a weekly Meals on Wheels volunteer food delivery service may accrue 54 hours of service time over a semester, but that volunteer experience does not equate to a course, which requires alignment with NYSED commencement-level learning standards and a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher who instructs the course. Additionally, these volunteer experiences may not be scheduled in STARS, while a course must be scheduled in STARS.

Service hours in pursuit of the [Seal of Recognition for Service](#) should be added to the transcript via a transcript update. However, these experiences should not be credit-bearing. Schools must maintain [a log of service hours](#) to add non-credit-bearing service hours to the transcript with a transcript update.<sup>51</sup> Service learning, which fulfills all the criteria necessary for a course, may be credit-bearing. However, as these service-learning experiences have a classroom component scheduled in STARS, they should not be added via transcript update.

For more information about the service seal, see the [Seal of Recognition for Service](#) guide.

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<sup>51</sup> As STARS requires a minimum entry of 10 service hours, schools should generally wait to add hours until the time of graduation. See the [Seal of Recognition for Service Wiki](#) for detailed instructions on how to document service hours in STARS.

### 3. *Independent Study*

Students may use independent study to complete up to six elective credits toward diploma requirements. Independent study may not fulfill subject-specific credit requirements, such as ELA, science, or physical education. A school-based panel consisting of, at minimum, the principal, a teacher in the independent study subject area, and a school counselor or other administrator, must approve any student's participation in independent study. The panel must attest to the student's ability to successfully complete independent study and progress toward graduation. The school should document the independent study approval process for each student and retain this documentation for their records.

In order to bear elective credit toward graduation requirements, all independent study courses must, at minimum, address NYSED commencement-level [learning standards](#) as outlined in a syllabus, provide the opportunity for 54 hours of instructional time per credit, and have supervision from a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher who determines student competency of the learning outcomes for the course.

Schools must schedule independent study courses in STARS, denoted by 'S' in the seventh character, as outlined in the [High School Course Code Directory](#).

### 4. *Credit by Examination*

Credit by examination is an intentional provision for students who have advanced proficiency in a specific Regents subject area despite never having studied the content formally in school. In rare situations, schools may award credit by examination to students who have scored 85 or above on a Regents exam without attempting the corresponding units of study, provided they meet all of the following criteria:

- The student did not previously take a course within the subject area of the Regents exam, including through a program outside of the NYCDOE.
- The high school superintendent or superintendent's designee (which may include the high school principal) determines that the student will benefit academically by exercising the credit by exam option based on the student's past academic performance.
- The superintendent or superintendent's designee (which may include the high school principal) must provide permission for a student to sit for a Regents exam for the purpose of using the credit by exam provision.
- The student successfully completes an oral examination or special project demonstrating proficiency of the subject matter developed in the course, but not measured by the relevant exams, as determined and documented by the principal.
- Students attempting to earn credit by examination in science still must meet the equivalent of the 1,200-minute laboratory requirement with satisfactory documented laboratory reports.

Students may earn up to two credits per Regents exam subject, and up to 13 total credits, through credit by examination. Note that:

- Credit by exam can only be awarded in subject areas that culminate in a Regents exam. It cannot be awarded in Government, Economics, Physical education, Health, World Languages, or other subject areas without Regents exams.
- The World Language Comprehensive exams or OHM BOCES World Languages exams may not be used to award credit by exam.
- Students who complete only the first half of Global History (content prior to 1750) and pass the Global History II Regents exam with a score of 85 or higher may take advantage of the credit by exam provision, since the Global History II Regents exam covers content only from the second half of the sequence (1750 to modern times).



- Students may not use an ELA Regents exam taken in grade 11 to give credit for grade 12 English courses, which would otherwise be completed after the ELA Regents exam.

Schools must enter credit by examination into STARS via transcript update, as detailed in the [STARS wiki](#) and in the [Transcript Update](#) guidance.

## 5. *Awarding High School Credit for College Courses – Updated August 2024*

Schools may offer advanced courses that bear credit toward a high school diploma and also bear higher education credit through arrangements with higher education institutions (for example, Early College programs). This is often referred to as dual credit, meaning eligible students can earn both high school and college credits for passing the college-level course. Dual credit courses can provide students with valuable exposure to the rigor and expectations of college coursework while in high school.

When offering dual credit courses, schools should work with their higher education partners to ensure that college courses offered for high school credit align with graduation requirements and satisfy NYSED commencement-level [learning standards](#), as outlined in the course syllabus/documentation. These courses must maintain rigorous, college-level instruction, meet the required 54 hours of instructional time per credit, and culminate in a college transcript documenting the earned credits.

Schools should prioritize equitable access to these opportunities for all eligible students, and supporting students' success through high-quality postsecondary advising and academic supports that prepare students for college and career success.

College courses may be taught by college-appointed instructors, including qualified high school teachers serving as adjunct instructors. For detailed information on instructor qualifications, appointment processes, and how to properly record instructors in STARS, please refer to the guidance on [College Courses](#).

Like all courses, college courses must be [scheduled in STARS](#), as outlined in the [High School Course Code Directory](#). Dual credit courses should be clearly marked in STARS using the standardized course code, with a 'U' in the 6th character as outlined in the directory.

The credit values for college courses often do not correspond to the credit values used by the NYCDOE. For example, some colleges award three college credits for a semester course, whereas a NYCDOE high school typically awards one credit for a semester course. Schools should carefully determine the equivalent high school credit value based on the scope and rigor of the college course content.

The process for awarding college credit is detailed further in the guidance on [College Courses](#). A high school may not impose any charge or fee on students for any required instruction or program leading to a high school diploma, including for such college courses.

A high school principal may also choose to award high school transfer credit for college courses students have completed independently, in accordance with the policies outlined in the [Transfer Credit](#) section.

For additional information, see the [Dual Credit Playbook](#), [College Courses](#) and [Off-site Courses](#) guidance.

## 6. *Earning Credit after Previously Failing a Course*

Teachers should enter final grades into STARS by the grade entry deadlines to ensure that students and families receive grades in a timely manner; all final grades must be entered no later than four weeks (or 20 days) after the end of the term. The 20-day window is intended as a flexibility for extenuating circumstances in which students require extra time before grades can be completed. Some teachers and schools allow students to turn in make up work during this time before grades are entered and finalized. The school's [grading policy](#) must clearly outline this option for students, if available. Once final grades are entered, even within this 20-day window, they cannot be changed without completing a [Transcript Update Form](#).

After final course grades are officially on student transcripts, students have the following options for making up failed course credits. Students can:

- **Retake the course:** Students who have missed significant amounts of class time or have not yet met the learning outcomes of a large portion of the subject matter can benefit from retaking the entire course again. These students can make up the course in another term during the school year or in summer school. Schools may also offer the course again as a virtual or blended course. Schools should consider what obstacles the student had to passing the course the first time and how they may support the student differently to help them earn credit.
- **Take credit recovery:** Students who previously failed a course and meet specific eligibility criteria can make up credit through credit recovery. Credit recovery is a targeted experience, specifically for students who attended most of a failed course and demonstrated proficiency in the majority of the content. In this option, the student does not retake the full course, but works with a teacher to receive instruction only in the portion of original course content in need of proficiency. After receiving instruction in and demonstrating proficiency of the remaining content of the originally failed course, the student may earn credit. However, there are specific NYCDOE and NYSED policies regarding the use of [credit recovery](#). Schools must use the STARS [eligibility check function](#) and the [Credit Recovery Approval Form](#) when scheduling individual students for credit recovery. See the [Credit Recovery](#) guidance for additional information and a detailed description of all applicable policies.
- **Earning credit after receiving a grade of 'NX' (course in progress) or 'NL' in accordance with the policies for using those marks:** Students must successfully complete remaining course requirements by the end of the next term to receive a final grade and credit, if applicable. If the following term is a summer, and the school is not open or the student is not available for summer school, the student will have until the end of the subsequent term to complete the outstanding course work.

Schools may not change a student's final, failing grade in a previously failed course, even if the student is making up credit by repeating the full course or taking credit recovery. Students must be scheduled for the make-up credit or credit recovery course using the [High School Course Code Directory](#) and the student must receive a new grade (and credit, as appropriate) in the semester the course or credit recovery was completed. Failing grades may never be removed from a transcript except in cases of entry error.

### F. **Transfer Credit**

Per NYSED policy, the principal, in consultation with relevant faculty, holds responsibility for evaluating transcripts and awarding transfer credits for students enrolling in a NYCDOE high school.

Schools must maintain procedures for the timely request and evaluation of transcripts from previous institutions to ensure that students are programmed for needed courses and exams using the required [Transfer Credit Equivalency Form](#) and [Transcript Update Form](#). See the [Transfer Student Toolkit](#) guidance for additional information and a transfer student entry checklist.

## 1. *Previous School Location*

### a. NYCDOE public schools and programs

For students who transfer between NYCDOE schools or programs (for example, from a high school to a YABC), academic records should transfer automatically. However, a prior school's academic sequence and corresponding STARS [course codes](#) may not align with those used by the receiving school, making it difficult to program the new student.

**Example:** Two schools might cover the same Algebra I [learning standards](#) over a different number of terms; therefore, students' transcripts may reflect different STARS [course codes](#) for the same content.

**Example:** Students from schools who have passed PBATs in place of Regents exams in math, science, or social studies may use these PBATs to fulfill Regents exam requirements upon transfer to a non-PBAT administering school. See this guidance on [schools administering PBATs](#).

In such instances, the receiving school should use transcript information, including course history, titles, and codes, to program students for the course(s) that best cover the remaining [learning standards](#) in a sequence, even if the sequence does not perfectly align with the previous school's coding scheme. The receiving school should maintain documentation that justifies the student's program placement, such as diagnostic assessment results, course syllabi for the student's prior courses, or communications with former school officials regarding course content. Receiving schools also may wish to request additional information on the content of courses. Schools receiving students back from other high schools or programs (from a YABC to the home school) should accept a variety of course coding schemes as long as the program can document that the courses taken cover the required [learning standards](#) and number of credits to complete the sequence. Historical course codes must never be modified.

### b. External, non-NYCDOE schools and programs

**For students transferring from a registered public or nonpublic high school in New York City or New York State:**

- The principal must grant transfer credit for all credits awarded by any New York State registered public or nonpublic high school provided they conform to New York State policies.

**For students transferring from non-registered New York State schools, schools outside New York State, schools outside the United States, and home schools:**

- The decision to award transfer credit must be based on whether the transcript and other records indicate that the work is consistent with NYSED's commencement-level [learning standards](#) and is of comparable scope and rigor to that which would have been done in the school awarding the credit. This decision is to be made by the principal, after consultation with relevant faculty. Based on the student's transcript or other records, the principal awards the appropriate transfer credits towards a high school diploma.
- Schools are responsible for ensuring that transcripts in a language other than English are translated effectively so that transfer credit can be awarded appropriately.
- Schools may contact the student's home country embassy or consulate for assistance or may use a translator service. It is not appropriate for the student or student's family members to complete the translation, or for the cost of translation to be passed along to the student. The translation may be documented on the [Transfer Credit Equivalency Form](#).
- Schools may award up to 10 credits of [World Languages](#) for students with documented residence and school attendance in an "other-than-English-speaking environment," provided that the

experience occurred at age 10 or older. Up to six credits are awarded per year. In determining the number of credits to be awarded, the school should consider both the student’s prior academic record and future academic experience. Schools must maintain documentation that demonstrates the student’s residence and school attendance in an “other-than-English-speaking environment.”

- Transfer students are not required to complete PE credits that would have occurred in terms during which they were enrolled in a high school outside of New York State. Instead, schools can waive PE courses equivalent to the number of terms the student was enrolled in a high school outside of New York State, which reduces the amount of PE credits the student must complete to meet graduation requirements. See the [PE](#) and [Transfer Credit](#) guidance documents for additional information.
- Students entering a New York State high school for the first time in grade 11 or 12 are exempt from certain Regents examination requirements; see the section of this guide on [Regents exam waivers](#). Effective 2018-19, students entering a New York State high school in grade 11 were also exempt from the four Global History and Geography distribution requirement, though they must still fulfill the eight Social Studies credit requirement to graduate. Students who entered in grade 12 in 2018-19 still had to fulfill the four Global History and Geography credit requirement. As of 2019-20, these flexibilities apply to students who enter a New York State high school for the first time in grade 11 or 12.

**For students who completed coursework at other educational or cultural institutions (such as study abroad programs, college courses taken independently of the NYCDOE, etc.):**

- Principals may award transfer credit for work completed through study abroad courses or other educational or cultural institutions. A principal must decide whether to award transfer credit for work done at educational or cultural institutions other than New York State registered high schools based on whether the transcript and other records indicate that the work is consistent with NYSED’s commencement-level [learning standards](#) and is of comparable scope and rigor to that which would have been done in the school awarding the credit.

All transfer credits must be reflected in [STARS](#), using the standardized [transfer course codes](#). Transfer credits may be designated within the term and year in which the student completed each course or within the term and year immediately prior to the student’s enrollment in the NYCDOE school. Transfer credits are reflected on transcripts with a ‘W’ in the third character and a grade of ‘CR.’ Waived PE credits are reflected on transcripts with a ‘W’ in the third character and a grade of ‘NW.’ See the [Transcript Update](#) guidance, [Transcript Update Form](#), [STARS wiki](#), and [list of transfer course and exam codes](#) for additional information on this process and the required documentation. For more information, see the guidance on awarding [Transfer Credits](#).

## 2. *Grade and Cohort Placement of Transfer Students*

When students transfer to a NYCDOE high school from a non-NYCDOE school, they are assigned an initial grade level by the Office of Student Enrollment. For most students, this grade level is based on the first year the student entered grade 9 at any school in the world; for students with incomplete or no educational records, the Office of Student Enrollment will place the student in grade 9.<sup>52</sup> Within the first two weeks of enrollment, the principal

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<sup>52</sup> For Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education, or whose educational records otherwise indicate grade completion much lower than the student’s age suggests, the Family Welcome Center may consult the Superintendent to determine an appropriate grade level and educational setting for the student.

must evaluate the instructional appropriateness of the grade placement based on available records, diagnostic assessments, and conversations with both the student and their family.

Schools must communicate with families in their preferred language about the rationale for any adjustments to the student's program. In addition, schools must remain mindful of the social and emotional impact of grade level adjustments and ensure that students have access to the necessary supports throughout the transition, which can include determining students' eligibility for language and/or special education services.

Based on the grade level entered into the system, students are assigned a provisional cohort. This matches the [cohort definition](#) established by the Federal and State governments. It is important to note that neither credit accumulation nor ability to stay on track toward graduation requirements determine a student's cohort year; rather, it reflects the student's first year of ninth grade at any school in the world. For more details on the definition of cohort, see the section of this guide on [cohort policy](#).

Upon receiving a transfer student, high schools must carefully evaluate transcripts and other academic records and award high school transfer course and exam credits, according to the guidelines in the section on [Transfer Credit](#). This evaluation should be conducted in a timely manner to ensure that the student is programmed for needed courses.

Upon evaluating the transcript and awarding transfer credit, a school may only change a student's grade level if documentation indicates assigned year of grade nine entry and corresponding cohort year assignment is inaccurate. A student's cohort year assignment must adhere to the policies described in the [cohort section](#) of this guide.

## G. Grade 8 Course Acceleration – Updated August 2024

Per [Part 100.4\(d\)](#), students in grade 8 have the opportunity to earn high school credits in departments including mathematics, science, World Languages, social studies, ELA, arts education, music, and career and technical education (CTE). Students in grades 6 and 7 are not eligible to earn high school credit through accelerated courses, except in World Languages; see the [World Languages](#) guidance document for details.

There is no limit to the number of accelerated course credits a student may earn in grade 8, provided all accelerated courses meet instructional time requirements to bear credit.<sup>53</sup> Schools must also provide hands-on or virtual laboratory time for science courses, inclusive of the required NYSED Investigations, to prepare students for science Regents exams (see the Science section of this guide for more details). These labs must be scheduled in STARS as outlined on the [STARS wiki](#).

There are two ways for grade 8 students to earn credits for high school-level courses:

- **Option 1:** In traditional grade 8 acceleration, students take an accelerated course in middle school aligned to high school-level learning standards, culminating in a Regents, SLP, or World Language Comprehensive exam. In order to earn high school credit for the course, grade 8 students must pass the accelerated course and earn a specific minimum score on the culminating assessment in June or August, immediately following the course.

The minimum score that a student needs to earn to receive high school credit after passing the accelerated course depends on the type of exam and if the student has an IEP.

Since school year 2018-19:

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<sup>53</sup> Middle school students may not accelerate PE credits for high school. Schools may refer to the [PE](#) guidance document for more information.

- Grade 8 students without IEPs must score 65 or higher on the culminating Regents exam in June or August immediately following the course.
- Grade 8 students with IEPs must score a 55 or higher on the culminating Regents exam in June or August immediately following the course.<sup>54</sup>
- For accelerated courses culminating in the Checkpoint A (formerly SLP) or World Language Comprehensive exam, all grade 8 students (with and without IEPs) must pass the accelerated course and score 65 or higher on the culminating Checkpoint A (formerly SLP) or World Language Comprehensive exam. Students who successfully complete the Checkpoint A (formerly SLP) as their culminating exam will earn two high school credits but cannot use this exam toward exam requirements for graduation.<sup>55</sup>
- In 2021-22 and 2022-23, grade 8 students who passed their accelerated course and were approved for a Special Appeal in the same subject (i.e., scored 50-64 on the culminating Regents exam in June or August immediately following the course) were eligible for high school credit in the course.

**Starting in 2024-25**, eligible middle school students taking world language course sequences specified in the STARS wiki will have high school credits and exams automatically transferred to their high school transcripts when they are properly programmed for the course and take corresponding third-party/vendor exams listed in the [Middle School Accelerated Courses and Regents wiki](#). See the [Middle School Academic Policy Guide](#) for more information.

- **Option 2:** In cases where a grade 8 accelerated course does not exist, individual students may attend a course at a high school with high school students and earn credit on the same basis as the high school students in that course. These students will have high school course codes and credits on their high school transcripts. Evidence of the course will not appear on the student’s middle school transcript.<sup>56</sup>

See the [Middle School Academic Policy Guide](#) for more information on how accelerated credit is awarded to middle school students.

High schools may not refuse to accept accelerated course credits or schedule students to repeat credits that have been appropriately awarded in alignment with NYCDOE and NYSED policies.

High school principals receiving incoming freshman who have earned high school credits through accelerated courses should provide opportunities for such students to continue advancing their study in the disciplines in which they have accelerated.

**Example:** If a high school receives a student who has earned accelerated course credit in math, for example Algebra I, and they determine that the student is ready to continue to the next course, the school should program the student for Geometry.

**Example:** If a high school receives a student who has earned accelerated course credit in math or science, for example Algebra I or Biology, but needs additional support to meet college and career readiness standards, the high school may consider programming the student to continue that course of study for a

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<sup>54</sup> This change applies only to current and future grade 8 students who are enrolled in an accelerated course. High schools may not retroactively award high school credit to students with IEPs who previously passed a grade 8 accelerated course but earned 55-64 on the culminating Regents exam prior to school year 2018-19.

<sup>55</sup> In addition to Grade 8 acceleration, students earn high school credit if they have taken two units (216 hours) of World Languages at any point before ninth grade that culminated in the SLP exam and pass the exam. See the [World Languages FAQ](#) for more information.

<sup>56</sup> Grade 8 students who participate in an accelerated course, comprised of grade 8 students, at a high school must meet the requirements listed in Option 1. For support in scheduling these students in STARS, reach out to your [OPE Lead](#).

total of up to four credits in the subject (including the accelerated course credit). In this case, the school should use diagnostic assessments and other data to determine the students' learning needs and program the student for a course designed to meet these needs.

**Example:** For students who have earned credit in Algebra I but need additional support, the high school may consider programming the student for an extended Geometry sequence for up to four credits in the subject which reinforces Algebra skills through the lens of Geometry in the first semester.

## IV. POLICIES FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

### A. English Language Learners (ELLs)

Schools identify students as ELLs based on the results of the [Home Language Identification Survey \(HLIS\)](#) and, if appropriate, students' English language proficiency level on the [New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners \(NYSITELL\)](#).<sup>57</sup> For additional information on ELL identification and placement, including Students with Interrupted/Inconsistent Formal Education (SIFE), see the [Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs](#). Note that students who arrived in the country for the first time during high school are eligible to [appeal to graduate](#) with a score of 55–59 on the ELA Regents exam.

#### 1. *New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL)*

The New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) is used to initially identify English Language Learners (ELLs). New entrants whose [Home Language Identification Survey](#) indicates languages other than English spoken in the home, and who may have English language acquisition needs, take the NYSITELL to determine if they are eligible for bilingual and English as a New Language (ENL) services. Based on NYSITELL results, the student receives an English language proficiency level. Based on NYSITELL results, students are categorized into one of five English language proficiency levels:

- Entering
- Emerging
- Transitioning
- Expanding
- Commanding

A student's English language proficiency level determines the number of service hours they receive. More information is available on [NYSSED's website](#). See the [Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs](#) for more information on ELL services.

Once a student has been identified as an ELL, parent selection of an ELL program drives program placement. Parents/guardians of ELLs are invited to a parent orientation, where they view an orientation video in their preferred languages, which describes the NYCDOE's three program options: Dual Language Bilingual Education (DLBE), Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), and English as a New Language (ENL) only, described further in the [Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs](#). All parents/guardians are entitled to choose among these three options, regardless of whether their student's current school has their program of choice. The [NYCDOE's website](#) provides a variety of resources for ELLs and families.

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<sup>57</sup> NYSED and NYCDOE refer to English Language Learners (ELLs) as Multilingual Learners/English Language Learners (MLs/ELLs) except in instances referring to state and federal policy.

Schools may not refuse admission to zoned students or students assigned by the NYCDOE's Office of Student Enrollment based on their ELL status or program needs.

Schools are required to form bilingual programs in grades 9–12 when there are 20 or more ELLs with the same language in one grade, for whom parents/guardians chose a bilingual program placement. This threshold is the minimum requirement under NYS Commissioner's Regulation (CR) Part 154, as amended by the ASPIRA Consent Decree, but by no means limits schools that choose to open programs with fewer students. For example, when parents/guardians request bilingual programs in a small school, the school can pool resources and staffing with other schools (e.g., campus schools and neighboring schools) in order to provide wider access to programs.

For all ELL programs, the number of ENL, bilingual content area, and Home Language Arts units provided is based on English language proficiency and all units must be standards-based. See the [Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs](#) for more information.

## 2. *New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT)*

Schools must annually administer the NYSESLAT to all ELLs to determine how well they are learning English as part of the required annual assessment and tracking of ELLs' English language proficiency. The NYSESLAT assesses students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills using grade bands. Students' NYSESLAT results determine their proficiency levels and their continued eligibility for ELL services (whether the students exit from ELL status). See [NYSESED's website](#) and the [Policy and Reference Guide for MLs/ELLs](#) for more information.

### B. **Students with Disabilities**

Policies and procedures for students with disabilities are described in the NYCDOE's [Standard Operating Procedures Manual](#) (SOPM). Students with IEPs should, regardless of their disability:

- Have access to a rigorous academic curriculum that sets high academic standards, enabling them to fully realize their potential and graduate prepared for independent living, college, and careers.
- To the greatest extent appropriate, be taught and participate in activities with other students with and without disabilities.
- Receive special education services that are targeted to their needs and provide the appropriate level of support throughout the school day.
- To the greatest extent possible, be able to attend their zoned schools or the school of their choice, while still receiving the special education services and supports required.

It is the responsibility of each school to ensure that students with disabilities and their families feel welcome. The [School Implementation Team \(SIT\)](#) facilitates the strategic planning to ensure that every school appropriately and adequately serves all students. The SIT works with other school teams but does not usurp the function of the [IEP team or any other team](#).

Students with disabilities who do not require special education services but need health services and/or education accommodations in order to attend school or participate in regular school activities, may be eligible for a Section 504 Plan. To determine student eligibility for a Section 504 Plan, a student's parent or guardian and physician must complete and submit [these forms](#) to the school. The school's Section 504 team reviews the student's records and the physician's statement to determine accommodations the student is eligible to receive. There are two types of accommodations:

- Health accommodations, which include administration of medication (for example, asthma and diabetes medication) and medically prescribed non-medication treatment (such as G-Tube feeding).



- Educational accommodations, which include testing accommodations (for example, extended time and testing location), classroom accommodations (such as assistive technology), the [Safety Net](#), and other academic supports and services.

If approved by the Section 504 Team, these accommodations must be provided to the student. For questions related to Section 504 Plans, see the [Office of School Health’s guidance](#) and [Chancellor’s Regulation A-710](#).

Schools should review each new student’s IEP or Section 504 Plan upon entry. If a student’s IEP or Section 504 Plan recommends programs or services that the school has not previously provided, the school should first make it clear to the parents and student that they are committed to providing the programs and services that are recommended on the IEP or Section 504 Plan, beginning on the student’s first day at that school. For questions related to programming for students with disabilities, schools may contact their [Administrator of Special Education \(ASE\)](#) or in District 75, the Office of Assessment and Accountability. For other policies related to students with disabilities, see the sections on [testing accommodations](#), [NYSAA](#), [commencement credentials](#), and [scheduling in STARS](#).

A student’s status as a student with a disability, and any information related to the disability, is private information. Schools should ensure that the transcript does not reveal a student as having a disability. For example, schools should not list courses titled as “SETSS” on a transcript.

### 1. *New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)*

In accordance with Federal and State regulations, students in high school in New York participate in Regents exams. NYSAA is an alternate assessment to measure progress and performance in ELA, math, and science for students with severe cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in standard assessments, even with testing accommodations.

Annually, IEP teams determine the eligibility of students with disabilities who have IEPs to participate in standard or alternate assessments. The IEP team determines this eligibility on a case-by-case basis.<sup>58</sup>

Students who are eligible for alternate assessments “have limited cognitive abilities combined with behavioral and/or physical limitations and who require highly specialized education and/or social, psychological, and medical services in order to maximize their full potential for useful and meaningful participation in society and for self-fulfillment.”<sup>59</sup> Eligibility for participation in alternate assessments is not determined by disability classification.

IEP teams must carefully consider this decision, as participating in alternate assessments rather than standard State assessments has long-term implications for students and their families. In high school, students who participate in alternate assessments in lieu of Regents exams for one or more subjects are not eligible to earn an NYS high school diploma; they instead earn the [Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential](#). IEP teams must explain the eligibility for a credential instead of a diploma to the family of a student recommended to participate in NYSAA when the student begins high school.

Students who participate in NYSAA are expected to achieve alternate learning standards. These alternate standards are reduced in scope and complexity. They are intended to enable students to access NYSED learning standards but focus more closely on supporting students for post-secondary life (e.g., life and vocational skills). Students will see “NA/0.00” or “NA/1.00” credits on their transcripts as these experiences are not credit-bearing.

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<sup>58</sup> See NYSED’s [Eligibility and Participation Criteria - NYSAA](#)

<sup>59</sup> See [section 100.1 \(2.\)\(iv.\)](#)

Schools must explain this to the family of a student recommended to participate in NYSAA when the student begins high school.

Schools administer the NYSAA to students according to their chronological age and against grade-level standards set by NYSED.<sup>60</sup> The ELA, math, and science NYSAA exams are computer-delivered adaptive assessments. These measures of achievement:

- Provide eligible students with an alternative way to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
- Measure students' progress towards achieving academic goals.
- Support teachers and specialists in adapting instructional strategies and supports.
- Are used by schools as part of their usual classroom assessment practices.

The IEP team documents a student's participation in alternate assessments in the IEP. The student's IEP must clearly state why the student cannot participate in the general assessment program and the rationale for participating in alternate assessments. IEP teams must inform families at every IEP meeting, using the parent notification of participation in NYSAA letter that their student will participate in alternate assessments for one or more subjects in high school and is therefore not eligible for an NYS high school diploma.

See the [Alternate Assessment \(NYSAA\)](#) guidance for more information on NYSAA policies and procedures.

## 2. *Transition Services for Students with Disabilities – Updated August 2024*

The NYCDOE's goal is to prepare all students for postsecondary college and career readiness, and for students to exit high school with the highest diploma option possible. High expectations, rigorous instruction, access to effective teaching practices, and quality IEPs with deliberately planned transition services help to ensure that each student with a disability is prepared for post-secondary college, career, and/or independent living. NYSED specifies the requirements for determining and documenting postsecondary [transition plans for students with disabilities](#), beginning no later than the first IEP to be in effect the year the student turns 15, and updated annually as needed. Transition services are formalized plans documented in each student's IEP for continuing education, vocational training, employment, adult services, independent living and/or community participation, and are aligned to postsecondary goals reflective of student needs, abilities, and interests.

Specific requirements include:

- Evidence of age-appropriate transition assessments which identify areas of strength, preference, and areas of need as they pertain to education, training, employment and, where appropriate, independent living skills
- A statement of the student's needs, taking into account the student's strengths, preferences and interests, as they relate to transition from school to post-school activities
- Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals relating to education, training, employment and, where appropriate, independent living skills
- A statement of the transition service needs of the student that focuses on the student's courses of study, including the diploma objective toward which the student is working
- Transition activities that facilitate movement from school to post-school activities, including instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives.

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<sup>60</sup> Students eligible for NYSAA must be assessed on the grade-appropriate content that is consistent with the student's chronological age. See the [birthdate ranges for students participating in NYSAA](#) to determine chronological ages and corresponding grade levels.

- A statement of the responsibilities of the school district and, when applicable, participating agencies for the provision of such services and activities that promote movement from school to post-school life.

Before students with IEPs exit, schools must also provide them an [exit summary](#). The exit summary serves as a statement of their academic achievement and functional performance, including recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting postsecondary goals once they leave high school. Schools must provide this summary regardless of whether a student’s eligibility for special education services terminates due to graduation from secondary school with a diploma or due to exceeding the age eligibility for a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Students may exit school with an advanced Regents, Regents, or local diploma, the [Career Development and Occupational Studies \(CDOS\) Commencement Credential](#), or the [Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential](#). For detailed information around transition planning, schools should refer to the [Guide to Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities](#).

Students with IEPs who turned 21 within the 2023-24 school year may remain enrolled or re-enroll for 2024-25 to meet graduation requirements or transition to adult/postsecondary programs.

**For the 2024-25 school year only (subject to revision thereafter):** A student is no longer age-eligible once they have attained the age of 22 as of June 30, 2025. Students who turn 22 on or after September 1 may receive services through June 30 of the school year in which the student turns 22. Students who turn 22 between July 1 and August 31 may receive any recommended Extended School Year (ESY) special education programs and/or related services, but are ineligible for services beginning September 1.

For support re-admitting students over the age of 21 in ATS, contact your [OPE Lead](#).

### **C. Testing Accommodations for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities – Updated August 2024**

Testing accommodations remove barriers to the test-taking process so that students with disabilities and English Language Learners can demonstrate their knowledge and skills.<sup>61</sup> Testing accommodations do not reduce expectations for learning and are neither intended nor permitted to:

- Change the skills or content being measured or invalidate the results.
- Provide an unfair advantage.
- Substitute for knowledge or abilities that the student has not attained.

The following students may be eligible for testing accommodations:

- Students with disabilities, who have IEPs or Section 504 Plans, including:
  - Students who have been declassified and have accommodations specified on their “Declassification from Special Education Services” document<sup>62</sup> continue to receive those

<sup>61</sup> See [NYSED’s Testing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities](#) and NYSED’s Testing Accommodations for [English Language Learners](#).

<sup>62</sup> Accommodations for students who have been declassified are considered at the time of declassification and entered on the declassification plan. Unlike declassification services, testing accommodations can be provided for more than one year or until the testing accommodations are revised or eliminated. Schools should revisit declassified students’ testing accommodations annually to ensure that the accommodations listed on the declassification plan still meet the student’s changing needs, especially considering the different types of assessments conducted as students progress through the grades. If a change in student need or type of assessment has occurred, a 504 team should convene to create a 504 with the appropriate accommodations for the student.

accommodations until receiving a diploma or aging out at the end of the school year in which the student turns 21 years old.<sup>63</sup>

- Students who demonstrate disabilities 30 days or fewer before the administration of a State or district-wide assessment may receive certain testing accommodations if authorized by the principal. For example, a student who breaks their arm the day before an exam may be approved for a scribe. Such decisions are made by the principal and must be carefully documented with the [Borough Assessment Implementation Director \(BAID\)](#) and the [NYSED Office of State Assessment](#).

- ELLs and former ELLs for two years after exiting ELL status

Decisions to provide accommodations, as well as the specific accommodations themselves, are made on an individual basis and are reflective of student needs. Examples of testing accommodations include:

- Flexible test schedules or timing, including extended time and breaks.
- Flexible test settings and locations, including smaller group size
- Method of presentation, including test format (such as large print, braille, audio or digital versions of the test)
- Method of response, including transcription, scribe, or alternative language edition
- [Bilingual dictionaries and/or glossaries](#) that provide direct one-to-one translation of words

At the beginning of the school year, schools should determine which testing accommodations benefit individual ELLs and former ELLs so that students become familiar with their specific testing accommodations. ELLs are entitled to use those accommodations for most assessments, including teacher-created assessments and State-mandated assessments. For a comprehensive list of ELL accommodations, please refer to [NYSED's website](#) and this [Student Testing FAQ](#). For students with disabilities, the IEP or Section 504 team annually should determine the testing accommodations required for each student at each IEP or 504 meeting. Such testing accommodations as recommended on the IEP or 504 plan must be provided for teacher-created, district and State-mandated assessments.

## **D. Academic Intervention Services (AIS)**

[Part 100.2\(ee\)](#) of NYSED general school requirements sets the purposes and requirements of Academic Intervention Services (AIS) for New York State public schools. AIS is defined in Part 101.1(g) as “additional instruction which supplements the instruction provided in the general curriculum and assists students in meeting the State learning standards ... and/or student support services which may include guidance, counseling, attendance, and study skills which are needed to support improved academic performance.”

At the high school level, NYSED mandates AIS for all students with [disabilities](#) and students without disabilities who are not meeting or are in danger of not meeting NYS standards for Regents exams required for graduation, as well as [English Language Learners](#) who are not meeting or in danger of not meeting annual [Part 154](#) performance standards. Students must receive AIS from qualified staff in the area of concern. Appropriate pedagogues include:

- Teachers licensed in the subject area where the student is not meeting performance standards
- Special education teachers
- Certified reading teachers

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<sup>63</sup> For the 2024-25 school year only (subject to revision thereafter): A student ages out of special education eligibility at the end of the school year (June 30th) in which they turn 22. A student who turns 22 from July 1st to August 31st may receive any recommended ESY special education programs and/ or related services over the summer but is ineligible for services starting September 1 of the calendar year.

NYSED also mandates student support services when attendance, social/emotional or study skill problems affect a student's ability to meet performance standards. A range of staff can provide mandated student support services, including licensed guidance counselors, at-risk counselors (i.e., SAPIS), members of the school attendance team, and non-academic staff who contribute to students' academic success.

For AIS services in a student's identified area of need, the school must provide instruction supplementary to what is occurring in the classroom. Scheduling options may include extra periods during the school day, before- and after-school programs, weekend tutorials programs, and summer school.

Along with choosing the specific content of additional instruction, schools may choose to differentiate the intensity of AIS by changing the length and/or frequency of sessions, as well as the group size. Regular progress monitoring must be a part of the AIS program and intervention providers must keep records of interventions used and student academic growth.

Schools must provide written notification to the parents or guardians when their student has been identified as needing AIS. The written notification should be in English and, when appropriate, translated into a non-English language preferred by the family. The notification must inform the family about the services the student will receive, the reason why their student needs these services and the consequences if the student does not meet expected performance levels. The school must also notify parents or guardians when it terminates AIS for a student. Schools do not need parent permission to start or to end AIS.

While the student is receiving AIS, the school must maintain ongoing communication to parents or guardians regarding their student's AIS program, including:

- Quarterly reports on the student's academic progress in response to the intervention services
- At least once per semester an opportunity to consult with the student's regular classroom teacher(s) and the school staff providing AIS for their student
- Information on ways to work with their student to improve achievement, monitor their progress, and work with educators.

Schools must track academic interventions in STARS in alignment with current [STARS programming guidance](#).

## **E. Response to Intervention (RtI)**

RtI focuses on direct services, supports, and interventions for students at risk. Multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) is a systematic approach that addresses the conditions for creating successful and sustainable system change while also supporting students and staff. For students identified for RtI services by a school-wide universal screening assessment, evidence-based instruction and intervention driven by diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring are provided in increasing levels of intensity where this is needed.

While both AIS and RtI have academic recovery as their goals, the RtI structure seeks to increase the accuracy of referrals to special education services by helping to determine whether learning delays are a result of inadequate instruction or learning disability. It also seeks to ensure that all students have access to high quality, effective, evidence-based instruction and differentiated supports.

New York State requires that all schools provide RtI for students in grade in K – 4; New York City extends the mandate to the fifth grade. Although RtI is not a formal requirement in the high school grades, schools may choose to embed RtI/MTSS structures into their AIS programs in order to ensure that academic intervention leads to academic recovery and that students are properly identified for special education referral accurately and where warranted.

Schools must track academic interventions in STARS in alignment with current [STARS programming guidance](#).

## F. Medically Necessary and Hospital Instruction – Updated August 2024

Medically necessary instruction (MNI) and hospital instruction programs provide educational services for students who are unable to attend school due to orthopedic, non-orthopedic/medical, or psychiatric reasons. MNI and hospital instruction programs are interim programs that provide academic services to limit the educational effects of a long-term absence. Effective July 1, 2023, middle and high school students in MNI and hospital programs must receive a minimum of 15 instructional hours per week, to the extent possible given the student’s condition.

Students maintain their affiliation with their NYCDOE school, or “affiliate school,” while on MNI or hospital instruction. Students receive MNI or hospital instruction via shared instruction, in which the MNI or hospital program collaborates with the affiliate school to oversee the student’s instructional program. This relationship ensures continuity of instruction and helps the student maintain a strong connection to the New York City school they will return to after home or hospital instruction has ended.

To facilitate collaboration between the affiliate school and the MNI program, all schools must [designate an MNI point person in myGalaxy](#) at the start of each school year.

Refer to [Medically Necessary Instruction and Hospital Instruction: Academic Policy Guidance for Schools and Programs](#) for additional information the collaboration between the affiliate school and the MNI or hospital program.

For information on student eligibility and how to submit a request for MNI, see [Medically Necessary Instruction](#).

## G. Home Schooling

Families who opt for home schooling should understand that home schooling is governed by a separate set of NYSED policies. Students who are instructed at home may not participate in the instructional programs of the NYCDOE; students either receive home school instruction or receive instruction from an NYCDOE school.

The NYCDOE does not award high school diplomas to (or maintain academic transcripts for) students who are instructed at home, nor is the NYCDOE required to provide a letter of substantial equivalence of instruction being provided at home. If a high school student transfers to a NYCDOE high school, the high school will evaluate the student’s work and determine the number of transfer credits to award, if appropriate. For more information, see the [Home Schooling](#) webpage, the [NYSED FAQ](#) on home schooling, and the section on [Transfer Credit](#).

## H. Students in and Returning from Court-Ordered Settings

Students who are or have been involved with the court systems are entitled to specific rights related to their education:

- The right to enroll or re-enroll in school in a timely manner
- The right to continue to receive appropriate special education services, where an IEP is in place
- The right to receive assistance from the NYCDOE in obtaining records and updating the student’s DOE transcript to reflect credits earned while in a non-NYCDOE court-ordered setting. For assistance obtaining records, schools should email [reenrollmentsupport@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:reenrollmentsupport@schools.nyc.gov). For assistance evaluating transcripts, schools should contact their [OPE Lead](#).
- Students returning from court-ordered settings are not required to provide release letters from the custodial agency before re-enrolling or returning to a prior school.

Students in court-ordered settings refers to:

- Students in the custody of the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS):
  - When students under the age of 18<sup>64</sup> are detained in New York City following an arrest, they are under the supervision of the Administration for Children’s Services, Division of Youth and Family Justice (DYFJ). These students attend a NYCDOE school at one of the sites of Passages Academy (79X695), a program operated by District 79. ATS will indicate that the student is on Passages Academy’s register.
  - Students who are adjudicated in Family Court and require a non-secure or limited secure placement are in the custody of ACS DYFJ. These students are considered to be in “placement.” Most of these students remain in New York City and attend Passages Academy.
  - When a student in Passages Academy is released back to the community, the student is transferred back to the register of their prior school.
- Students in an Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) placement:
  - Some students are placed by the Family Court or Supreme Court in the custody of OCFS, or OCFS/ACS-contracted facilities (for example, Children’s Village, Greenburgh-Graham, etc.) and receive educational programming from a non-DOE entity.
  - These students are discharged from Passages (79X695) with a discharge code ‘10.’ Upon the end of their court-ordered involvement, students are required to appear at a Family Welcome Center to re-enroll in a NYCDOE school.
  - Students who return to the NYCDOE from an OCFS or other setting have the right to return to the school in which they were enrolled before entering placement.
  - Some students with IEPs who are placed in a school outside of the NYCDOE may receive a new IEP while in custody. Those students, upon re-enrollment in a NYC public school, must be provided a comparable services plan pending development of a new NYCDOE IEP.
- Students in the custody of the New York City Department of Correction:
  - Students who are 18 years of age or older, if arrested, may be placed in the custody of the New York City Department of Correction. Such students have the option of enrolling in East River Academy (79Q344), the school run by the NYCDOE on Rikers Island.
  - Students who were enrolled in a NYCDOE school at the time of transfer to East River Academy have the right to return to the school in which they were enrolled.
    - If the student is moved into State custody, the student will be discharged from East River Academy.

See the [Transfer Student Toolkit](#) for information about how to support a student’s transition back to their NYCDOE home school.

## I. Children of Active-Duty Military Personnel – **Added August 2024**

Adopted into New York State law in 2014, the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children is a nationwide agreement aimed at minimizing educational disruptions for children of active-duty military personnel due to frequent relocations and parental deployments. The compact mandates schools to offer increased flexibility in educational and graduation requirements for eligible students.

Eligibility for the compact is determined by the active military status of the student’s parent or legal guardian. Schools are required to identify students whose parent or legal guardian has active-duty status by distributing [this form](#) annually and documenting the student’s eligibility in ATS. The form is also available in NYCSA for parents to

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<sup>64</sup> New York’s [Raise the Age \(RTA\)](#) legislation changed the age that a child can be prosecuted as an adult to 18 years of age in criminal cases in New York State. Prior to RTA, 16- and 17-year-olds were prosecuted as adults.

complete. Schools must request official military orders to verify the active-duty status of the student's parent or legal guardian. If the student resides with a legal guardian who is not the military member, the guardian should provide proof of guardianship or a family care plan to establish eligibility under the compact.

As of September 2017, schools are required to accept alternative exams to fulfill New York State Education Department (NYSED) 4+1 graduation requirements, which include:

- **Option 1:** State exit exams from other states where the student has a verified passing score (e.g., Florida's Comprehensive Assessment Test).
- **Option 2:** National norm-referenced achievement tests with verified passing scores (e.g., SAT, SAT II, ACT, International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement).
- **Option 3:** Local end-of-course exams for which the student earned credit at their previous school, as verified by the principal of the sending school (e.g., teacher-created final exams).

NYCDOE principals may request additional information regarding courses and exams before accepting transfer credits. All exam alternatives must be documented on the student's NYCDOE transcript prior to graduation. Schools must document the review process using the [Transfer Credit Equivalency Form](#) and update the transcript accordingly. Procedures for transcript updates are outlined in the [Transcript Update](#) guidance document, and schools should select the option to add a New York State-approved alternative to a Regents exam, with the mark 'WX.'

Schools must retain documentation, such as exam score sheets or transcripts from other schools, to support these updates. For further information on credit and exam flexibilities available to children of military families, refer to the [Children of Active Duty Military Personnel: Guidelines for Exam Flexibilities under the Interstate Compact](#).

## V. PROGRAMMING AND SYSTEMS POLICIES

The [STARS](#) suite of applications is the NYCDOE's official record of students' programs, grades, and progress toward completing academic requirements. [STARS Classroom](#), [STARS Admin](#), and [STARS Client](#) comprise the STARS suite of course scheduling and grade management applications used by the NYCDOE. STARS Classroom is a web-based application compatible with most internet browsers that automates the collection of course marks for teachers. Teachers can use this system to view [class rosters](#), access student data, and enter course marks which will appear on STARS-generated student [report cards](#). For more information, see the [STARS wiki](#).

High schools have a responsibility to program students towards the most rigorous coursework and diploma possible. All NYCDOE high schools must accurately reflect students' academic schedules, coursework, grades, and credits in STARS. Maintaining accurate student and teacher schedules in STARS ensures schools, students, and families understand how a student is progressing towards graduation. It also reduces data requests from central offices to schools.

### A. Term Models

Term is the length of a course with one syllabus and a final grade and credit(s) earned. Schools must designate a school-wide term model in STARS before the start of the school year. A school's designated term model defines the maximum length of any course experience that it may offer. Schools may adjust the number of weeks of instruction per term in STARS as long as they have designated enough instructional days to meet State [instructional day and aidable day requirements](#), as well as individual course instructional time requirements. Individual courses may be shorter than the school's designated term model. However, schools cannot offer courses that span across multiple terms; courses must begin and end within one term.



Regardless of the term model, all schools must ensure that courses meet for the equivalent of 54 hours per credit during the school year (or 45 hours during the summer term). Schools may choose from one of four term models:

- **Annual:** about 36 weeks of instruction, in which students remain in a course the entire year and receive final course marks in June
- **Semester:** about 18 weeks of instruction, in which the year is divided into two terms
- **Trimester:** about 12 weeks of instruction, in which the year is divided into three terms
- **Cycle:** about 9 weeks of instruction, in which the year is divided into four terms

Term model heavily influences course sequences, student programming and progress to graduation, and the frequency of awarding credits. See the [guidance on term models](#) for a summary of the benefits and drawbacks of each term model. Schools should not modify the term model frequently and must never adjust the term model during the school year.

## B. Scheduling in STARS

A school's academic program is operationalized through its [master schedule](#) in STARS. The master schedule contains key information about current course offerings, including the teacher of record and locations and meeting days. Each course has the following attributes that can be used in creating both student and teacher schedules:

- Course code
- Section number
- Period
- Cycle (meaning the number of days per week the course meets)
- Capacity (the maximum number of students that can be scheduled in one section)
- Room number
- Teacher name

Once the master schedule is uploaded into STARS Client, schools can begin to program their students. Note, schools can use a mass scheduling function such as the [Schedule Engine](#) to program students. This does not require a finalized master schedule. Schools can also finalize their master schedule and use tools like [Request Add/Drop](#) or the [Walk-In Scheduler](#) to program students in a more individual fashion.

Depending on the programming needs identified, some schools typically program students using either an individual or block scheduling model, or some combination of the two methods, which are described in brief here:

- **Individual scheduling:** Students are scheduled based on individual needs and requirements. As a result, each student's schedule is unique. Courses may be scheduled as a daily uniform program or on a rotation cycle.
- **Block scheduling:** Students are grouped according to their needs, or by special program or grade level. Each group follows the same schedule. In some cases, block scheduling may allow for longer periods and normally requires courses to meet on a rotation.

In addition to individual and block scheduling, schools may choose to adopt different instructional approaches in accordance with contractual requirements.

## 1. Course Codes – **Updated August 2024**

Schools indicate the courses they currently offer by designating active course codes. STARS course codes capture information about the subject area, course content and its alignment to NYSED [learning standards](#), the position of a course within a sequence, the instructional level, and delivery model. They are used for student schedules, report cards, transcripts, and NYCDOE data and accountability purposes.

Schools must follow the coding practices detailed in the [High School Course Code Directory](#) to ensure that course sequences can be interpreted by other NYCDOE schools and NYCDOE tools. The use of the standardized codes outlined in the [High School Course Code Directory](#) allows users within and outside the school community to understand what the course codes signify. Many NYCDOE reports, tools, and data feeds use the rules established in the [High School Course Code Directory](#) to inform their business rules.<sup>65</sup>

Prior to building the term's master schedule, schools should review their course offerings and [active codes](#) for the given year and term and ensure the courses will again be available. At this time, schools should also adjust course codes for the current school year and beyond, as needed. As a reminder, **both G- and Z-coded courses should not be credit-bearing**. If in their review of active codes schools identify credited G- and Z-codes, they must be removed from code decks.

**Beginning 2024-25**, new course codes are available for music, dance, and theater. Schools should review the new course codes in the [High School Course Code Directory and STARS wiki](#) and schedule students accordingly.

Schools must not modify historical course codes, as this can result in the loss of important academic data. As described in the [Transcript Update](#) guidance, schools must not complete transcript updates in order to “clean up” or delete and modify historical course codes to better align with the above policies and practices.

Course codes and other attributes, like title and credits, are set at the course level. The information designated by the code applies to all students in the course and sections receiving that content. Schools may not customize codes for individual sections or students who are sitting in the same class. For support with course coding, schools may contact their [OPE Lead \(formally APPA\)](#).

## 2. Course Titles

Schools also select the title of their courses. These titles appear on students’ transcripts and records, and they are visible to those within and outside of the NYCDOE.

The New York City Department of Education is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive school environment for all students free from harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying and free from discrimination on account of actual or perceived race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, or weight.

To support this district-wide commitment, schools should be mindful of what a course title reveals about participating students. Specifically:

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<sup>65</sup> For schools serving students in grades 6–12, middle school courses must be scheduled using the [Middle School Course Code Directory](#).

- Course titles may never indicate that a course is designed specifically for students with disabilities (for example, courses may not be titled “English Special Ed”).
- Course titles should not identify the gender of students participating in those courses (for example, Girls Health or Boys Choir).

See the [Guidelines on Gender Inclusion](#) for help implementing gender-inclusive curricula, programs, activities, and practices that are consistent with this policy and with the NYCDOE’s commitment to equity and access. Schools must be mindful that inappropriate gender segregation may result in isolating students, hindering diversity, and/or perpetuating gender stereotypes.

The additional following guidance applies:

- The titles of courses should be easy for an external reader to interpret. Information about the themes and topics covered in required courses can hinder postsecondary institutions’ ability to understand a student’s academic history. This information can be communicated with students and families through course catalogs or other materials.
- Courses for which a standard code is not available are generally coded using ‘Q’ in the second character. The titles of these courses should be descriptive so that the reader of the transcript can interpret them. For example, the course “MQS11: Math Topics” does not provide any information about the content of the course and whether it is high-school level, while “MQS11: Pre-Algebra” clearly describes the course content.
- Advanced Placement courses must use specific, required course titles; see the [AP Courses](#) guidance for additional information.

### 3. *Section Properties – Updated August 2024*

Schools capture additional information about the delivery method and content of the course using [section properties](#). These fields further identify the unique properties of a course/subject, including but not limited to:

- Whether the course integrates English as a New Language (ENL)
- The target language of instruction and percent of time in target language
- The special education model
- Whether the course integrates computer science subjects and is part of the Computer Science for All initiative
- Whether the course integrates a meaningful lesson or unit of financial education
- Whether the course is a performing group, as defined in the [STARS Programming Related to Class Size wiki](#)
- Whether the course is part of the following programs: CareerReady Summer Youth Employment Program (CRSYEP), Career and Technical Education (CTE), FutureReady New York City (FRNYC), or Career Readiness and Modern Youth Apprenticeship (CRMYA)
- For health education, the number of HIV/AIDS lessons provided
- Whether the course is taught in a virtual or blended learning environment, using the Virtual/Blended section property.
- **In addition to** the virtual/blended section property:
  - Whether the course is part of School Based Virtual Learning (SBVL)
  - Whether the course is part of Virtual Learning Classroom (VLC)
  - Whether the course uses a learning management system such as iLearn; this property may also be used for courses that are not virtual/blended

In order to ensure students are receiving the instruction to which they are entitled and to support accurate reporting for compliance, schools must carefully complete the section properties in each year and term and ensure they accurately reflect students’ experiences. For additional support, refer to the following STARS Wiki

pages: [English Language Learners](#), [Special Education Programming](#), [Computer Science](#), [Financial Education](#), and [Section Properties](#).

#### 4. *Push-in/Pull-out Instruction*

Push-in and pull-out instruction occurs when a teacher other than the primary teacher(s) delivers targeted instruction to a subgroup of students on a regular basis. Push-in and pull-out instruction can be used to meet a variety of instructional needs including, but not limited to, intervention, enrichment, and services for English language learners/multilingual learners, and students with disabilities.

Push-in and pull-out instruction must always be programmed in STARS to reflect the content and subjects being delivered to students. It must be scheduled to reflect the frequency with which the push-in or pull-out instruction occurs. Push-in/pull-out instruction records identify the teacher, the minutes and meet times, the subject of the instruction (using course codes), and any other important properties.

- In **push-in instruction**, an additional teacher instructs a student or subgroup of students within the primary class. The STARS push-in record should match the subject being delivered in the primary class.
- In **pull-out instruction**, a student or subgroup of students leaves the primary class to receive instruction outside the classroom from a second teacher.

Integrated co-teaching (ICT) is not considered push-in or pull-out instruction. Instead, this is indicated as a section property.

For additional details and instructions for programming push-in and pull-out instruction, see the [STARS wiki page](#); for additional information on special education programming, see the [STARS wiki Special Education Programming Guidance](#).

## VI. GRADING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

### A. Grading Policies

All elementary, middle, and high schools must have written grading policies that they review and update annually. Well-documented grading policies facilitate discussion with students and families about academic growth and support students and families in sharing ownership of their learning. School-based grading policies should be developed in consultation with the school community and grounded in the needs of their students. Grading policy documents may be organized in a variety of ways, depending on the extent to which schools' grading policies are standardized at the school, department, or course level.

Schools must share a physical or electronic copy of their grading policy with students and families at the beginning of the school year. Schools should also share grading policies at open houses, parent-teacher conferences, on the school website, and through other touchpoints with families. Students and families have the right to request the grading policy at any point in time, per the [Student Bill of Rights](#) and the [Parents' Bill of Rights](#). Schools must translate their grading policies for families when needed.

All grading policies must explain, at a minimum, how grades are determined, the grading scales used, and the timeline of when students receive grades. In addition, schools should have clearly defined procedures to ensure that students' final course grades are entered in STARS by the end of the term, and in some cases may be entered up to 20 business days (or 4 weeks) after the end of the term for individual students who need additional time.

Schools have discretion in deciding which specific measures are factored into students' grades. Schools must make determinations of passing or failing based primarily on how well students demonstrate understanding of the subject matter, concepts, content, and skills addressed in a course or subject. Even in courses like physical education (PE), science labs, or electives, students must be graded based primarily on how well they have learned the concepts and subjects being taught.

Students who meet the learning outcomes of the course by meeting the expectations outlined in the syllabus must receive credit for the course. When students miss class time, teachers should give students reasonable chances to make up missed work before final grades are entered in STARS.

Students may not be denied credit based on lack of "seat time" alone. Schools must communicate these academic expectations to students and families at the beginning of the school year.<sup>66</sup>

Attendance may not be factored into a student's grade. Attending school, participating in class, and demonstrating understanding are all essential components of student learning, and school communities must make every effort to ensure that students attend school, with a goal of every student, every day. When students attend school consistently, they have the greatest opportunity to make progress, receive support from their teachers, and demonstrate their learning. Students' grades must reflect the extent to which they have met the learning outcomes for their courses.

All students, including [students with disabilities](#) and [ELLs/MLs](#), should be working toward grade-level standards and must receive grades based on competency of NYSED commencement-level [learning standards](#).<sup>67</sup>

- **ELLs/MLs:** Grading policies should consider students' English as a New Language (ENL) proficiency level and should include opportunities for students to demonstrate competency of NYSED commencement-level learning standards in their native language.
- **Students with disabilities:** All students, including students with disabilities, should be working toward grade-level standards and should receive grades based on how well they comprehend the content and skills addressed in a course or subject. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) describes specially designed instruction and accommodations for an individual student that creates access to grade-level standards and enables progress toward annual goals. Students' receipt of accommodations may not impact the grade that can be earned. Students with disabilities have the same opportunity to earn grades as all other students.
  - Schools issue report cards to provide feedback on students' progress in the general education curriculum and distribute progress reports to reflect the likelihood a student will meet or has already met their annual goals. While progress reports are usually distributed at the same time as report cards, they may not replace report cards for students with disabilities.
- **Students with disabilities who participate in alternate assessments:** Due to the severity of the students' disabilities, schools modify the general education curriculum to provide students access and allow for participation and progress. Modification changes the expectation of what skills students need to demonstrate they have met the learning outcomes of the course. To accommodate different

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<sup>66</sup> Sometimes, students miss the majority of the course and it is not reasonable for them to complete course requirements through make-up work before teachers award final grades. In these cases, it may be appropriate to award special marks such as an 'NX' (Course in Progress) or 'NL' (New/Recent Admit or Other), consistent with the NYCDOE policies for these marks. Students who are considered long-term absentees (LTA) and students receiving hospital instruction or medically necessary instruction (MNI) should never be assigned an 'NS' mark. See the [Grading Policy Toolkit](#) for more information.

<sup>67</sup> See the United States Department of Education's [Dear Colleague Letter](#).

expectations, a school's grading policy should address how they grade students with disabilities who participate in alternate assessment.

Schools must not use Regents exam scores as a factor in student grades.

For information on how to develop and implement strong grading policies that promote accurate, equitable, and social-emotionally responsive grading, schools can refer to the [Grading Policy Toolkit](#).

## B. Course Marks and Report Cards

Schools determine the number of marking periods to include within a year, semester, trimester, or cycle, depending on the model they use in STARS; see the section of this guide on [term models](#) and the [overview of term models](#) guidance for more information. Schools must give at least two grades (marks) in each course per term and enter them in STARS, to ensure that students have the opportunity to receive at least one interim and one final mark in every course. The last marking period in the term is where final course grades for that term are recorded.<sup>68</sup> Schools determine these calculations according to their grading policies. Schools should clearly define procedures for calculating and entering final grades in STARS by the end of the term, and in some cases may be entered up to 20 business days (or 4 weeks) after the end of the term for individual students who need additional time.<sup>69</sup>

### Important Terms to Know

**Grades** are a reflection of students' understanding and command of content, their progression through a course or subject, and their competency of skills *at a given point in time*.

**Grading policies** outline when and how students receive feedback on their competency of content and skills. Schools can address these elements in one or more document(s). Schools are not required to use a specific format when drafting their grading policies. The purpose of a grading policy is to allow students, families, and teachers to have a mutual understanding of what specific grades mean. Schools may establish grading policies at the school, department, grade, or course level, provided the school applies their grading policies equitably to all students.

**Term** is the length of a course with one teacher or set of teachers, one syllabus, and a final grade and credit(s) earned. Schools must designate a school-wide term model in STARS before the start of the school year. A school's designated term model defines the maximum length of any course experience that it may offer. Individual courses may be shorter than the school's designated term model. Schools cannot offer courses that span across multiple terms; courses must begin and end within one term. The term model a school uses heavily influences course sequences, student programming, and students' progress to graduation.

**Marking periods** are intervals during a course when the teacher of record awards interim marks, which provide status updates to students, families, and other stakeholders.

**Report card grades** are indications of students' progress toward proficiency of the course's learning standards at a given point in time. These are grades that do not appear on the transcript. Report card grades may be standalone or cumulative. They are also often called marking period grades.

**Final grades (marks)** are given at the end of the term, representing the work students completed over their courses and should reflect the ultimate level of proficiency at the end of the course, as of that point in time. This

<sup>68</sup> For additional information on generating final grades in STARS, see the STARS wiki page on [Grades and Exams](#).

<sup>69</sup> See the [STARS wiki](#) for more information on how to define terms and enter marking period grades.

grade may also confer credit(s) when a course is credit-bearing. The teacher of record determines the final mark in accordance with the school's grading policies and the City and State's academic policies.

## 1. *Course Marks*

All schools are required to enter both interim and final report card grades (course marks) into STARS for grade levels K–12, regardless of the type of report card they choose to use. Schools should enter grades in accordance with their school-level grading policies and in accordance with the [Grading Policy Toolkit](#). Schools are not required to enter indicator marks or narratives if the school is not already using the STARS report card. The marks entered in STARS must accurately match the marks awarded and communicated to students and families.

Schools must award grades in STARS using one of the available NYCDOE grading scales, to ensure that measures of student progress are transparent and translatable across schools. Schools may choose to award grades using one or multiple grading scales, provided the use of each scale is clearly explained in the school's grading policies. The principal, in consultation with the School Leadership Team (SLT), may determine whether grading scales are set at the school, department, grade, or course level.

Each course mark has a citywide pass/fail equivalent, and most have a numeric equivalent used in the calculation of GPA. See the [Course and Exam Marks Tables](#) for the full list of grading scales and marks available for high schools.

The following policies apply to specific course marks:

- **Course in Progress ('NX')**: Schools must award a grade of 'NX' (Course in Progress) if a student has a documented, extreme extenuating circumstance that prevents them from completing the course in its established timeframe (for example, surgery or a death in the family). 'NX' does not have a pass/fail or a numeric equivalent. A student who receives a Course in Progress must successfully complete remaining course requirements by the end of the term following the termination of the course in order to receive a final grade and credit, as applicable. Schools must update the previously awarded 'NX' with the final grade via transcript update.
- **New or Recently Admitted Students ('NL')**: Schools must award a grade of 'NL' to students who enroll in a course after it has started and may have missed assignments or assessments needed to generate a complete course grade for the given marking period. These students may be given a grade of 'NL' in STARS to indicate the student did not have the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the course content. 'NL' does not have a pass/fail or numeric equivalent. Students have until the end of the following term (not including summer) to complete the course. The school should create a detailed plan for the student that specifies the timeline and work necessary to earn a final grade and credits. The school will award a final grade and credit using a transcript update. Schools must update the previously awarded 'NL' with the final grade via transcript update.
- **No Show ('NS')**: Schools have discretion in using this mark, but it is recommended that the mark be used sparingly if at all. An 'NS' has a numeric equivalent of 45, which is lower than the numeric equivalent of an 'F' (55). If schools choose to use this mark, it should be reserved for the most egregious situations where a student fails to attend a course and does not participate in any of the work from which a grade can be derived.
  - Neither long-term absentees (LTA) nor students receiving hospital instruction or medically necessary instruction (MNI) should be assigned an 'NS' mark. See [Medically Necessary and Hospital Instruction](#) guidance for information on how schools should collaborate with students receiving medically necessary or hospital instruction. Schools who have students who are LTAs

and have missed more than 20 consecutive school days, must follow the [guidance on using ZLTA codes](#) so that students are not awarded marks.

## 2. *Report Cards*

[Report cards](#) can be generated in STARS for each marking period and must be distributed to students and families at least twice per term— one report indicating the student’s progress and one report indicating the student’s final grades for the term. Schools may use the standard NYCDOE report card and/or school-developed materials to provide students and families with more information about their progress and performance. Schools can refer to the [Student Report Cards](#) InfoHub page for sample STARS report cards, including translations.

All schools are required to enter both interim and final report card grades into STARS for grade levels K–12, regardless of the type of report card they choose to use. Schools should enter grades in accordance with their school-level grading policies. The marks entered in STARS must accurately match the marks awarded and communicated to students and families.

As a way to create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all students, schools should use gender-neutral language in report cards and other student records that will remain with the student throughout their academic career.

Examples of gender-neutral language include:

- Using the student’s name or the singular “they” instead of gendered pronouns like “he” or “she.”
- Avoiding gender stereotypes and focusing on the individual student’s strengths and weaknesses.
- Using inclusive language that includes all genders, such as “children,” “learner,” or “student.”

By using gender-neutral language, schools can help create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for all students, regardless of their gender identity.

All school staff members and students must refer to students by their chosen names and pronouns, consistent with the [Guidelines to Support Transgender and Gender Expansive Students](#).

## 3. *Competency-Based Learning*

Competency-based learning is a pedagogical approach where instruction, feedback, and assessment are organized around the most important skills and knowledge in a course, called learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are pre-determined competencies and skills in reference to standards. In a competency-based learning system, students are given timely, differentiated supports based on evidence of their learning, as well as multiple opportunities to demonstrate their proficiency. Implementing competency-based learning requires long-term planning and strong support from the school community, including teachers, administrators, students, and families.

For additional guidance on programming students in schools that employ competency-based learning models, see this guidance on [Competency-Based Learning](#). Schools should contact their [OPE Lead](#) for direct support with academic policy and programming.



### C. Transcript Updates

Schools must have procedures to keep [student transcripts](#) up to date to ensure that students are progressing toward promotion and diploma requirements. Schools may complete a transcript update only in specific circumstances. Schools must complete all transcript updates in accordance with the policies listed below by completing the [Transcript Update Form](#) and providing any necessary supporting documentation.

High schools may update a student’s final grade for the following reasons:

- Add a new course
  - Transfer credit, in accordance with the policies outlined in the section on [transfer credit](#)
  - World Languages credit, for documented residence and school attendance in an “other-than-English-speaking” environment, in accordance with the policies outlined in the section on [World Languages](#)
  - Credit by examination, in accordance with the policies outlined in the section on [credit by examination](#)
  - Physical education credit for participation in PSAL, in accordance with the outlined policies in the [PE FAQ](#)
  - Service hours, documenting students’ progress toward the [service seal](#)<sup>70</sup>
- Change an existing grade<sup>71</sup>
  - Grade calculation/entry error, in accordance with the course’s grading policy
  - Updating a grade of Course in Progress (‘NX’) or New/Recent Admit or Other (‘NL’) to a final grade, per the policies outlined in [Course Marks and Report Cards](#)
  - Principal override, in accordance with UFT contracts. A teacher must be notified in writing of any principal override of final course grades.
- Add or change an examination outcome
  - Regents exam waiver (‘WA’), in accordance with the policies on [Regents Exam Waivers](#)
  - Regents exam score, a student completed at a non-NYCDOE school in New York State
  - NYSED-approved alternative (‘WX’), as outlined in the section on [NYSED-approved alternatives](#)
  - Performance-based assessment task for [schools with State approval](#) to administer PBATs
  - Successful appeal to graduate with a low score on a Regents exam as outlined in the [Appeals](#) section of this guide (‘WG’)
- Remove an exam or course
  - Removing an exam due to duplication or error
  - Removing a course due to duplication or error
- Parent Choice Policy
  - Remove an exam due to parent request
  - Add an exam that was previously removed due to parent request

Schools must have a signed and completed [Transcript Update Form](#) with documentation that supports the change being made before completing the transcript update in STARS. Schools

<sup>70</sup> Service hours transcript updates should not be credit-bearing; they should only be adding the total number of hours a student has worked. See the [transcript update](#) guidance document or the section on [Internships and Service Learning](#) for more information.

<sup>71</sup> As of September 2018, annualization is no longer an accepted reason for a transcript update and is no longer available on the transcript update form or in STARS.

cannot perform transcript updates for reasons not specified on the form. They cannot use transcript updates to add courses that were never scheduled and cannot use the transcript update process to modify historical course codes or credit values for individual students. For support with coding concerns, schools may contact their [OPE Lead](#).

#### **D. Calculation of Grade Point Average (GPA) and Rank**

Schools may determine which courses taken at their school to include in the calculation of student GPA. In addition, schools may use [STARS to assign additional weight](#) to honors, [Advanced Placement \(AP\)<sup>®</sup>](#), International Baccalaureate, and [college courses](#), as explained in the [school's grading policy](#).

Schools may determine whether to establish school-based policies for class rankings and determinations of a valedictorian and salutatorian. Schools are encouraged to consider factors such as equity, motivation, and academic integrity when considering whether to specify an individual student's rank to move away from using grades as a means of comparative student recognition and instead celebrate all students. In cases where class rank is necessary (e.g., to determine a student's scholarship eligibility), schools should consider designating students as being in the top 10% or top 25% for GPA outside of STARS without assigning each student an individual number/rank in STARS. Schools should share clear, documented policies with students and families that take into consideration which students are eligible to be ranked, which courses count in the ranking, how courses are weighted, and how the final rank will be calculated. In STARS, when calculating the rank, schools can determine which students are included in the denominator by creating a custom group and excluding or including students based on their ranking policy. Schools should complete their ranking prior to certifying students for graduation and discharging them in ATS.

## **VII. ATTENDANCE, DISCHARGE, AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**

### **A. School Calendar**

Each year, the school year calendar is centrally designed to meet the NYSED requirement of a minimum number of 180 school days, and a minimum of 990 instructional hours for students in grades 7-12. Please see [New York State Education Commissioner's Regulation 175.5](#) regarding State Aid. The [NYCDOE School Year Calendar](#), which includes Chancellor's conference days for professional development and parent teacher conference times, is pre-determined to ensure that schools do not fall below the minimum number of aidable days while adhering to contractual requirements and observing key holidays. According to NYSED:

- Aidable days must be between September and June
- Classes or activities scheduled on Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays do not count towards the 180 aidable days

To avoid the risk of a reduction in State Aid, and to limit the impact on bus scheduling and other services, schools may not deviate from the calendar except in limited circumstances. See the [NYCDOE Calendar Change Requests](#) page for additional information and the link to the Calendar Change Request Application.

## B. Daily Session Time and Student Schedules

Each year, the principal determines a school’s schedule in alignment with contractual obligations and NYSED minimum instructional time requirements. Changes to the schedule that deviate from the traditional contractual requirements require a vote via the School-Based Option (SBO) process.

The principal determines a school’s schedule in alignment with contractual rules and the above instructional time requirements, described in the [Session Time Memo](#). Once a school’s overarching session times and contractual work day schedules are established in the [Session Time Application](#), students must be programmed for all instructional time in the STARS suite of applications. For middle and high schools, this includes updating the bell schedule in the STARS client with accurate information to inform student programming.

In accordance with State policies around school funding and State Aid, schools must provide all students with a minimum amount of instructional time per school year:

- In grades K–6 a minimum of 900 hours of instructional time, over at least 180 aidable days
- In grades 7–12 a minimum of 990 hours of instructional time, over at least 180 aidable days

These are experiences where students are:

- Receiving instruction from a teacher in an academic subject area
- Engaged in instructional experiences which are supervised by a qualified pedagogue

Instructional time does not include minutes where instruction and/or supervised study time is not provided to students, such as lunch or recess. Schools must work to maximize student instructional time and prioritize time in the classroom. This may include reducing minutes of passing time between periods and eliminating homeroom if it is not operationally necessary.

In order to meet these requirements, NYCDOE schools must provide a total of 25 hours per week to students in grades K–6 and 27.5 hours per week to students in grades 7–12 of supervised instructional time, exclusive of lunch. This time may include supervised, instructional experiences overseen by teachers at the school that occur off-site (for example, courses taken at a college, internships).<sup>102</sup>

Schools must provide students the following minimum instructional time, summarized in the table below, over at least 180 aidable days, as set forth in the [NYCDOE’s School Calendar](#):

Grade levels	Hours per year	Hours per week
Students in full day Kindergarten and grades 1–6	900 hours/year	25 hours/week
Students in grades 7–12	990 hours/year	27.5 hours/week

Schools may choose to extend their school day beyond the required hours with the help of community-based organizations/non-profits and special grant opportunities; however schools must deliver their mandated instruction and services, including for [English language learners](#) and the IEP-recommended program and related services for [students with disabilities](#), during the regular, mandated school day.

For middle and high school grade levels, the following applies:

- Regents testing and Regents rating days are considered aidable days by NYSED. Schools should carefully consider if students would benefit from attending class and receiving instruction during these days. In general, Regents Days should be instructional, unless it is necessary for schools to allow students to leave the building to support proper exam administration.
- **In 9–12 schools:**

- For all non-D75 schools comprised only of students in grades 9–12, schools may choose to remove Regents days from their school calendar in ATS using [ERES](#). Attendance scan sheets will not be generated.
- This process of releasing grades 9–12 may also be applied in schools administering their own final assessments in place of or in addition to Regents exams (e.g. portfolio reviews or final exams for courses not culminating in Regents exams) in the following circumstances:
  - The final assessments administered during these days must be required assessments that count toward students’ final course grades for the term. Schools may not implement non-attendance days for practice exams, course makeup or review sessions, or assessments that could be readily incorporated into classroom instructional time.
  - The assessment(s) must be administered during the Regents exam administration periods.
  - The assessment(s) must be scheduled for morning and/or the afternoon.
  - The assessment(s) must require significant school space and/or staff as to impede administration on a traditional instructional day.
- **In 6–12 schools:**
  - Schools serving students in grades 6–12 may use the function [CCLA](#) (release code 43) to release students in affected grades if the exam administration will disrupt normal instruction. Approval is not required, provided the school is releasing on the days of Regents exams only.
  - Similarly, secondary schools may request the release of grades 6–8 during the Regents exam period if middle school students take local final examinations, as described above.
- **In K–12 schools:** Schools serving students in grades K–12 must request approval in advance if they would like to release students in affected grades during Regents exam administration. Schools must follow the [Calendar Change Request process](#).

Note that days of special events, such as PSATs, field trips, promotion ceremonies, etc. are days of attendance; impacted grades may not be released.

Students on track for graduation often reach their senior year needing only a few required courses or already having met minimum diploma requirements. Regardless, schools must schedule all students for 27.5 hours per week of instructional, supervised activities. Schools may use a variety of options to support students in pursuing more rigorous diploma options and strengthening their college and career readiness, including:

- Extended core courses (for example, a fourth year of math or science), [Advanced Placement \(AP\)](#)<sup>®</sup> courses, International Baccalaureate courses, [college-preparatory courses](#), or elective courses
- Off-site internships, overseen by a teacher or administrator in the school, which align with [learning standards](#)
- [Courses at a college](#), in partnership with the high school
- Seminars or independent studies where students can research a topic of interest to them
- Advisory activities to support students in planning for college and careers

For guidance on awarding credit for these learning experiences, see [course credit policies and procedures](#).

Students above compulsory age (specifically those who have completed the school year in which they turn 17) have the right to attend a full-time high school or high school program through the end of the school year in which they turn 21. Students above compulsory age and who have completed four years of high school (meaning those who are in their fifth year of high school or beyond), have the following additional options:

- Schools are encouraged to program students with a full schedule to complete their academic program and earn a diploma, completing the schedule with experiences and electives, to support college and career readiness.
- Students may transfer to a YABC to complete final credits or take Regent’s prep courses.
- Based on their academic and personal needs, schools may program individual students for shortened schedules (such as attend classes every morning until noon) to complete their academic program and earn a diploma. In this case, schools should ensure that students are scheduled, at a minimum, for courses and exams needed to put them on track to graduate. All students should be provided opportunities to complete an academic program that adequately prepares them for their college and career goals.
- Students may not be given part-time schedules (with a schedule of courses meeting fewer than five days) without marking such students absent on the days they do not attend courses.

The following additional guidance on programming non-attending students applies:

- Schools must follow the guidance in [Chronic Absenteeism and Attendance Improvement](#) for any students who are not attending school.
- Schools should use official classes (via **CMOD**) to organize their register and attendance rosters, including for students with long-term absences (LTAs). Monitor attendance for non-attending students who may be marked present in error.
- Schools are responsible for ensuring that all students, including students who are absent for extended periods of time, are provided with an academic program that moves them toward graduation and college and career readiness. In the event that a student is absent for more than 20 consecutive school days the school may:
  - Add administrative block(s) to serve as a transition schedule, in which the student will meet with a counselor, administrator, and/or other school staff members prior to their return to classes, with a ‘ZA’ in the first two characters. This ‘ZA’ functional course serves to indicate that the student needs to see the guidance counselor or another administrator upon return.
  - Partially or fully remove the student from the academic program for which they were previously scheduled. The school should retain a copy of the academic program in the student’s cumulative record to facilitate the process of recreating the program in STARS at a later date.
- If a student returns from an extended absence, the following must occur:
  - On the same day the student returns, the school must develop a transition plan, which may include discussing the student’s progress toward graduation and postsecondary goals, diagnosing the student’s academic proficiency, informing the student’s teachers of the student’s current program, and providing the student with information about school systems and structures. For any remaining time in the school day, the school must provide the student with academic instruction in alignment with their needs.
  - By the following morning, the school must provide the student with a full academic program. To create this program, the school should review and adjust the student’s most recent academic program to ensure that it will support the student in progressing toward graduation and college and career readiness. Where needed, the school should modify the program to provide opportunities for academic intervention and recovery.

For more information on term models and how to reflect instructional time in STARS, see the [Scheduling in STARS](#) section of this guide. Schools may contact their [OPE Lead](#) for direct support with STARS.

### C. Attendance, Discharge, and Strategies for the Reduction of Chronic Absenteeism

Attending school, participating in class, and demonstrating understanding are all essential components of student learning and achieving success in school and in life. It is the collective responsibility of the New York City school system to make every effort to remove barriers to attendance and to help every student attend and learn in school every day.

To see the full 2024-25 attendance policy and related policies, refer to the [Attendance InfoHub](#).

### D. Student Records Retention and Transfer

Maintaining up-to-date, accurate student records is an important part of ensuring that students are programmed for the correct courses and exams and receiving the services they need. High schools are responsible for obtaining and maintaining relevant records electronically and in students' cumulative files. See the guidance provided in [Records Retention and Disposition Schedule for New York Local Government Records LGS-01](#), the [Student Records](#) document and [Chancellor's Regulation A-820](#). To ensure that school records requests are directed appropriately, school principals should identify staff members responsible for managing student records requests. This individual may be identified in the [USIN](#) ATS screen.

NYCDOE's data systems automatically transfer the following information to high schools:

- [ATS](#): biographical information, attendance data, health/immunization records, promotion data, disciplinary history, exam scores, and transportation eligibility
- [STARS](#): students' previous grades
- [SEIS](#) (Special Education Student Information System): IEP<sup>72</sup>

Students' cumulative files should be transferred to high schools as follows:

- **For students transitioning from NYCDOE middle schools to NYCDOE high schools:** middle schools are responsible for transferring students' cumulative files to students' receiving high schools each spring once high school placement decisions have been finalized. Middle schools use the [PLNT](#) (general education) and [PSPE](#) (special education) reports in ATS to access students' high school DBNs, and distribute students' cumulative files accordingly. The PLNT and PSPE reports should be included with the records as a cover sheet. High schools can use the [RQSA](#) screen in ATS to request missing records as needed.
- **For students enrolling from non-NYCDOE schools:** high schools are responsible for confirming students' prior schools and contacting the schools to request copies of students' cumulative files in a timely manner in order to provide students with appropriate academic programs. See [Transfer Credit](#) for more information on supporting transfer students.
- **For NYCDOE students transferring to non-NYCDOE schools:** only copies of the contents of the cumulative folder should be sent to the admitting school. The original folder should be kept at the school indefinitely.

The [Student Records](#) guidance details what kinds of student records schools are responsible for providing to parents and students. Former students who wish to obtain copies of their academic records should submit a [written request](#) to the school they last attended, accompanied by valid proof of ID.

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)), confidential student information is not available to everyone. This law protects the privacy of student information. See the [Student Records](#) guidance and the [Data Privacy and Security Policies home page](#) for more information.

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<sup>72</sup> It is not necessary to transfer a paper copy of the IEP.

Reasonable methods must be used to identify and authenticate the identity of parents, students, school officials, and any other parties to whom personally identifiable information from education records is disclosed. When a request comes from a former student who resides out of the New York area, schools must still attempt to confirm the identity of the requestor.

It is vitally important that schools protect students from the unintended consequences of their private data falling into the wrong hands. Schools must encrypt emails to external parties any time an email body or attachment includes information about a student, such as when fulfilling a records request.

## 1. *Changes to Student Records*

The types of documentation required for records change requests differs depending on the type of record that a parent/guardian or student is seeking to update. Parents and eligible students must submit their request in writing and include the following information:

- the information that is claimed to be inaccurate, misleading, or in violation of the student’s privacy rights;
- the education records in which the parent/eligible student believes the information is contained;
- the basis for the claim (i.e., why they believe the information is inaccurate, misleading, etc.); and
- the parent/eligible student’s proposed change.

Schools must respond to the request, in writing, within 15 days of receiving it. See pages 11-13 of [Chancellor’s Regulation A-820](#) for additional information about the amendment of records and appeals process.

Before updating a student’s electronic records, schools must receive the appropriate documentation from the student or parent/guardian as described below.

- **Request to correct a student’s date of birth:** Any document accepted as a proof of age for enrollment (for example, birth certificate or passport)
- **Request to correct or change a student’s legal name on their permanent record:** A court order, birth certificate, or government ID reflecting the student’s legal name
- **Request to correct or change a student’s chosen name:** A signed [Name and Gender Change Request Form](#). Students’ chosen names are recorded separately from their legal names in ATS and appear on attendance rosters, report cards, and other important documents. See [Preferred Student Name \(Chosen Name\)](#) for additional guidance.
- **Request to change a student’s gender marker:** A signed [Name and Gender Change Request Form](#). The DOE does not include gender on student- and school-facing permanent records.

Starting in 2022-23, ATS, SESIS, and MySchools include option “X” as a gender marker for students who do not identify as female or male; this may include students who are non-binary, gender expansive, or gender fluid. Gender markers are self-identified. Schools must not request birth certificates or other documentation.

Students are able to change their gender marker and chosen name on their permanent education records without legal documentation by submitting a signed [Name and Gender Change Request Form](#) to their school, which must be signed by their parent/guardian if the student is under 18 years of age. The form can be used by all students (for example, transgender and gender expansive students, those who go by a shortened version of their name, or those who have changed their name for social reasons).

A student’s chosen name can be entered or changed in ATS if the parent/guardian—or the student if they are 18 years of age or older—submits a signed [Name and Gender Change Request](#)

[Form](#) to the school. When the student’s chosen first name (‘CFN’) and/or chosen last name (‘CLN’) is entered in ATS, the chosen name(s) will display on most student-, family-, and community-facing materials produced by the DOE in addition to most DOE school-facing applications, such as STARS. If a chosen name is not entered for a student, their legal name will continue to display. See the [Preferred Student Name \(Chosen Name\) wiki page](#) for more information.

Schools must retain copies of this documentation in the student’s cumulative folder. The former name and/or gender marker will be maintained in archived data to ensure that records will accurately reflect circumstances in effect at the time each record was created, enable records to be cross-referenced, and maintain confidentiality.

For more information, see the NYCDOE’s [Guidelines to Support Transgender and Gender Expansive Students](#) and the [guidance on changing a student’s name and/or gender in ATS](#).

#### **a. Records Other Than Permanent Records**

No documentation is required to update a name or gender marker in records that are not part of a student’s permanent file, such as guidance logs, graduation programs, sporting rosters, and yearbooks. Schools must use the student’s chosen name and gender in all other records that are not permanent records. For students participating in Public School Athletic League activities, they can update their roster by speaking to their athletic director who will email [lgbtq@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:lgbtq@schools.nyc.gov) for support in making this change.

#### **b. School ID Cards**

A student’s school ID card is not a permanent record and a school must issue the ID in the name that reflects the student’s chosen name. Student IDs must not have gender markers on them. See this [STARS wiki page](#) for step-by-step assistance on updating a student ID without a change in ATS.



## VIII.APPENDICES

### A. Credential, Diploma, and Endorsement Codes in ATS

The following is excerpted from the [Transfer, Discharge, and Graduation Guidelines](#).

#### 1. Credential Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION
30	Received High School Equivalency Diploma (GED)
64	Received <a href="#">Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential</a> <i>For students who participate in standard assessments only</i>
65	Received <a href="#">Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential</a> <i>For students with IEPs who participate in <a href="#">New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)</a> only</i>

#### 2. Diploma Granting Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION
26	Received Local Diploma
27	Received High School Regents Diploma
28	Received High School Regents Diploma with Honors
47	Received High School Advanced Regents Diploma
62	Received High School Advanced Regents Diploma with Honors

### 3. *Diploma Endorsement Codes*

Upon entering a graduation code in the GRDT (or DISC) screen in ATS, schools may indicate a “diploma type” for students who have earned endorsements. For students who earn combinations of endorsements not listed here, use the [CCCR Achievement Order of Precedence](#) to determine which endorsement to enter into GRDT.

CODE	ENDORSEMENT	ELIGIBLE DIPLOMA CODES
<b>01</b>	Arts	26, 27, 28, 47, 62
<b>02</b>	CTE	
<b>03</b>	CTE and arts	
<b>05</b>	Math	47 and 62 only
<b>06</b>	Science	
<b>07</b>	Math and science	
<b>08</b>	Arts and science	
<b>09</b>	Arts and math	
<b>10</b>	Arts, science, and math	
<b>11</b>	CTE and science	
<b>12</b>	CTE and math	
<b>13</b>	CTE, science, and math	
<b>14</b>	CTE, arts, and science	
<b>15</b>	CTE, arts, and math	
<b>16</b>	CTE, arts, math and science	
<b>20</b>	CDOS credential as an endorsement to a diploma	26, 27, 28, 47, 62
<b>21</b>	Service Seal	26, 27, 28, 47, 62, 30, 64, 65
<b>22</b>	NYS Seal of Biliteracy (NYSSB)	27, 28, 47, 62
<b>23</b>	NYS Seal of Civic Readiness (NYSSCR)	26, 27, 28, 47, 62

## B. Course and Exam Marks Tables

The table below outlines all available grade scales, and their associated marks, in STARS, along with their pass/fail equivalents and numeric equivalents.

Course Mark	Description	Numeric Equivalent	Pass/Fail Equivalent
IB2–IB7	International Baccalaureate scale	N/A	P
IB1	International Baccalaureate scale	N/A	F
4 (+/-)	Performance level: excels in standards (1–4 scale)	N/A	P
3 (+/-)	Performance level: proficient (1–4 scale)	N/A	P
2 (+/-)	Performance level: below standards (1–4 scale)	N/A	F
1 (+/-)	Performance level: well below standards (1–4 scale)	N/A	F
100–65	Numeric course grades (10–100 scale) <sup>73</sup>	65–100	P
64–10	Numeric course grades (10–100 scale) <sup>102</sup>	10–64	F
A+	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	98	P
A	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	95	P
A-	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	93	P
B+	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	88	P
B	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	85	P
B-	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	83	P
C+	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	78	P
C	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	75	P
C-	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	73	P
D+	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	68	P
D	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	65	P
D-	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	60	F
F	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)/Fail (Pass or fail scale)	55	F
P	Pass (Pass or fail scale)	N/A	P
E+	Excellent+ (E–U scale)	98	P
E	Excellent (E–U scale)	95	P
E-	Excellent- (E–U scale)	93	P
G+	Good+ (E–U scale)	88	P
G	Good (E–U scale)	85	P
G-	Good- (E–U scale)	83	P
S+	Satisfactory (E–U scale)	78	P
S	Satisfactory (E–U scale)	75	P
S-	Satisfactory- (E–U scale)	73	P
N+	Needs Improvement+ (E–U scale)	68	P
N	Needs Improvement (E–U scale)	65	P
N-	Needs Improvement- (E–U scale)	60	F
U	Unsatisfactory (E–U scale)	55	F
CE	Exceeds standards (4-level competency scale)	100	P
CM	Meets standards (4-level competency scale)	85	P

<sup>73</sup> In order to avoid conflicting pass/fail equivalencies for marks of 1–4, schools using the numeric scale should round marks of less than 10 to either an ‘NC’ or a 10, or utilize the ‘NS’ mark where appropriate. Schools may also choose to set a minimum failing mark in their grading policies in accordance with the policies described in the [Grading Policy Toolkit](#).

Course Mark	Description	Numeric Equivalent	Pass/Fail Equivalent
CA	Approaching standards (4-level competency scale)	70	P
CN	Not yet meeting standards (4-level competency scale)	55	F
ME	Exceeds standards (Competency scale)	95	P
MA	Above standards (Competency scale)	85	P
MT	Meets standards (Competency scale)	75	P
MP	Approaching standards (Competency scale)	65	P
MB	Below standards (Competency scale)	55	F
CR	Credit	N/A	P
NC	No Credit	N/A	F
NS	No credit – No show ( <a href="#">additional policies</a> apply)	45	F
ND	No credit – Fulfilled distribution requirement	N/A	NULL
NU	No credit – Audit	N/A	NULL
NX	No credit – Course in Progress <sup>74</sup> ( <a href="#">additional policies</a> apply)	N/A	NULL
NL	No credit – New/Recent Admit or Other <sup>75</sup> ( <a href="#">additional policies</a> apply)	N/A	NULL
NW	Course waived (use for PE only)	N/A	P

Exam Mark <sup>76</sup>	Applicable Exams	Description	Default Numeric Equivalent	Pass/Fail Equivalent
100–65	Regents World Language Comprehensive exam World Languages Checkpoint A (formerly SLP) exam	The numeric exam score the student received on the exam	100–65	P
64–0	Regents World Language Comprehensive exam World Languages Checkpoint A (formerly SLP) exam	The numeric exam score the student received on the exam	64–0	F
ABS <sup>77</sup>	Regents World Language Comprehensive exam World Languages Checkpoint A (formerly SLP) exam	Absent: Student was scheduled to take the exam but did not show up on test day	N/A	F

<sup>74</sup> During the transition to remote learning in March 2020, the description of ‘NX’ changed from ‘Incomplete’ to ‘Course in Progress’.

<sup>75</sup> With the release of the 2020-21 Grading Policy, the description of ‘NL’ changed from ‘New/Recent Admit’ to ‘New/Recent Admit or Other’.

<sup>76</sup> Schools have the option of displaying only the highest Regents exam score on the transcripts of students who have taken Regents exams multiple times. If students have a waiver and an exam score in the same exam area, they may choose which to display.

<sup>77</sup> Marks of ABS, INV, and MIS will not appear on transcripts. All Regents exam marks are maintained in the students’ STARS permanent records.

Exam Mark <sup>76</sup>	Applicable Exams	Description	Default Numeric Equivalent	Pass/Fail Equivalent
INV <sup>104</sup>	Regents World Language Comprehensive exam World Languages Checkpoint A (formerly SLP) exam	Invalid: Student cheated on the exam; or student became ill during the exam and was therefore unable to complete it	N/A	F
MIS <sup>104</sup>	Regents World Language Comprehensive exam World Languages Checkpoint A (formerly SLP) exam	Misadministration: School/teacher mis-administered the exam	N/A	N/A
WA	Regents	Waived exam: Student received a NYS Regents, World Language, or NYSED-approved alternative exam waiver.  Student entered a NYCDOE school in grade 11 or 12, as applicable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grade 11 or 12: waive Global History &amp; Geography</li> <li>• Grade 12: waive Global History &amp; Geography and/or Science</li> </ul>	N/A	P
WX	NYSED-approved Regents Alternative	Student passed NYSED-approved Regents Alternative	N/A	P
WG	Regents	Appealed exam	N/A	P
P	PBAT RCT	For PBAT or RCT exams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PBATs are used by Consortium Schools only; mark corresponds to Consortium Rubric grades of Outstanding, Good, and Competent</li> <li>• RCTs are available only to students with disabilities who entered grade 9 prior to September 2011</li> </ul>	N/A	P
F	PBAT RCT	For PBAT or RCT exams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PBATs are used by Consortium Schools only; mark corresponds to Consortium Rubric grade of Needs Revision)</li> <li>• RCTs are available only to students with disabilities who entered grade 9 prior to September 2011</li> </ul>	N/A	F

### C. Forms

The following is a list of forms for school use, in fillable format. The second column indicates whether the form is required for all high schools to use and that schools may not use their own school-created versions of the form. All of the forms below are available on the [academic policy page](#) to print and reference as needed. For assistance using these forms, schools may contact their [OPE Lead](#).

Form	Required	Principal Must Review and Sign	Optional	Description
<a href="#">Appeals to Graduate with Low Scores on Regents Exams</a>	x			A school designee must complete this form and submit the required supporting documentation in order to request a low score appeal on a Regents exam. This accompanies an appeal submitted via RQSA.
<a href="#">CDOS Attestation Form</a>	x	x		Principals must complete and submit this form as part of the request for a superintendent determination of graduation for students who have demonstrated competency of the CDOS commencement-level learning standards and are using the requirements of the CDOS commencement credential to meet the ELA and/or math Regents exam eligibility requirements.  As a best practice, complete this form when students are earning the CDOS in any capacity.
<a href="#">Credit Recovery Approval Form</a>	x	x		The school-based panel must complete this form for every student who is approved to participate in credit recovery. This documents that the student is eligible and the policies for credit recovery are being met.
<a href="#">Course Review Form</a>		x	x	Complete this form to determine if a proposed or currently offered course suits a school's programming needs and meets the requirements to bear credit.  As a best practice, keep this form with a copy of the course syllabus.
<a href="#">Diploma Requirements Worksheet</a>			x	Complete this form to assess a student's progress towards fulfilling credit and exam graduation requirements.
<a href="#">Letter to Families to Identify Parents on Active Duty in the Armed Forces</a>	x			This form is available in NYCSA for parents to complete annually to indicate the student's parent is on active duty in the armed forces.

Form	Required	Principal Must Review and Sign	Optional	Description
<a href="#">Name and Gender Change Request Form</a>			x	This form is used for students who would like to change their gender and/or <a href="#">chosen name</a> in NYCDOE systems.
<a href="#">Offsite Coursework Agreement Form</a>	x			A school designee and a student must complete this form for each instance of off-site coursework. Parent signature required.
<a href="#">Override Code Review Form</a>	x	x		A school designee must complete this form so that the principal may approve credit and exam override codes entered into GRDT when students are certified for graduation.
<a href="#">Parent Opt-In Form for Virtual/Blended Learning</a>	x			This form is used to inform parents/guardians of virtual or blended courses the school may offer their student. Parents/guardians must sign this form and return it to the school in order for the student to participate in a virtual or blended course.
<a href="#">Student Gender Identification Form</a>	x			This form is used at the time of enrollment to a New York City Department of Education school to collect information about students' gender and their chosen name(s), if applicable.
<a href="#">Superintendent Determination of Graduation</a>	x			A school designee must complete this form and submit the required supporting documentation in order to request a superintendent determination of graduation. This accompanies an appeal submitted via RQSA.
<a href="#">Transfer Credit Equivalency Form</a>	x			A school designee must complete this form and submit the required supporting documentation in order to document transfer credits awarded from a non-DOE school.
<a href="#">Transfer Student Entry Checklist</a>			x	Complete this form to assist students transferring into a DOE school from a non-DOE school.
<a href="#">Transcript Update Form</a>	x	x		A school designee must complete this form and submit any required supporting documentation before updating student transcripts with additions or corrections. The form must be retained with supporting documentation.

## **D. Impact of COVID-19 – Updated August 2024**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, NYCDOE schools and students transitioned to remote and blended learning models. During that time both NYSED and NYCDOE implemented policies to address the continued impact of COVID on teaching and learning. Some of these policies and flexibilities have been expanded upon and continue to exist while others are no longer in effect.

### **1. Graduation Requirements**

#### **a. Minimum Credit and Assessment Requirements**

The credit and assessment requirements to earn a New York City high school diploma remained unchanged during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students were still required to earn 44 credits distributed across specific subjects and pass assessments in the subjects of English language arts (ELA), math, social studies, and science. However, the way that students earned credit and met the assessment requirements were modified.

#### **b. Instructional Time Requirements for a Unit of Study**

From March 2020 to August 2020 (the end of the 2019-20 school year, including summer school), the New York State Education Department (NYSED) waived the instructional time requirement for a student to earn course credit, therefore schools were not required to provide the full 54 hours of instruction per credit. Students received course credit at the end of a course as long as they met the learning standards and earned a passing grade, per the DOE's [Grading Policy for Remote Learning](#).

In July 2020 NYSED updated the definition of a unit of study to include alternative learning experiences, "including but not limited to through digital technology or blended learning that represents standards-based learning under the guidance and direction of an appropriately certified teacher. Instructional experiences shall include, but not be limited to: meaningful and frequent interaction with an appropriately certified teacher; academic and other supports designed to meet the needs of the individual student and instructional content that reflects consistent academic expectations as in-person instruction. Any alternative instructional experience must include meaningful feedback on-student assignments and methods of tracking student engagement."

During 2020-21, schools had to use 180 minutes per week (or 54 hours per credit) as a benchmark for comparison when designing and delivering instruction aligned to the learning standards.

Since the 2021-22 school year, schools must once again provide 54 hours of instruction per credit, but this instructional time may continue to include alternative instructional experiences.

#### **c. Science Labs**

From March 2020 to August 2020 (the end of the 2019-20 school year, including summer school), NYSED waived the requirement that students complete 1,200 minutes of hands-on lab experiences to be eligible for the culminating Regents exam. For the 2020-21 school year, NYSED allowed schools to use the 1,200 minutes of traditionally required lab experiences as a benchmark for ensuring that lab experiences during blended and remote learning were of comparable scope and rigor. These time flexibilities did not extend past the 2020-21 school year.

Since the 2021-22 school year, students can complete the full 1,200 minutes through a combination of hands-on and simulated laboratory experiences.



## 2. *Assessments*

### a. **Regents, World Language Exams, and NYSED-Approved Alternatives**

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) cancelled the administration of Regents exams scheduled for [June 2020](#), [August 2020](#), [January 2021](#), and [August 2021](#), [January 2022](#), as well as most exams in [June 2021](#) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, NYSED postponed the administration of the U.S. History and Government (Framework) Regents exam through January 2023. NYSED provided guidelines for the issuance of Regents and World Language exam waivers so that students were not adversely affected by the cancellation of these exams. These waivers represent a passed exam (equivalent to a score of 65).

Students in grades 7-12 who met specific eligibility criteria to receive the Regents, World Language exams, and NYSED-approved +1 waivers could use them toward the assessment requirement for diplomas (local, Regents, and advanced Regents), credentials, and endorsements. See the [Regents Exam Waivers](#) wiki for more information.

### b. **Appeals to Graduate with Low Scores on Regents Exams**

NYSED approved an additional option for students to graduate using a lower score on a Regents exam: the Special Appeal. This option provided flexibility to students taking Regents exams in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years to meet the assessment requirements for any diploma type.

The Special Appeal is different from traditional low score appeals in that the student does not need to have taken the exam under Special Appeal twice, nor participated in academic assistance provided by the school in the same subject of the Regents exam under appeal. Additionally, there is no limit to the number of Special Appeals that can be applied to specific diploma types. See [Appeals to Graduate with Low Scores on Regents Examinations](#) for more details.

### c. **Compensatory Score Option**

Regents exam waivers cannot be used to compensate for scores of 45-54 on another Regents exam.

## 3. *Diploma Endorsements*

### a. **CDOS Endorsement**

Students who exited high school from June 2020 to August 2021, and were unable to complete the requirements for the CDOS Commencement Credential or the CDOS +1 pathway as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, and demonstrated proficiency of the CDOS learning standards, were granted a waiver from the completion of the 216 hours of Career and Technical Education (CTE) instruction and/or the 54 hours of work-based learning requirement.

### b. **Honors Designation**

Students who received Regents waivers due to cancelled Regents exam administrations could still earn the Honors designation. The calculation for the designation depends upon the number of Regents exams applicable to the diploma type. See the [Regents exam waiver](#) section of this guide for details on Regents waivers.

### **c. Mastery in Math Designation**

Students who received math Regents waivers due to cancelled Regents exam administrations could earn the mastery endorsement in math as long as they meet the requirements for an advanced Regents diploma and:

- Passed 3 Regents exams in math with a score of 85 or higher; or
- Passed 2 Regents exams in math with a score of 85 or higher and received a Regents waiver for a third Regents exam in math; or
- Passed 1 Regents exam in math with an 85 or higher and earned a final course grade of 85 or higher in 2 additional math courses culminating in a Regents exam for which a Regents waiver was granted.

See the section of this guide for details on Regents waivers.

### **d. Mastery in Science Designation**

Students who received science Regents waivers due to cancelled Regents exam administrations could earn the mastery endorsement in science as long as they meet the requirements for an advanced Regents diploma and:

- Passed 3 Regents exams in science with a score of 85 or higher; or
- Passed 2 Regents exams in science with a score of 85 or higher and received a Regents waiver for a third Regents exam in science; or
- Passed 1 Regents exam in science with an 85 or higher and earned a final course grade of 85 or higher in 2 additional science courses culminating in a Regents exam for which a Regents waiver was granted.

See the section of this guide for details on Regents waivers.

## **4. *Graduation Policies and Procedures***

### **a. 21+ Students**

NYCDOE allowed students who turned 21 in the 2020-21 school year to return in 2021-22 in pursuit of a high school diploma, credential, or endorsement. NYCDOE also allowed students who turned 21 in the 2021-22 school year to remain enrolled or re-enroll in the 2022-23 school year to meet graduation requirements and/or transition to adult/postsecondary programs.

### **b. Special Determination to Graduate with a Local Diploma in June 2022**

In June 2022, New York State Department of Education (NYSED) approved an emergency rule allowing students scheduled to graduate in June 2022 who were unable to earn a diploma because they did not qualify for a Special Appeal or were unable to participate in a Regents exam because of illness (including isolation or other restrictions attributable to COVID-19) to request a Special Determination to graduate with a local diploma. This flexibility was only available for June 2022 graduates and is not an option for graduates in any other year or term.

## **5. *Additional Ways to Earn Credit***

### **a. Online and Blended Courses**

In July 2020, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) revised the definition of “unit of study” in [Commissioner’s Regulations Part 100.1 \(a\)](#) to include instructional experiences delivered through digital

technology, including online and blended courses. Instructional experiences are not defined solely as a student's time spent in front of a teacher or in front of a screen, but time engaged in standards-based learning under the guidance and direction of a subject-certified teacher. In the 2020-21 school year, schools could factor the time students participated in online and blended experiences into their instructional time benchmark of 180 minutes per week.

Further, due to the waiver of Regents exam requirements, students did not need to pass the corresponding Regents exam to receive course credit in any subject area waived during a given exam period between June 2020 and January 2022; students received course credit by meeting the learning outcomes of the course and earning a passing grade, per the school's grading policy.

Since the 2021-22 school year, and consistent with the online and blended course policy prior to COVID-19, students are required to pass the corresponding Regents exam at the end of the Regents-culminating term (if available), if the student had not already passed an exam that counted toward a diploma in that subject area.

#### **b. Credit by Examination**

Students cannot earn credit by examination using the Regents or World Language exam waivers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, since those waivers required having earned course credit.

### *6. Course Marks and Report Cards*

During the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years, the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) issued grading policies in response to the academic, social, and emotional needs of students, families and educators. While most of these policies are no longer in effect, schools must be aware of the policies that were in effect during those times, because they may have some carry-over effects, such as whether grades may be included in ranking. See the [Grading Policy for Remote Learning \(2019-20\)](#) and the [Grading Policy for Remote and Blended Learning Models \(2020-21\)](#) for details.

### *7. Student Records Retention and Transfer*

When school buildings were closed intermittently to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the NYCDOE developed [Guidance for Sharing Student Records with Families During Remote Learning](#) for schools to share educational records in a secure and confidential manner, as needed. This resource provided details on responding to student data requests from families, former students, third parties, etc.