Washington County School District
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Saint George, Utah 84770
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District Policy 4100

Graduation Requirements/School Credits

Graduation, Curriculum, & Instruction Washington County School District - Adopted 8-13-85; Revised 12-12-00; Revised 11-13-01; Revised 2-5-08; Approved 3-18-08; Revised 10-8-13; Approved 1-14-14; Revised 4-14-15; Revised 11-8-16; Revised 6-13-17; Revised 10-9-18; Revised 8-13-19; Revised 4-6-26

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1. Purpose:

Washington County School District (WCSD) Board of Education has adopted this policy to specify standards and credit requirements for high school graduation and shall issue differentiated diplomas or certificates of completion consistent with state law and rules.

2. Policy:

Washington County School District graduation requirements meet or exceed the minimum requirements established by Utah Code 53G-4-402 and Utah Administrative Rule R277-705.

3. Definitions:

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

3.1. "Accredited" means evaluated and approved under the accreditation standards of the State Board of Education.

3.2. "Concurrent Enrollment" means enrollment by public school students in one or more college or university courses for credit by a high school student who continues to be enrolled in a Washington County high school.

3.3. "Dual enrollment" means a student who is enrolled simultaneously in a Washington County School District school and another accredited public school. (e.g.: Success Academy, an online school)

3.4. "Early Graduation" means any secondary public school student, with the approval of the student, the student's parent or guardian, and an authorized local school official, who has completed all required courses or demonstrated mastery of competencies, graduates prior to the conclusion of the twelfth grade.

3.5. "Transcript" means an official document or record generated by one or several schools which includes, at a minimum; the courses in which a secondary student was enrolled, grades and units of credit earned. The transcript is usually one part of the student's permanent or cumulative file which also may include birth certificate, immunization records and other information as determined by the school in possession of the records.

4. Procedure:

4.1 CREDITS REQUIRED FOR GRADUATION:

The Washington County School District shall offer a differentiated high school diploma to all students that successfully complete all state and District course requirements for graduation. These requirements will be in place for the Class of 2028 and beyond.

4.1.1. Academic Requirements for High School Graduation: Students in grades 9 through 12 must earn at least the minimum number of credits designated by the student's high school through course completion or through competency assessment consistent with Utah Administrative Rule R277-705 and District policy. Schools on a 4x4 schedule = 28 credits; on a 5x5 schedule = 35 credits. Students earning less than their high school's required credits have the option of earning a Washington County School District Basic Diploma or attending Millcreek Alternative High School, Utah Online High School, or Southwest Adult High School. Students who meet the requirements for a High School Diploma with Honors may receive that diploma.

4.1.1.1. Language Arts 4.0 units of credit

4.1.1.2. Mathematics 3.0 units of credit

4.1.1.3. Science 3.0 units of credit at a minimum, two selected from the four science foundation areas

4.1.1.4. Social Studies 3.5 units of credit

4.1.1.5. Directed Coursework

4.1.1.5.1. Fine Arts 1.5 units of credit

4.1.1.5.2. Career and Technical Education 1.0 unit of credit

4.1.1.5.3. Digital Studies 0.5 units of credit

4.1.1.5.4. General Financial Literacy 0.5 unit of credit

4.1.1.5.5. Physical and Health Education 2.0 units of credit

4.1.1.5.6. Electives as determined by the high school to reach the appropriate credit total.

4.1.2. Certificate of Completion

4.1.2.1. A certificate that may be awarded instead of a diploma for students who have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and will be continuing their education in the

specialized program post-graduation. (See Section 4.7. - Students with Disabilities)

4.1.3. Washington County School District Basic Diploma

4.1.3.1. An alternative diploma in which the requirements are established by WCSD and meet the basic requirements set by the state. This plan must be developed for a student in collaboration with a parent/guardian, counselor, school administrator, district administrator, and student after it is determined that the student requires alternative services. Students are not eligible for early graduation and must maintain a full schedule. May only be earned through Alternative Education opportunities. This will be a WCSD diploma.

4.1.3.2. A modified Washington County School District Basic Diploma may be earned at boundary high schools. Refer to Modified Graduation Requirement Request.

4.1.4. High School Diploma

4.1.4.1. A diploma in which the requirements are in addition to Washington County School District Basic Diploma requirements as determined by the WCSD Board of Education and enumerated in the High School Manual. All high schools require the same core classes although they may vary in elective credit requirements. This will be a High School Diploma.

4.1.5. High School Diploma with Honors

4.1.5.1. In an effort to encourage high school students to take a rigorous course of study, to take full advantage of their high school years, to more completely prepare graduates for post secondary education, and to help graduates discover and grow their academic abilities, the Washington County School District Board of Education will award a High School Diploma with Honors to students who meet the requirements. This will be a high school diploma.

4.1.5.1.1. To qualify for the High School Diploma with Honors, students will qualify for the Traditional High School Diploma and meet the requirements outlined on the WCSD Honors Diploma Worksheet.

4.1.5.1.2. Students who qualify will be given the opportunity to wear an Honors Stole at graduation. This stole will be provided by the School District.

4.2. UNITS OF CREDIT

4.2.1. A unit of credit or fraction thereof shall be given upon satisfactory completion of a course or learning experience in compliance with state course standards.

4.2.2. The District may grant credit from among the following:

4.2.2.1. Successful completion of a course offered by the District; approved by the District taken outside of the regular school day or school year; approved by the District for concurrent enrollment and offered by an accredited post-secondary institution; or offered by correspondence or extension that is approved and accredited by the State of Utah.

4.2.2.2. Demonstrated proficiency by way of a District approved assessment. Parents/guardians are responsible for the cost of assessment.

4.2.2.3. Successful completion of a course from an accredited secondary school, accredited special purpose school, accredited supplemental education school, or other approved online course.

4.2.2.4. Students enrolled in grades 6 through 12 will be allowed to earn credit by enrolling in and completing courses offered by state approved and accredited programs. The number of allowable online credits each academic year are 6 credits per year. (R277-726-2)

4.3. COURSE GRADE FORGIVENESS (R277-717-3)

4.3.1. A student wishing to improve a course grade has the following options: a) repeat the course one or more times; or b) enroll in and complete a comparable course. (A grade for an additional unit of credit does not change a student's original course grade for purposes of this section.) The student will be responsible for any course fees or cost.

4.3.2. Repeating a course: If a student repeats a course, student's school/Local Education Agency (LEA): a) shall adjust the student's course grade and grade point average to reflect the student's highest grade and exclude a lower grade; b) shall exclude from the student's permanent record the lower course grade; and c) may not otherwise indicate on the student's record that the student repeated the course.

4.3.3. Enroll in a comparable course: If a student enrolls in a comparable course the student shall, at the time of enrolling in the comparable course, inform the student's LEA of the student's intent to enroll in the course for the purpose of improving a course grade. The LEA, prior to enrollment, confirms with the students that the comparable course fulfills the same credit requirements as the course the student intends to replace.

4.3.3.1. At the completion of the comparable-course the student's LEA: a)shall adjust, the student's course grade and grade point average to reflect the student's highest grade and exclude a lower grade; b) shall exclude from the student's permanent record the lower course grade; and c) may not otherwise indicate on the student's record the course or comparable course for which the student received the lower grade.

4.4. HOME INSTRUCTION

4.4.1. Students released for home instruction do not earn Washington County School District credits.

4.5. EARLY GRADUATION OPTION

4.5.1. The option for early graduation is available to any secondary student who has completed all graduation requirements for the High School Diploma as outlined in District Policy and the student's high school.

4.6. CONCURRENT ENROLLMENT

4.6.1. Students who can demonstrate readiness for college level work may be eligible for the Concurrent Enrollment program. This program allows students to earn college credit while attending high school. All credit earned in concurrent enrollment courses will count toward high school graduation.

4.7. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

4.7.1. A student with a disability under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) shall satisfy high school completion or graduation criteria, consistent with state and federal law and the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). WCSD may modify graduation requirements consistent with the student's IEP (R277-700). The IEP team must refer to the USBE Graduation Guidelines for Students with Disabilities for additional information regarding modifying graduation requirements and IEP substitutions. Students with disabilities are entitled to participate in graduation.

4.7.2. There are three graduation options for students with disabilities in Utah: 1) Graduate with a regular high school diploma, 2) Graduate with an alternative diploma, and 3) Earn a certificate of completion. Earning the alternative diploma, a certificate of completion, or a GED does not end WCSD's responsibility of FAPE; therefore, a student may continue to receive special education and related services until age 22.

4.7.3. Graduation with a regular high school diploma constitutes a change of placement, requiring written prior notice (WPN). The obligation of WCSD to provide FAPE ends when a student under IDEA is issued a regular high school diploma. Students with disabilities shall meet graduation requirements with appropriate documented (a cumulative record) accommodations, curricular modifications, substitutions and amendments as determined by their IEPs. The student's transcript must not identify special education classes.

4.7.4. Students with disabilities may earn an alternate diploma if the student accesses grade-level core standards through the Essential Elements; the student's IEP team makes graduation substitutions with an Essential Elements course or another USBE or LEA approved course; and the student meets all graduation requirements prior to exiting school at or before age 22 (277-705-5). An alternate diploma issued by the LEA may not indicate that the recipient is a student with a disability.

4.7.5. Students with disabilities may graduate with a certificate of completion if they have completed their senior year; however, have not met the graduation requirements and whose IEP Transition Plan (beginning at age 14) includes a District Post-High School Program. A certificate of completion indicates a record of completed competencies and does not constitute a change of placement, until the student ages out (age 22) and/or exits the program. This certificate may not identify the student as a student with a disability.

4.7.6. Students with disabilities may earn a Career Development Credential (CDC) if: the student meets the requirements of a career focused work experience prior to leaving school; consistent with state and federal law; and the student's IEP or 504 plan. See USBE R277-705-6 for more information. A student can earn a CDC in conjunction with a regular high school diploma or the alternate diploma.

4.8. TRANSFER AND WITHDRAWN STUDENTS

4.8.1. The District will approve credits and grades received from an accredited public or private school. Credit earned at a school accredited by the USBE or AdvancEd is accepted at face value in Washington County District schools.

4.8.2. Students enrolling during the fourth (4th) term of their senior year shall have their graduation status coordinated by the principals of the new school and the sending school.

4.8.3. Students who have withdrawn from public school before graduating may not return to public school once they have turned 18 years old and their class has graduated. Students will be referred to Washington County Adult Education to complete their high school education.

4.9. ADULT HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

4.9.1. All students from public school who are 16 years and older who seek an adult high school diploma through Washington County Adult Education may earn a High School Diploma from Southwest Adult High School or Utah High School Completion Diploma (GED) and must meet all eligibility requirements necessary to become an enrollee in accordance with federal and state requirements and pay the enrollment fee.

4.9.1.1. Southwest Adult High School Diploma

4.9.1.1.1.Complete a minimum of 1/2 credit in a core academic subject in the Washington County Adult Education program

4.9.1.1.2. Earn at least 24 units of credit as outlined in the USBE Adult Education and Washington County School Board graduation requirements. Previous credits from an accredited high school will transfer.

4.9.1.2. Utah High School Completion Diploma (GED)

4.9.1.2.1. Sixteen-year-old, out of school youth, may attend an Adult Education program to gain verification to take the GED.

4.9.1.2.2. Upon successful completion of the GED, the State of Utah shall award the student a Utah High School Completion Diploma.

4.9.1.2.3. Students who are engaged in the Focused Graduation Pathway may earn high school credit towards the Basic and High School Diplomas. Please reference WCSD Policy 9100 for specific information.

4.10. FOREIGN EXCHANGE AND PRIVATELY PLACED FOREIGN STUDENTS

4.10.1 The intent of the Foreign Exchange program is to provide a cultural experience in an American high school without the pressure of meeting the same set of standards expected of our students. As such, Foreign Exchange (J-1) students are not eligible for a Washington County School District high school diploma.

4.10.1.1. Foreign students shall not be allowed to enroll if they have already graduated in their home country or they are 18 years of age and above.

4.10.1.2. Foreign students with J-1 status will not be considered for graduation and are therefore not eligible to receive a high school diploma. They may receive a transcript and certificate of completion and participate in graduation ceremonies if approved by school administration.

4.10.1.3. Foreign students with J-1 status who intend to submit transcripts in languages other than English, must bear the responsibility and cost for translation of their transcripts. Transcript evaluations for all foreign students will be completed by the District counseling coordinator.

4.11. GRADUATION CEREMONY

4.11.1. Washington County School District recognizes that a student's graduation is a culmination of years of planning and successful completion of state and District requirements. The wearing of the cap and gown and participation in the ceremony awarding the certificate of completion or diploma shall be reserved for students who have met those requirements. The Board recognizes the importance of the completion of the requirements for a certificate of completion, Washington County Diploma or high school diploma and views it as an achievement that improves the community as well as the individual. The Board wishes to recognize that achievement in a publicly celebrated graduation exercise.

4.11.1.1. Participation in the graduation ceremony is an opportunity and not a protected property right. Participation may be denied as a disciplinary measure, or if a student refuses to comply with graduation ceremony standards established and developed at the individual school site.

4.11.1.2. Participation in the graduation ceremony is optional and is not required.

4.11.1.3. Caps and gowns will be worn in the proper manner as designated by the school administration.

4.11.1.4. Special needs students shall be provided with the opportunity to participate in ceremonies utilizing criteria based upon their unique circumstances as outlined in section 4.7 of this policy.

4.12. SEAL OF BI-LITERACY

4.12.1. Available for students who meet proficiency standards in speaking, listening, writing and reading in English and a second language. Students may request information from their school counselors.

REFERENCES

- Utah Code Ann. § 53E-4-302 - Duties of State Board of Education
- Utah Code Ann. § 53E-4-305 - College Readiness Assessments
- Utah Code Ann. § 53G-7-206 - Acceptance of credits and grades awarded by accredited schools
- Utah Administrative Rule R277-700 - The Elementary and Secondary School General Core
- Utah Administrative Rule R277-705 - Secondary School Completion and Diplomas
- USBE Graduation Guidelines for Students with Disabilities

- Utah State Board of Education - New Civics Class requirements
- WCSD Form 412 - WCSD Honors Diploma Worksheet