

**IHF-R Graduation Requirements**

1/16/25

**RATIONALE/OBJECTIVE:**

The Cobb County School District (District) shall provide secondary school teaching, learning, and support services that reflect the high school graduation and state assessment requirements and assist all students in developing their unique potential to function in society. The District follows all State Board Rules and policies regarding graduation requirements, credit transfers, and awarding of credits to students unless waived under the District's Strategic Waiver School System contract and shall meet or exceed all standards as set forth by applicable accrediting agencies.

**RULE:****A. INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT AND DELIVERY SERVICES:**

The District shall provide instructional support and delivery services. These services shall include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Beginning in sixth grade, students will be provided a continuous advisement component to:
  - a. Familiarize students with graduation requirements;
  - b. Help students identify the likely impact of individual career objectives on the program of study they plan to follow, including career pathways; and
  - c. Provide annual advisement updates to report progress and offer alternatives in meeting graduation requirements and career objectives.
2. Record keeping and reporting services that document students' progress toward graduation and include information for the school, parents/guardians, and students.
3. Diagnostic and continuous evaluation services that measure individual student progress in meeting competency expectations for graduation.
4. Instructional programs, resources, and accelerated intervention opportunities to assist each student in meeting graduation requirements.
5. Appropriate curriculum and assessment procedures for students who have been identified as having disabilities that prevent them from meeting the prescribed competency performance requirements.

**B. APPLICATION:**

This Rule is effective for students enrolling in the ninth grade for the first time in 2008-2009 and subsequent years.

**C. DEFINITIONS:****1. Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) Pathways:**

Three elective units in a coherent sequence that includes rigorous content aligned with industry-related standards leading to college and work readiness in a focused area of student interest.

**2. Core Courses:**

Courses identified as "c" or "r" in the Georgia Board of Education's list of state-funded courses for the specified program of study (see State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.20).

**3. Elective Courses:**

Any courses identified as "e" in the Georgia Board of Education's list of state-funded courses that a student may select beyond the core requirements to fulfill the unit requirements for graduation (see State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.20).

**4. Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA):**

An alternate assessment based on alternate academic achievement standards. The GAA is a standardized, task-based assessment with multiple access points designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

(IDEA) whose Individualized Education Program (IEP) team has determined they are unable to meaningfully access the regular assessment program, even with maximum appropriate accommodations. The purpose of the GAA is to ensure that students with significant cognitive disabilities are provided access to the state academic content standards and given the opportunity to demonstrate achievement of the knowledge, concepts, and skills inherent in the standards.

5. **Required Courses:**

Specific courses identified as "r" in the Georgia Board of Education's list of state-funded courses that each student in a program of study shall pass to graduate from high school (see State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.20).

6. **Secondary School Credential:**

A document awarded to students at the completion of the high school experience:

a. **High School Diploma:**

The document awarded to students certifying that they have satisfied attendance, unit requirements, and any applicable state assessments.

b. **High School Certificate:**

The document awarded to students who have earned 23 units but do not complete all of the criteria for a diploma.

c. **Transition Diploma:**

The document awarded to students with disabilities assigned to a special education program who have not met the state assessment requirements referenced in Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-3-1-.07 "Testing Programs-Student Assessment" or who have not completed all of the requirements for a high school diploma but who have nevertheless completed their IEP. This document is referenced as a Special Education Diploma in Georgia State Board Rule 160-4-2-.48 and does not terminate Free and Public Education for students with an Individual Education Plan.

d. **Alternate Diploma:**

The document awarded to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who were assessed using the alternate assessment aligned to the alternate academic achievement standards. While this diploma is standards-based and aligned with the state requirements for the regular high school diploma (High School Diploma), it is not a regular high school diploma. Therefore, an alternate diploma does not terminate Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

7. **Significant Cognitive Disabilities:**

Students with significant intellectual disabilities or intellectual disabilities concurrent with motor, sensory or emotional/behavioral disabilities who require substantial adaptations and support to access the general curriculum and require an integrated curriculum focused on relevant life skills and may participate in the Georgia Alternate Assessment (GAA).

8. **Unit:**

One unit credit awarded for a minimum of 150 clock hours of instruction or 135 hours of instruction in an approved block schedule.

9. **Unit, Summer School:**

One unit of credit awarded for minimum of 120 clock hours of instruction.

**D. GENERAL PROVISIONS:**

The District has based local graduation requirements on State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.48 and requires the following:

1. **Attendance:**

a. Attendance is required for high school students in accordance with state law and State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.10.

b. Students must be enrolled in a minimum of two and a half units of credit each semester as they progress toward high school graduation. For exceptions to this Rule, see Administrative Rule IED-R (Scheduling for Instruction).

2. **Units of Credit:**

a. All District high schools shall make available to all students the required programs of study.

b. A course shall count only once for satisfying any unit of credit requirement for graduation.

## AREAS OF STUDY

COURSE	UNITS REQUIRED
English/Language Arts*	4
Mathematics*	4
Science*	4 The 4 <sup>th</sup> science unit <b>may</b> be used to meet both the science and an elective requirement, but shall count as only one unit unless otherwise specified.
Social Studies*	3
CTAE and/or World Languages and/or Fine Arts	3
Health and Physical Education*	1
Electives	4
<b>TOTAL UNITS (MINIMUM)</b>	<b>23</b>

### \*Required Courses and/or Core Courses

#### 3. Course Credit:

Credit may be earned in the following ways:

##### a. Regular School Program:

- (1) Unit credit shall be awarded only for courses, grades 9-12, as approved by the State Board of Education. Unit credit may be awarded for courses offered in the middle grades that meet 9-12 Georgia standards. The IEP, if applicable, shall specify whether core courses taken as part of an IEP shall receive core unit credit.
- (2) No course credit may be awarded for courses in which instruction is based on the Georgia standards for grade K-8.
- (3) Completion of diploma requirements does not necessarily qualify students for the Hope Scholarship Program.

##### b. Dual Enrollment:

See Administrative Rule IDCH-R (Dual Enrollment Programs).

##### c. Work Experience:

Work Experience credit is awarded during the school year only for on-the-job experience phase of the Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) Work Based Learning programs:

##### (1) Traditional Schedule:

Students may earn from .5 up to a maximum of 1.5 units per semester, depending upon his/her individual schedule, grade level, graduation status, and job placement.

##### (2) Block Schedule:

Students may earn a maximum of two units per semester, depending upon his/her individual schedule, grade level, graduation status, and job placement.

##### d. Non-Traditional Course Delivery:

##### (1) Definition:

Non-Traditional course delivery is course delivery that is outside of the traditional programs as outlined above. This includes online courses, correspondence courses and private school courses taken while concurrently enrolled in Cobb County during the school year and summer.

##### (2) Requirements:

- (a) Students may earn credit toward graduation through non-traditional delivery provided the course(s) meet(s) District curriculum and assessment requirements, and the course provider is accredited by a regional accreditation institution.
- (b) Students seeking a diploma from the District must meet the enrollment requirements of Administrative Rule IED-R (Scheduling for Instruction).
- (c) **Hardship Cases:**

The Superintendent or designee shall exercise discretion in approving credit for courses delivered through non-traditional methods or waiving provisions stated above for hardship cases on an individual basis.

- (d) Credit for courses delivered through non-traditional methods may be applied toward the graduation requirements for all diplomas. Options include:

1) **Cobb Virtual Academy/Georgia Virtual:**

- a) **Cobb Virtual Academy** provides year-round online courses for initial credit and credit recovery to high school students enrolled in the District. Online course offerings and enrollment information may be found on the **Cobb Virtual Academy** website at [www.cobbvirtualacademy.org](http://www.cobbvirtualacademy.org)
- b) The Georgia Virtual School provides year-round online courses for initial credit and credit recovery to high school students in those courses not offered by **Cobb Virtual Academy** online course offerings and enrollment information may be found on the Georgia Virtual School website at [www.gavirtualschool.org](http://www.gavirtualschool.org)

2) **Credit Recovery:**

The District provides course credit recovery opportunities for students who have previously failed a course through online curriculum delivery systems.

(3) **Correspondence Courses, Online Courses, and Private School Courses (Other than Cobb Virtual Academy, Georgia Virtual School and other State Credit Recovery programs, or courses receiving prior District approval):**

Credit will be given for correspondence, online, and private school courses taken while concurrently enrolled in the District (including summer term) for elective credit when the student complies with the following provisions:

- (a) Before the student enrolls in the course, the course is approved using Form IHF-1 (Request for Approval to Take Non-Traditional Courses).
- (b) While the student is enrolled in a District school, completion of one credit as recorded on an official transcript will be required before the school officials authorize enrollment in another non-traditional course.
- (c) The course provider is accredited by a regional accreditation institution.
- (d) The course includes a final evaluation component, and the course provider provides evidence that the administration of the final examination has been appropriately proctored.
- (e) If a course is approved for a graduating senior, the school must receive the transcript no later than the last day of senior classes.

e. **Subject Area Competency Testing:**

In accordance with State Board Rule 160-5-1-.15, students who successfully demonstrate subject area competency through a state-adopted or state-approved assessment instrument may earn up to three units of credit toward graduation.

f. **High School Courses Taken in Middle School:**

- (1) Upon completion of high school courses taken at the middle school level the final grade will be recorded on the high school transcript.
- (2) High school credit earned in middle school will count toward graduation but grades for these courses will not be calculated into the student's high school Grade Point Average (GPA).

g. **Summer School:**

The District offers tuition-based course opportunities for all high school students during the summer recess.

**E. AREAS OF STUDY:**

Courses listed below in the program meet the entrance requirements for public post-secondary institutions in Georgia. Students who are planning to attend a school other than a Georgia public institution should check the specific requirements of the school they wish to attend. In order to receive a diploma, students must also pass the requirements as referenced in State Board of Education Rule 160-3-1-.07.

1. **General Provisions:**

- a. Courses that earn unit credit are listed in the State Board of Education's list of state-funded courses.

- b. Students may select courses listed in the State Board of Education's list of state-funded courses within the following guidelines:
- (1) **Required Courses:**  
Any course identified as "r" is required and must be successfully completed. Another course cannot be substituted for them unless otherwise specified in the State Board of Education's list of state-funded courses (see State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.20).
  - (2) **Core Courses:**  
Any course identified as "c" is a core course and may be selected to count as one of the core unit requirements (see State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.20).
  - (3) **Elective Courses:**  
A course identified as "e" is an elective course that may be selected beyond the core requirements to fulfill the unit requirements (see State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.20).
2. **English/Language Arts:**  
Four units of credit in English language arts shall be required of all students. A full unit of credit in Ninth-Grade Literature and Composition and a full unit of credit in American Literature/Composition shall be required. All courses that may satisfy the remaining units of credit are identified with a "c." The Writing, Conventions, and Listening, Speaking, and Viewing strands of the Georgia Performance Standards shall be taught in sequence in grades 9-12. Literature modules may be taught in any sequence in grades 10-12.
3. **Mathematics:**
- a. Four units of core credit in mathematics shall be required of all students, including Algebra I or its equivalent, Geometry or its equivalent, and Advanced Algebra or its equivalent. Additional core courses needed to complete four credits in mathematics must be chosen from the list of Georgia Board of Education/IB/dual enrollment designated courses.
  - b. **Students with disabilities:**
    - (1) The mathematics requirements above apply to each student with a disability, consistent with his or her IEP. Students with Disabilities may, upon determination of the IEP team, who earn credit in Coordinate Algebra/Algebra I/or the equivalent, Analytic Geometry/Geometry/or the equivalent, Advanced Algebra/Algebra II/or the equivalent, along with two support courses (3 core and 2 electives) to meet mathematics diploma requirements. Successful completion of 3 core units of mathematics may not meet the mathematics admission requirements for entrance into a University System of Georgia institution or other post-secondary institution without additional coursework.
    - (2) Students with Disabilities, who were identified prior to high school enrollment and have a disability affecting mathematics achievement, may, upon determination of the IEP team, follow an alternate course sequence to meet mathematics course requirements. The alternate course sequence allows a student earning core credit in Coordinate Algebra or Algebra I and Analytic Geometry or Geometry, with two additional state-approved mathematics courses, to satisfy the minimum mathematics requirements for high school graduation. IEP teams should utilize the Students with Disabilities- High School Mathematics Decision Rubric, as outlined by the Georgia Department of Education when making the determination regarding alternate course sequence. Successful completion of this pathway may not meet the mathematics admission requirements for entrance into a University System of Georgia institution or other post-secondary institution without additional coursework.
4. **Science:**
- a. Four units of credit in science shall be required of all students, including:
    - (1) One unit of Biology;
    - (2) One unit of either Physical Science or Physics;
    - (3) One unit of either Chemistry, Earth Systems, Environmental Science or an AP/IB course; and
    - (4) One additional science unit.
  - b. The fourth science unit may be used to meet both the science and an elective requirement but shall count as only one unit unless otherwise specified.

- c. Any AP/IB science course may be substituted for the appropriate courses listed above.
- 5. **Social Studies:**  
A total of three units of credit shall be required in social studies:
  - a. One unit in United States History;
  - b. One unit in World History;
  - c. One-half unit of American Government/Civics shall be required; and
  - d. One-half unit of Economics shall be required.
- 6. **CTAE/World Languages/Fine Arts:**  
A total of three units of credit shall be required from the following areas: CTAE and/or World Languages and/or Fine Arts. Students are encouraged to select courses in a focused area of interest.
  - a. **Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) Pathways:**
    - (1) Students may earn three units of credit in a coherent sequence of CTAE courses through a self-selected pathway leading to college readiness and a career readiness certificate endorsed by related industries.
    - (2) Students are encouraged to complete a pathway when selecting electives.
  - b. **World Language:**
    - (1) Students are encouraged to earn two units of credit in the same language.
    - (2) Students planning to enter or transfer into a University System of Georgia institution or other post-secondary institution must earn two units of the same language.
    - (3) Technical College System of Georgia institutions do not require world language credit for admissions.
      - (a) Students whose native language is not English may be considered to have met the world language expectation by exercising the credit in lieu of enrollment option if they are proficient in their native language. A formal examination is not necessary if other evidence of proficiency is available.  
NOTE: Not all post-secondary institutions may accept credits earned under this provision.
      - (b) Any state board approved world language course may be taken to fulfill the world-language requirements.
  - c. **Fine Arts:**
    - (1) Students may earn three units of credit in a coherent sequence of Fine Arts courses in the same area (e.g., band, chorus, dance, orchestra, theater, or visual arts).
    - (2) Students are encouraged to complete a pathway when selecting electives.
- 7. **Health and Physical Education:**
  - a. One unit of credit in health and physical education is required. Students shall combine one-half or one-third units of credit of Health (17.011), Health and Personal Fitness (36.051), or Advanced Personal Fitness (36.061) to satisfy this requirement.
  - b. Three (3) units of credit in JROTC (Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps) may be used to satisfy this requirement, beginning with students who enter as 9<sup>th</sup> graders in the 2017-2018 school year.

#### **F. REQUIRED PROCEDURES FOR AWARDING UNITS OF CREDIT:**

- 1. Unless otherwise waived by the District's Strategic Waiver System contract, a unit of credit for graduation shall be awarded to students only for successful completion of state-approved courses of study based on a minimum of:
  - a. 150 clock-hours of instruction provided during the regular school year;
  - b. 135 clock-hours of instruction in an approved block schedule during the regular school year; or
  - c. A minimum of 120 clock-hours of instruction in summer school.
- 2. Units of credit for graduation shall be awarded to high school students participating in any dual enrollment program using the ratio referenced in Georgia Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.34 "Postsecondary Options."
- 3. Credit awarded for learning which has occurred outside the 9-12 classroom (for example, home schooling) shall be awarded based on proficiency tests. Equivalency credit shall be shown on the transcript.
- 4. Refer to Administrative Rule IHE-R (Promotion and Retention) for requirements to advance with the student's entering class.

## **G. STUDENTS WITH SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITIES:**

1. Students with significant cognitive disabilities who entered the ninth grade for the first time prior to the 2020-2021 school year may graduate and receive a regular high school diploma when the student's IEP team determines that the student has:
  - a. Completed an integrated curriculum based on the GSE that includes instruction in Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science and Social Studies as well as career preparation, self-determination, independent living and personal care to equal a minimum of 23 units of instruction;
  - b. Participated in the GAA during middle school and high school; and
  - c. Reached the 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday OR has transitioned to an employment/education/training setting in which the supports needed are provided by an entity other than the local school system.
2. Students with significant cognitive disabilities who entered the ninth grade for the first time on or after the 2020-2021 school year may graduate and receive an alternate diploma (as defined above) when the student's IEP team determines that the student has:
  - a. Completed an integrated curriculum based on the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) that includes instruction in Mathematics, English/Language Arts, Science and Social Studies as well as career preparation, self-determination, independent living and personal care to equal a minimum of 23 units of instruction;
  - b. Participated in the GAA during middle school and high school; and
  - c. Has transitioned to an employment/education/training setting in which the supports needed are provided by an entity other than the local school system.

Revision Timeline\*: Adopted: 9/26/02

Revised: 3/30/03

Reclassified an Administrative Rule: 9/1/04

Revised: 5/9/07; 8/13/08; 11/11/09; 10/12/11; 4/11/12

Revised and re-coded: 9/27/12 (Previously coded as Administrative Rule IKF)

Revised: 11/13/13 (to be effective 7/1/14); 7/3/14; 12/14/16; 4/22/21; 7/1/22; 12/7/23; 1/16/25

\*Administrative Rules and Board Policies are reviewed on a regular basis. Dates indicate when revisions were made, not the dates of document review.

Division: Academics (Teaching & Learning)

### Legal Reference

O.C.G.A. 20-2-70	Requirements and procedures for issuing and awarding high school diplomas to honorably discharged Korean Conflict and Vietnam Conflict veterans
O.C.G.A. 20-2-142	Prescribed courses; development/dissemination of instructional materials on effects of alcohol
O.C.G.A. 20-2-150	Eligibility for enrollment
O.C.G.A. 20-2-154	Remedial education program
Rule 160-4-2-.20	List of State Funded K-8 Subjects and 9-12 Courses
Rule 160-4-2-.48	High School Graduation Requirements For Students Enrolling In Ninth Grade For The First Time In The 2008-2009 School
Rule 160-4-3-.14	Work-Based Learning Programs
Rule 160-4-8-.09	Student Advisement