

Regulation

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Related Entries: Policy IIC, Policy 608.03

Responsible Office: DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

A. PURPOSE

To establish the requirements for students graduating with a Maryland High School Diploma from Anne Arundel County Public Schools.

B. BACKGROUND

The mission of the public high school is to challenge and prepare students to enter post-high school education, employment, or both. Through intellectual, personal, physical, and social growth, graduates should be able and willing to take the appropriate first steps into their chosen field of work or study, to act responsibly as citizens, and to enjoy a productive life.

C. PROCEDURES

In accordance with State law, the graduation requirements for Anne Arundel County Public Schools students are as follows:

1. Diplomas and Certificates
 - a. The diploma awarded to students upon graduation from an Anne Arundel County public high school shall be a Maryland High School Diploma.
 - b. Beginning with the class of students who graduate in 2006, students may earn an Anne Arundel County Public Schools Certificate of Merit based on the requirements in C.2.c.(4):
 - c. Students may earn an AP Diploma Endorsement if they meet the following criteria:
 - (1) Earn a minimum of 5 Advanced Placement credits in four of five domains (a credit shall be defined as locally determined clock hours or successful demonstration of established learning outcomes for all original credit instruction):

- (a) Languages (English and/or World or Classical Language)
 - (b) Social Studies
 - (c) Mathematics
 - (d) Natural Sciences
 - (e) Computer Science and/or Fine Arts
- (2) Earn a 3.0 un-weighted GPA in AP courses taken (Students must earn all “A’s” and “B’s” in AP classes taken; those receiving one “C” are included provided there is at least one offsetting “A”); and
- (3) Sit for a minimum of five AP exams
- d. There shall be a State certificate for completion of a special education program named the Maryland High School Certificate. This certificate shall be awarded only to students with disabilities who cannot meet the requirements for a diploma but who meet one of the following standards:
- (1) The student is enrolled in an education program and is determined by an Individual Education Plan (IEP) Team, with the agreement of the parents of the student with disabilities, to have developed appropriate skills for the individual to enter the world of work, act responsibly as a citizen, and enjoy a fulfilling life, with the world of work including but not limited to:
 - (a) Gainful employment,
 - (b) Work activity centers,
 - (c) Sheltered workshops, and
 - (d) Supported employment, or
 - (2) The student has been enrolled in an education program for 4 years beyond grade 8 or its age equivalent and will have reached the age of 21 by the end of the school year in which the student plans to graduate.
2. Graduation Requirements
- a. Enrollment Requirement. The student shall satisfactorily complete four years of approved study beyond the eighth grade unless one of the alternatives in C.2.g or h of this regulation is satisfied.
 - b. State Assessments.
 - (1) Beginning with the 2005-2006 school year, to be awarded the

Maryland High School Diploma, all students, including elementary and middle school students who take high school level courses, shall take the Maryland High School Assessments for algebra/data analysis, biology, English 2 and government.

- (a) Beginning with the 2001-2002 school year, for elementary and middle school students who take high school level courses, and for students entering the ninth grade, the student's performance on the Maryland High School Assessments shall be reported on the student's permanent record card.
 - (2) As stated in COMAR 13A.03.02.12B, beginning with students who enter ninth grade in the 2005-2006 school year, to be awarded a diploma, a student shall:
 - (a) Pass the Maryland High School Assessments for Algebra/Data Analysis biology, government and English 2 in accordance with the requirement of COMAR 13A.01.04, or
 - (b) Earn a minimum score on each test and a combined score of at least 1602 – the total of the four passing scores.
 - (3) Appropriate Assistance
 - (a) In accordance with COMAR, Anne Arundel County Public Schools shall provide appropriate assistance to strengthen areas of weaknesses for students who have not achieved satisfactory scores on the Maryland High School Assessments.
 - (b) Each student who fails a Maryland High School Assessment shall be provided the opportunity to retake the appropriate assessment in accordance with the testing schedule issued by the Maryland State Department of Education.
- c. Credit Requirements
- (1) Credit requirements for a student to be awarded the Maryland High School Diploma in Anne Arundel County Public Schools are based on the year a student enters grade 9.
 - (a) To be awarded the Maryland High School Diploma, an Anne Arundel County Public Schools student entering grade 9 in the 2004-2005 school year, and before, shall have earned a minimum of 22 credits at the completion of grades 9-12.

- (b) To be awarded the Maryland High School Diploma, an Anne Arundel County Public Schools student entering grade 9 in the 2005-2006 school year and thereafter shall have earned a minimum of 26 credits at the completion of grades 9 – 12.
- (2) A student shall earn the following specified core and elective credits as part of the 22-credit requirement.
- (a) English--four credits of organized instruction in listening and speaking, reading and literature, and written composition and use of language, of which one credit shall be aligned with the Maryland High School Assessment for English II.
 - (b) Fine arts--one credit in visual arts, music, theatre, or dance, or a combination of these;
 - (c) Mathematics as follows:
 - (i) Three credits, one with instruction in algebra aligned with the Maryland High School Assessment for algebra/data analysis and one with instruction in geometry aligned with the Maryland Core Learning Goals.
 - (d) Fitness for Life --one-half credit;
 - (e) Health education--one-half credit;
 - (f) Science--three credits of which one shall be in biology aligned with the Maryland High School Assessment for biology and two from the earth, life, or physical sciences, or all of the above, in which laboratory experiences are an integral component;
 - (g) Social studies--three credits including one credit in United States History, one credit in world history, and one credit in local, State, and national government aligned with the Maryland High School Assessment for government;
 - (h) Technology education--one credit that includes the application of knowledge, tools, and skills to solve practical problems and extend human capabilities.
 - (i) Electives--six credits
 - (j) A student entering grade 9 in the 2005-2006 school year and thereafter shall have earned in addition to the 22 credits

above the following specified 4 credits as part of the 26-credit requirement

- (k) 1.0 credit of mathematics
 - (l) .5 credit of physical education
 - (m) 2.5 elective credits
- (3) In addition to meeting the specific credit requirements in C.2.c of this regulation, a student shall earn one of the following:
- (a) Two credits of the same World or Classical Language
 - (b) Two credits of advanced technology education, or
 - (c) Successfully complete a State-approved career and technology program.
- (4) Specified Credits for High School Certificate of Merit. Beginning with the graduating class of 2006, students will earn the Anne Arundel County Public Schools Certificate of Merit for the following criteria:
- (a) To be awarded the Anne Arundel County Public Schools Certificate of Merit along with the Maryland High School Diploma, a student shall meet the following requirements:
 - (i) Specified core credits in C.2.c.(2) and (3) of this regulation;
 - (ii) Advanced instruction;
 - (iii) Cumulative grade point average.
 - (b) For students beginning grade 9 prior to the 2005-2006 school year, at least 12 of the credits in the student's high school program shall be earned in advanced instruction. Students entering Grade 9 in the 2005-2006 school year and beyond will have to earn at least 15 credits in advanced instruction to earn the AACPS Certificate of Merit. Advanced instruction shall be identified by each local school system and shall meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - (i) Student assignments and class activities shall require more application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation than other instruction with the same title at the same grade level or other instruction in the

same subject area at the same grade level;

- (ii) Instruction includes more content or the study of content in more depth than other instruction with the same title at the same grade level or instruction in the same subject area at the same grade level;
- (iii) Instruction requires the study or application of mathematics concepts at the level of Algebra I or beyond; all mathematics instruction shall meet this criterion;
- (iv) Instruction in World and Classical Language is at Level III or beyond.

(c) Students shall obtain at least a 3.0 cumulative grade point average on a 4.0 scale for the high school years to earn the Anne Arundel County Certificate of Merit.

d. Additional Requirements

- (1) Instruction in computer use shall be included in the curriculum of each appropriate subject area.
- (2) Students shall receive appropriate instruction in study skills and such thinking skills as gathering, organizing, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating information.
- (3) Elective programs and instruction shall be offered and be open to enrollment for all students. These programs and instruction shall be developed by Anne Arundel County Public Schools and shall focus on in-depth study in required subject areas, exploration, or application/integration of what has been learned.

e. To satisfy the Service Learning requirement students shall complete one of the following:

- (1) Seventy-five hours of student service that includes preparation, action, and reflection components.
- (2) A program in service learning that has been approved by the State Superintendent of Schools.

f. A student who enters the school system in the 12th grade shall complete the service learning graduation requirement at a pro-rated level of engagement, but no student can be exempt from meeting the service learning requirement, including second semester transfers.

g. Other Provisions for Earning Credit. In accordance with COMAR, in

addition to earning credits during the regular school day and year, credits may be earned through various other programs. These programs are:

- (1) Summer School, as determined by the needs of students or for original or review credit. Original credit instruction shall meet the aggregate time requirements specified by the school system for regular school year instruction. Requirements for review credit shall be developed for individual students by the school system after determining the student's proficiency in the subject. Credit may be given for acceptable summer study offered by approved public and nonpublic institutions in or outside of Maryland, if the principal of the student's own school authorizes the study in advance.
- (2) Evening School, as an extension of the regular school day for original or review credits as determined by the needs of students. Requirements for those subjects being used by students for original high school diploma credit shall be the same as those required for subjects in the day school. Requirements for review credit may be developed for individual students by the school system after determining the student's proficiency in the subject.
- (3) Correspondence and Online Courses. Only students who are enrolled in and attending Anne Arundel County Public Schools or who are placed by AACPS in an approved nonpublic school are eligible to register for online courses. All eligible students must gain prior approval from their parent/guardian and principal; however, eligible students are not guaranteed enrollment in any online course.
 - (a) Registration information will be processed through the Office of Instructional Technology. All online courses must be evaluated for alignment to Maryland State Department of Education content standards, Voluntary State Curriculum, and meet all requirements for AACPS accreditation. Grades from an online course will be included in the grade point average of the student in accordance with AACPS policy.
 - (b) As a condition of participating in online courses, students must accept the terms of the *AACPS Academic Integrity and Ethics Agreement*. If credit is to be applied toward minimum graduation requirements, the cost of correspondence courses shall be borne by the school system after successful completion of the course.
- (4) Tutoring. Extenuating circumstances may necessitate the assistance of tutors for certain students. However, tutoring should

be considered only after all the resources of the school system have been used fully and when it is felt definitely that the best interests of the students are being served. If tutoring is recommended by the school and approved by the school system for credit to be applied toward minimum graduation requirements, then the tutor, the program of study, and examination shall be financed by the school system.

- (5) Work Study Programs, Job Entry Training Programs, or Experience Outside the School. Work and experience outside the school are recognized as valid ways of learning. Actual time spent in these activities may be counted as a portion of the specific number of clock hours required for credit when identified as an integrated part of a planned program. For work or experience outside the school which is approved and supervised by the school system, not more than nine elective credits toward meeting graduation requirements may be granted to a student.
 - (6) College Courses. With prior approval of the superintendent of schools or the superintendent's designee, credit toward high school graduation may be given for courses at accredited colleges. The cost of these courses shall be borne by the student.
 - (7) Credit by Examination. In accordance with Policy IIE (High School Diploma by Examination).
 - (8) Independent Study/Internship. Credit toward high school graduation may be earned in grades 9 – 12 for independent study or internships in which students successfully demonstrate the school system's pre-established curricular objectives.
- h. In accordance with COMAR, the Anne Arundel County Public Schools may develop alternatives to Four-Year Enrollment in a Public High School. In recognition of the fact that four-year enrollment in a public high school may not serve the best interests of some students, the following alternatives shall be made available:
- (1) Early College Admission Program. A student may receive a Maryland High School Diploma after completion of grade 11 through acceptance in the early college admission program, provided that:
 - (a) The student is accepted for early admission to an accredited college before high school graduation;
 - (b) All State competency prerequisite and student service requirements have been met;
 - (c) A written request by the student and parent or guardian is

made to and approved by the local superintendent of schools, asking the waiver of the fourth year attendance requirement and certifying the early admission acceptance;

- (d) The student's program for the first year of college is approved by the superintendent of schools if this program is included toward the issuance of a high school diploma; and
 - (e) At the conclusion of a full year of study, a written request for the high school diploma is submitted to the superintendent together with a transcript or letter from the college to the high school principal indicating that the student has successfully completed a year of college work.
- (2) Early Admission to Approved Vocational, Technical, or Other Post-High School. A student may receive a Maryland High School Diploma after completion of grade 11 through acceptance in an early admission program of an approved vocational, technical, or post-high school if:
- (a) The student is accepted for early admission by an approved vocational, technical, or post-high school before high school graduation;
 - (b) All State competency prerequisite and student service requirements have been met;
 - (c) A written request by the student and parent or guardian is made to and approved by the superintendent of schools, asking the waiver of the fourth year attendance requirement and certifying the early admission acceptance;
 - (d) The student's program for the first year of Vocational, Technical, or Other Post-High School is approved by the superintendent if this program is included toward the issuance of a high school diploma; and
 - (e) At the conclusion of a full year of study, a written request for the high school diploma is submitted to the superintendent together with a transcript or letter from the Vocational, Technical, or Other Post-High School to the high school principal indicating that the student has successfully completed a year of Vocational, Technical, or Other Post-High School work.
- (3) General Educational Development Testing Program. A Maryland High School Diploma may be awarded by the State Board of Education for satisfactory performance on approved general

educational development tests, provided that the student meets those requirements as defined in §7-206 of the Education Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland and COMAR 13A.03.03.01 and in accordance with Policy IIE (High School Diploma by Examination).

- (4) Maryland Adult External High School Diploma Program. A Maryland High School Diploma may be awarded for demonstrating competencies in general life skills and individual skills on applied performance tests provided that the student meets those requirements as defined in COMAR 13A.03.03.02.
- i. Anne Arundel County Public Schools may develop alternatives for structuring programs in accordance with the guidelines set forth in COMAR.
- (1) The school system may develop alternative plans for individual or groups of students to fulfill graduation requirements. An alternative plan may include a waiver of the fourth year, if all credit, competency, prerequisite, and student service requirements are met; the curricular plan assures that the content of the specified credits is included and the standards for graduation are met; the plan contains a program description, performance requirements, and evaluation procedures; and the superintendent of schools or designee determines that this waiver is in the best interest of the student. The superintendent shall be responsible for approving any plan and shall notify the State Superintendent of Schools once approval has been given.
 - (2) The school system may offer local certificate programs, in addition to the State diploma, as incentives for students to meet locally established requirements, outcomes and instruction beyond the minimums specified by the State.
- j. In accordance with COMAR, Anne Arundel County Public Schools may grant a Maryland High School Diploma to students who transfer from another jurisdiction or a private school.
- (1) Graduation Requirements
 - (a) To receive a Maryland High School Diploma from the Anne Arundel County Public Schools, a student shall be in attendance at an Anne Arundel County public high school one full semester immediately preceding graduation in addition to meeting the other diploma requirements.
 - (b) In cases where this requirement creates an undue hardship for a student transferring to or from a Maryland nonpublic school or from an out-of-State school and wishing to

receive a Maryland high school diploma, the superintendent may waive the one full semester attendance requirement.

- (c) Exception shall be made for special education students in State-approved nonpublic programs.
- (2) Students transferring from one Maryland public high school to another during the second semester of their senior year and meeting all requirements for graduation shall be given the option of graduating from either high school by agreement of the local superintendent of schools or the respective local superintendents when more than one local school system is involved.
 - (3) Transcript of Record from Non-accredited School
 - (a) The principal shall ascertain whether the school or schools previously attended by the student are accredited. If there is any doubt on this point, an official inquiry shall be addressed to the state department of education in the state in which the school or schools are located. If the school or schools are approved by that state, credits may be allowed the student in the subjects that the student has completed successfully.
 - (b) The superintendent of schools shall determine by an evaluation of a student whether credits earned at a non-accredited high school will be accepted at the public high school to which the student transfers. This evaluation may include administration of standardized tests and examinations, the use of interviews, as well as the inspection of transcripts, report cards, and other documentation. The student shall be notified in writing of the reasons for any failure to transfer credits from non-accredited schools.
 - (c) Unavailability of Transcript or School Report Card. If the transcript of record or the school report card is not available, the superintendent of schools or designee shall determine by an evaluation the appropriate placement of the student within the high school program. The evaluation of the student may include the:
 - (i) Administration of standardized tests and examination;
 - (ii) Use of interviews; and
 - (iii) Inspection of transcripts, report cards, and other documentation as well as the observation of the

student in a classroom setting.

- (d) Anne Arundel County Public Schools shall define the high school year in accordance with COMAR.
 - (i) Maryland public high schools shall be open for at least 180 school days and a minimum of 1,170 school hours during a 10-month period in each school year.
 - (ii) A student begins grade 9 and each subsequent grade upon successful completion of the previous grade.

Regulation History: *Developed by Superintendent: 7/12/06*
Reviewed by Board of Education: 7/11/07
Issued: 7/11/07

Note previous regulation History: *Replaces AR608.03, issued 12/2/98 and revised 10/20/04*