

BOARD AGENDA ITEM
February 22, 2011

SUBJECT:

Revision of *Policy IKF-R Graduation Requirements* – First Reading

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Currently high school students through their junior year must take at least five classes, and seniors must take at least four classes. As part of our district's examination of policies and procedures affecting graduation rate, principals identified a need for greater flexibility in scheduling fifth-year seniors who need only a few credits to graduate.

ADMINISTRATIVE CONSIDERATION:

The district does not receive state funding for students who attend classes for less than 200 minutes per day, which is the basis for the four-course requirement.

Allowing some fifth-year seniors to take only the classes they need to graduate could encourage some students who would drop out at this point to stay in school.

Effective 2010-11, fifth-year graduates will be counted toward both the high school and district state report card ratings. Previously, only on-time graduates counted in the high school and district absolute ratings on the report card.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Approve the proposed revision to *Policy IKF-R Graduation Requirements* on First Reading.

ATTACHMENT:

Policy IKF-R Graduation Requirements with proposed revision

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IKF-R Graduation Requirements

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All students in grades nine through 11 must be enrolled in at least five courses each semester unless extenuating circumstances are approved by the principal and the assistant superintendent for the area. Seniors must be enrolled in at least four courses. These four courses must include any and all core courses required for graduation. Students are required to take an English and/or math course unless waived by the administration. With the approval of the principal and area assistant superintendent, fifth year seniors may take only the courses required for graduation.

A student must earn 24 units of credit in state-approved courses for graduation.
The unit requirements are distributed as follows.

Subject	<u>Credit units</u>
Mathematics	4
Science	3
U.S. History and Constitution	1
Economics	1/2
US Government	1/2
PE or junior ROTC	1
Computer science	1
Foreign language or Career and technology education	1
Electives	7
Total	24

The student must complete a study of and pass a classroom test on the provisions and principles of the United States Constitution, the Declaration of Independence, the Federalist papers and American institutions and ideals. This instruction must be given for a period of at least one year or its equivalent, either within the required course U.S. History and Constitution or within another course.

Beginning with the graduating class of 2010, the student must pass a high school credit course in science and in which an end-of-course examination is administered.

The student must be enrolled for a minimum of one semester immediately preceding his/her graduation except in case of a bona fide change of residence. Units earned in a summer school program do not satisfy this requirement.

The student must pass both parts of the South Carolina high school exit examination in addition to earning the required number of prescribed units.

Awarding of high school credit

A school also may award and accept credit towards a high school diploma for the following.

- a course that has been approved by the state department of education in a proficiency-based system
- those gateway courses that are a part of the end-of-course examination program only if the student takes the course approved by the school in which he/she is enrolled and meets all the stipulated requirements of the program
- courses in summer programs that meet all the regulatory requirements for courses offered for students in grades nine through 12
- a course that is approved by the district - whether the school offers the particular course or not - if the student receives prior approval
- a course that the student takes in an approved adult education program if the course is approved by the superintendent or his/her designee
- locally designed subject-area courses, elective courses and CATE courses under conditions as outlined in state board regulation
- the PE credit if the PE course meets all statutory requirements including the personal fitness and wellness component and the lifetime fitness component
- the American Sign Language course as the required unit in a foreign language
- a college course that a student in grades nine through 12 takes under the district's dual credit arrangement

Adult education

For adult education students receiving a diploma, the unit requirements are distributed as follows.

<u>Subject</u>	<u>Credit units</u>
English/Language Arts	4
Mathematics	4
Science	3

U.S. History and Constitution	1
Economics	1/2
US Government	1/2
Other social studies	1
Computer science (including keyboarding)	1
Electives	9
Total	24

Exit examination

For purposes of state testing requirements, students in their second year of high school enrollment beginning with grade nine are required to take an exit examination consisting of tests in English/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies based on state curriculum standards. Passage of the exit examination is a condition for the receipt of a state high school diploma. This requirement also applies to students in an adult education program who are seeking a diploma.

Students who do not pass the exit examination must receive academic assistance in the area(s) not passed.

Any student who fails to pass the exit examination and who is actively enrolled in school will have two opportunities per year (spring and fall) to pass an equivalent form of the failed part or parts of the examination by meeting the minimum performance standard in effect at the time of the test administration.

An administration of the exit examination may be available during the summer after the twelfth grade for students who have met all other requirements for graduation and who were actively enrolled in school.

The district will award an appropriate state certificate to those students who must pass the exit examination to receive a diploma, but fail to do so. The certificate will indicate the number of credits earned and grades completed. A student who has earned the required number of units but who fails to pass the exit exam may enroll in adult education to continue with academic assistance and to re-take the exit exam. If the student is under the age of 21, he/she may continue in school until he/she passes the exit exam and receives a diploma or until he/she reaches 21, whichever occurs first.

The district will do the following.

- Implement administration and security measures established by the state board of education for the purpose of the exit examination.

- Establish a procedure for written notification of students and parents/legal guardians by the seventh grade or upon entry into the district schools, whichever comes first.
- Publicize the exit examination schedules.
- Recommend for a South Carolina State High School Diploma only those students who pass all parts of the exit examination.
- Provide academic assistance related to the parts not passed.
- Advise students who have met all other requirements for graduation but have not passed the exit examination of other alternatives.

Districts will identify students who meet the participation criteria for alternative assessment. Students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) may take the exit exam with accommodations and/or modifications determined to be appropriate by the IEP team and allowable by state and federal statutes and regulations.

High school credit for college work

Students in grades nine through 12 and/or adult education programs can earn credits for college course work that can be applied to the required number of units for a state high school diploma.

The following conditions apply.

- Courses may be offered through distance learning and cooperative agreements with institutions of higher education. One quality point will be added to the CP weighting for dual credit courses that are applicable.
- Only courses applicable to baccalaureate degrees or to associate degrees offered by institutions accredited by the board of education of that state or the appropriate regional accrediting agency [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SCACS CASI)] qualify.
- Tuition and any other fees will be the responsibility of the student or his/her parent/legal guardian.

A three-hour college course will transfer one Carnegie unit.

Units earned for college courses may not be substituted for courses of similar content offered in the high school curriculum.

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