

16 NCAC 06D .0503 STATE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

(a) To graduate from a public high school in North Carolina and be issued a high school diploma by the governing body of a public school unit, a student shall satisfy the requirements set forth in this Rule. The requirements for each student are determined by the school year in which the student first enrolls in Grade 9. The requirements for a student who has been identified as a child with a disability and whose IEP team has determined cannot satisfy the standard state graduation requirements are set forth in 16 NCAC 06D .0506.

(b) A student who first enrolled in Grade 9 in the 2020-2021 school year shall earn a total of 22 course credits, including the following:

- (1) Four course credits in the content area of English and language arts, which shall consist of:
 - (A) English I;
 - (B) English II;
 - (C) English III; and
 - (D) English IV
- (2) Four course credits in the content area of mathematics, which shall consist of:
 - (A) NC Math I;
 - (B) NC Math II;
 - (C) NC Math III; and
 - (D) A fourth course credit aligned with the student's postsecondary plans.

A student may, with the approval of the principal of the student's school, complete a CTE course approved by DPI in lieu of NC Math III.
- (3) Three course credits in the content area of science, which shall consist of:
 - (A) Biology;
 - (B) One course in physical science; and
 - (C) One course in earth and environmental science.
- (4) Four course credits in the content area of social studies, which shall consist of:
 - (A) One course on founding principles of the United States, which shall be either American History: Founding Principles, Civics, and Economics; or Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy;
 - (B) Economics and Personal Finance;
 - (C) One course in American history, which shall be either American History, American History I, or American History II; and
 - (D) World History.
- (5) One course credit in the content area of health and physical education, including completion of instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation ("CPR") as provided in G.S. 115C-81.25(c)(10).
- (6) Two elective course credits in any combination of the following content areas:
 - (A) Career and technical education;
 - (B) Visual or performing arts education; or
 - (C) World languages education.
- (7) Four elective course credits in any combination of the following content areas:
 - (A) Career and technical education;
 - (B) Visual or performing arts education;
 - (C) Reserve Officer Training Corps ("ROTC"); or
 - (D) Any other content area.

(c) A student who first enrolled in Grade 9 in the 2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024, 2024-2025, or 2025-2026 school years shall earn a total of 22 course credits, including the following:

- (1) Four course credits in the content area of English and language arts, which shall consist of:
 - (A) English I;
 - (B) English II;
 - (C) English III; and
 - (D) English IV
- (2) Four course credits in the content area of mathematics, which shall consist of:
 - (A) NC Math I;
 - (B) NC Math II;
 - (C) NC Math III; and
 - (D) A fourth course credit aligned with the student's postsecondary plans.

A student may, with the approval of the principal of the student's school, complete a CTE course approved by DPI in lieu of NC Math III.

- (3) Three course credits in the content area of science, which shall consist of:
 - (A) Biology;
 - (B) One course in physical science; and
 - (C) One course in earth and environmental science.
- (4) Four course credits in the content area of social studies, which shall consist of:
 - (A) Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy;
 - (B) Economics and Personal Finance;
 - (C) American History; and
 - (D) World History.
- (5) One course credit in the content area of health and physical education, including completion of instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation ("CPR") as provided in G.S. 115C-81.25(c)(10).
- (6) Two elective course credits in any combination of the following content areas:
 - (A) Career and technical education;
 - (B) Visual or performing arts education; or
 - (C) World languages education.
- (7) Four elective course credits in any combination of the following content areas:
 - (A) Career and technical education;
 - (B) Visual or performing arts education;
 - (C) Reserve Officer Training Corps ("ROTC"); or
 - (D) Any other content area.

(d) A student who first enrolled in Grade 9 in the 2026-2027 school year or thereafter shall earn a total of 22 course credits, including the following:

- (1) Four course credits in the content area of English and language arts, which shall consist of:
 - (A) English I;
 - (B) English II;
 - (C) English III; and
 - (D) English IV
- (2) Four course credits in the content area of mathematics, which shall consist of:
 - (A) NC Math I;
 - (B) NC Math II;
 - (C) NC Math III; and
 - (D) A fourth course credit aligned with the student's postsecondary plans.

A student may, with the approval of the principal of the student's school, complete a CTE course approved by DPI in lieu of NC Math III.

- (3) Three course credits in the content area of science, which shall consist of:
 - (A) Biology;
 - (B) One course in physical science; and
 - (C) One course in earth and environmental science.
- (4) Four course credits in the content area of social studies, which shall consist of:
 - (A) Founding Principles of the United States of America and North Carolina: Civic Literacy;
 - (B) Economics and Personal Finance;
 - (C) American History; and
 - (D) World History.
- (5) One course credit in the content area of health and physical education, including completion of instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation ("CPR") as provided in G.S. 115C-81.25(c)(10).
- (6) One course credit in the content area of computer science, as prescribed in G.S. 115C-81.90. A student shall be exempt from this requirement if the student transfers from a nonpublic school or a school in another state to a North Carolina public school after completion of Grade 11, or if the student has been identified as a child with a disability and the student's IEP team determines that the student's disability would prevent the student from completing the course credit.
- (7) Two elective course credits in any combination of the following content areas:
 - (A) Career and technical education;
 - (B) Visual or performing arts education; or
 - (C) World languages education.

(8) Three elective courses any other content area.

(e) A student who first enrolled in Grade 9 in the 2025-2026 school year shall have earned at least one course credit in visual or performing arts from Grade 6 through 12. A student shall be exempt from this requirement if the student transfers from a nonpublic school or a school in another state to a North Carolina public school in Grade 9 or thereafter and the requirement would prevent the student from graduating with the cohort of students to which the student was assigned upon transfer.

(f) In determining whether a student who is the child of a military family has satisfied the requirements established by this Rule, the governing body of a public school unit shall consider and comply with all requirements of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, codified at G.S. 115C-407.5.

History Note: Authority G.S. 115C-12(9c); 115C-12(9d); 115C-81.5; 115C-81.25; 115C-81.45; 115C-81.90; 115C-83.31; 115C-83.32;
Eff. December 1, 1999;
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