

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

1.0 PROGRAM DEFINITION

A. Rationale

The West Virginia Board of Education and the West Virginia Department of Education believe that schools must attempt to prepare every student who exits from high school with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to be a successful, functioning member of society; to develop proficiency in basic functional skills; to function in this culture; to develop a sense of civic responsibility; and to prepare him/her for college, technical, or vocational programs subsequent to high school and for work.

The School Laws of West Virginia give the West Virginia Board of Education the responsibility for determining the educational policies of the state.

18-2-5-- “Subject to and in conformity with the Constitution and laws of this State, the state board of education shall determine the educational policies of the State, ... and shall make rules for carrying into effect the laws and policies of the State relating to education, ... and such other matters pertaining to the public schools of the State as may seem to the state board to be necessary and expedient.”

18-2-7– “The state board of education shall prescribe minimum standards in the course of study to be offered in elementary schools, high schools, vocational schools, and in all other kinds, grades, and classes of schools, or departments thereof, which may now or hereafter be maintained in the State, in whole or in part, from any state fund or funds:...”

Graduation Requirements for West Virginia Public Schools: Adolescent Education (Grades 9-12) prescribes the state requirements for graduation from high school. These requirements are based upon the number of units of credit attained in grades 9 through 12 for satisfactory completion of learning outcomes and also upon attendance. County board of education shall have the authority to increase these graduation requirements beyond the state requirements.

B. Definitions

1. Standard Graduation Requirements - the number of required and elective units of credit which must be earned by a student in grades 9-12 in order to be graduated from high school with a standard diploma. A student must also attend at least four years in grades 9-12 unless an attendance exception is granted.

2. Modified Graduation Requirements - the alternative instructional goals and objectives specified in the individualized educational program which must be completed by students with severe disabilities in order to be graduated from high school with a modified diploma. A student must also attend at least four years in grades 9-12 unless an attendance exception is granted.
3. Unit of Credit - that which is awarded for the attainment instructional goals and objectives (IGO's) from a required or elective area of study for which a minimum of 8100 minutes of instructional time has been allocated. (It must be noted that 40 hours of work-based learning are also required for graduation.)
4. Standard Diplomas - diplomas awarded to students, including exceptional students, who satisfactorily complete all state and county standard graduation requirements.
5. Modified Diplomas - diplomas awarded to students with severe disabilities who satisfactorily complete modified graduation requirements.
6. Instructional Goals and Objectives (IGO's)- measurable descriptions of the expected knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes a teacher expects learners to acquire as a result of instruction within a program of study or a related area of study. For example, in the adolescent education program of study science, area of study biology, the learner will be able to describe the cell theory, structure, and function.
7. Alternative Instructional Goals and Objectives - IGO's appropriate to meet the needs of a student determined unable to successfully achieve the IGO's necessary to meet standard graduation requirements. The determination of ability to achieve standard IGO's is made by the individualized educational plan. These alternative IGO's do not have to be from the required and elective areas of study for standard graduation requirements, but they are learning outcomes which are reasonable and attainable for students with severe disabilities.
8. Applied Arts - family and consumer science, industrial arts/technology, pre-vocational education, and vocational education.
9. Certificates of Achievement - certificates awarded in addition to a standard diploma to recognize students whose adolescent planned educational program meets specific requirements which exceed the state

requirements.

10. The Arts - dance, music, theater and visual arts.
11. Foreign Languages - a language other than English.
12. Applied Mathematics - Applied Math I, Applied Math II and Applied Geometry.
13. Work-Based Learning - Work-based experiences are educational activities that assist the student to gain an awareness of the workplace performance and gain valuable work experiences and skills while exploring career interests and abilities.

C. Program of Study

1. Requirements for Graduation

a. Standard Graduation Requirements

Standard graduation requirements are the number of required and elective units of credit which must be earned by a student in grades 9-12 in order to be graduated from high school. A standard diploma is the document that is awarded to a student to verify completion of these graduation requirements.

(1) Total Units

The total number of units of credit needed for graduation is 23 for the class of 2001-2002 and 25 plus work based learning beginning with the class of 2003. The specific units of credit for graduation are outlined below as required and elective units.

(2) Required Units

Fourteen required units are the offerings which constitute a common body of general learning necessary for preparing a student to function in society. The required units which must be completed by all students during the grades 9 through 12 are:

English-Language arts	4 units
Social Studies	3 units
Mathematics	3 units

Science	3 units
Physical Education	1 unit
Health	1 unit
Applied Arts, Fine or Performing Arts, or Foreign Language	1 unit (class of 2001-02 only)
The Arts (replaces applied arts, fine or performing arts, or foreign language)	1 unit (begins class of 2003)
Advisory Program	1.5 units (beginning class of 2003)
<p>(The student is required to participate in eight (8) semesters of the advisory program and successfully complete six (6) semesters. (One semester of advisory equals ¼ credit.) Requirements will not be retroactive for transfer students and will be adjusted to the number of semesters remaining in their program. The student must take advisory each semester and earn 1 ½ credits if possible).</p>	
Career Concentration/Major	4 units
Total - Required Units	19.5 units (class of 2001-2002)
Total - Elective Units	3.5 units
*Grand Total	23 units (class of 2001-2002) 25 units plus work based learning (beginning class of 2003)
Work Based Learning	40 hours (beginning class of 2003)

(3) Elective Units

Elective units are the additional offerings which are needed to complete the 23 units for the class of 2001-2002 and 25 units beginning with the class of 2003 and which meet a student's specific needs, interests, and abilities. State Board Policy 2510, Regulations for General, Vocational, and Special Educational Programs, give a listing of electives which must be available to students in all schools of West Virginia. Elective offerings needed to meet state graduation requirements should be chosen from those listed in that policy.

b. Modified Graduation Requirements

Modified graduation requirements are designed students with severe disabilities who have been determined by a special education placement advisory committee to be unable to meet state and county standard graduation requirements. Students will need at least four years to complete these requirements, as specified in their individualized education programs.

2. Authorized Diplomas

County boards of education are authorized to award standard diplomas and modified diplomas.

3. Planned Educational Programs

A planned educational program is defined as an educational program that includes the state requirements for graduation as set forth in this document. The program places emphasis on preparation for college, advanced vocational programs, and/or employment.

Students shall be encouraged to plan and follow a flexible, planned educational program and to accumulate units beyond the 23 (class of 2001-2002) and 25 (class of 2003) required for graduation. The student's planned program shall be subject to periodic revision and designed to enhance the opportunity for success in chosen endeavors after graduation from high school.

4. Certificate of Achievement

The state board of education shall award certificates of achievement to those students whose educational programs in grades 9-12 merit special recognition.

Counties are encouraged to develop specific criteria for awarding additional certificates of achievement to those students whose educational programs in grades 9-12 exceed the state graduation requirements. Certificates may include but are not limited to the following areas:

- (1) College preparatory programs,
- (2) Completion of vocational programs, and
- (3) Advanced study in particular areas

5. Authorization for county boards of education to increase requirements.

The graduation requirements include 19.5 specific units (class of 2001-2002) and 21.5 specific units (class of 2003) total units.

The county superintendent shall notify the West Virginia Department of Education of any changes in requirements beyond the state requirements.

D. Extracurricular Activities

Units of credit are not awarded for participation in extracurricular activities.

2.0 PROGRAM DELIVERY

A. Administrative Practices

1. Unit of Credit

A unit of credit is that which is awarded for the attainment of IGO's_ from a required or elective area of study for which a minimum of 8100 minutes of instructional time has been allotted. Partial credit may also be awarded, e.g., ½ unit for attainment of IGO's from a required or elective course for which a minimum of 4050 minutes of instructional time has been allotted.

One credit for vocational agriculture shall be awarded at the high school provided 8100 minutes are taught. An additional one-half credit may be awarded if the instructor and principal verify at least 4050 minutes of instruction has taken place outside the regular term, be it summer or otherwise. A total of one and one-half credits will be awarded if a student completes both the regular school term and works outside the regular term.

2. Alternatives to the Unit of Credit

Based upon school and individual student needs, county boards of education, with the approval of the West Virginia Board or Department of Education as indicated, shall develop policies which allow alternative delivery systems for the unit of credit. Areas in which policies may be developed are as follows:

a. Accepting Credits Earned Before Grade 9

If a student earns credit in a high school course (a course listed in the high school curriculum) he/she will receive credit to be included in the 23 units (class of 2001-2002) or 25 units (beginning with the class of 2003). The student's permanent record shall include all such classes attempted for credit. A high school credit earned prior to grade 9 will be treated the same as any high school credit earned in grades 9-12.

b. Correspondence/Virtual/Internet Classes

1. The board does not accept correspondence credit toward graduation.
2. Proposals to accept virtual school credit or on-line instruction from an accredited institution will be addressed on an individual basis by the principal, guidance counselor, and in consultation/approval of the superintendent.

c. Colleges

County boards of education may adopt policies which allow students to earn credits for completion of college work. Three semester hours of college credit shall be counted as $\frac{1}{2}$ unit of credit. Generally, there are two reasons for accepting college credit: (1) the student is enrolled in the high school and would profit by taking a course at the college/university which is not available at the high school or (2) the student is enrolled as a full-time college student and needs to transfer credit back to the high school to complete graduation requirements. These units of credit may be used to meet the required units.

Any student who scholastically ranks in the top 10 percent (no fractions) of his/her class at the end of his/her junior year shall be eligible, upon written application to the local high school, to apply for early college admission. The student must need four or fewer subjects for graduation and the college credits must meet the high school graduation requirements of the student. If a student chooses to enroll as a full-time college student, he/she shall forfeit all rights and privileges of a high school student (i.e., not ranked with class) but will receive a high school diploma. This may be given at high school graduation if the student desires. The student must enroll in and successfully complete not less than twelve (12) college hours per semester to meet the graduation requirements of Monroe County Schools. One-half unit equals three college hours.

A high school senior may enroll in an accredited college, university, or vocational trade school while attending high school provided he/she meets all other requirements for graduation and has at least a "B" average except the unit requirements can be college electives. If a student chooses this option, he/she shall retain all rights as a high school student and must be enrolled in at least four (4) classes at James Monroe High School. It shall be the policy of the Monroe County Board of Education to rank seniors for award purposes following completion of all work at the end of

the eighth semester.

d. Experimental Programs

Experimental programs shall be approved by the West Virginia Board of Education. Each program shall be evaluated annually and a report filed with the West Virginia Department of Education.

e. Summer School

The board approves not more than two credits per summer as awarded to each student who attends summer school. This credit must meet the approval of the principal.

f. Night School (Other than Alternative School)

A student may enroll for credit in night school or other approved classes if the following criteria are met:

1. A student must attend regular day school full-time four full years (full-time student equals seven classes).
2. A student may take classes before his/her senior year but does not eliminate four full years of high school unless student qualifies under 2.0 - Program Delivery (A.2.c.)
3. All classes must be taken by an approved school which meets the state and local board policies (i.e. - 8100 minutes of instruction with qualified instructor).
4. Student must have prior approval from principal and superintendent before taking a class. This must be done in writing.
5. Tutorial/Individual Instruction Option: For students who have failed a required course, the principal, along with the superintendent, may authorize course work taken for credit with an individual instructor under the following additional criteria:
 - a. The principal and the teacher of the course failed both agree in writing that the course of study to be pursued fulfills the requirements of this class and the amount of credit to be earned.

- b. The instructor to teach the course must be certified in the subject area for credit to be awarded;
- c. The instructor must agree to provide the 8100 minutes of instructional time for one full credit, 4050 for one-half credit; this time must be documented.
- d. A maximum of one (1) credit may be earned with the tutorial/individual instruction option.
- e. The student and his parents are responsible for hiring the instructor for this work.

B. Program for Career Exploration Opportunities

The purpose of this program is to offer rising seniors the opportunity to explore career opportunities and interests not covered through current board or early college entrance policies and to fulfill work-based experience credit. Such a program must have prior approval from the principal and superintendent before being submitted for board approval.

- 1. Guidelines for the program:
 - a. Student has at least a 2.0 GPA and no more than 10 absences of any type for the semester prior to entering the program. If excessive absences exist, the student may appeal through the school attendance committee.
 - b. Selected opportunity has to be related to area of concentration or career plans.
 - c. Student must not have more than four (4) required credits left to complete graduation requirements.
 - d. Parent will need to sign release form for student.
 - e. School or school system will not provide transportation or tuition or any other associated costs of the program.
 - f. Removal from the program for any reason may jeopardize

graduation.

- g. No approval will be granted if the program request does not allow for student to complete graduation requirements at the end of the school year or if it does not comply with state and local policies. No JMHS diploma will be issued unless all requirements are met.
- h. If grades are issued through the requested program, it is the student's responsibility to provide counselors with transcripts of grades. The delivery of grades must meet time lines set by James Monroe. The transcript and/or grades become part of the student's permanent record, GPA, and class rank, if part-time at the high school, otherwise transcript, grades and GPA are recorded as part of the student's record but the student is not ranked.
- i. Any student who is off the JMHS campus in a full-time program is only eligible to receive the high school diploma when all requirements are met. This student will receive no ranking, has no right to attend school dances or proms, unless invited under regular invitation guidelines, no consideration for valedictorian or salutatorian, or any other school honors or activities.

2 Steps to initiate involvement in the program:

- a. A documented meeting will be held with one of the counselors to discuss the opportunities and requirements.
- b. Student is responsible for presenting a proposal of what they want to do with written documentation of parental support. Details would have to be provided concerning location and type of opportunity, any requirements or expectations of the school, its accreditation or licensure, how it is related to career plans or area of concentration and what the student expects to gain from the experience.
- c. Curriculum committee would discuss each proposal and make a recommendation to the board. Considerations would include: a) whether the opportunity was for credit or not; b) if for credit who would be responsible for the evaluation; c) who would be responsible for assignment of grades; d) if early college entrance, then the review of GPA, test scores, and career plans.
- d. The Board would grant final approval to the student.

C. Alternative Credit Make-Up Policy

1. Eligibility: The program is only available to those students enrolled in James Monroe High School. To be eligible for this program, a student must have 15 credits (17 credits beginning with the class of 2003) at the beginning of the school year. Students could only enroll in the Alternative School class if that class can not be scheduled otherwise and if they are eligible to attend this program.
2. Time Frame: This program will only be available during a student's senior year.
3. Credit Limit: Students could only earn one credit through this program.
4. Cost: The cost to the student is \$150 per half credit, \$75 if reduced lunch certified, or \$0 if free lunch certified. Once requirements are met, credit will not be awarded until payment is received. This non-refundable tuition is payable to James Monroe High School. The money will be used to purchase tutorial resources for the alternative school.
5. Hours Necessary For Credit: Hours for credit should be consistent with the number of hours a JMHS student would be in class. A minimum of sixty-seven and a half hours (67 ½ hours) would be necessary.
6. Course Content: Each course taken through this policy would be consistent with the state IGO's.
7. Grading: Grading for this program would be consistent with the county grading policy.
8. Enrollment Deadline: After the program is initiated with a pool of students, the enrollment deadlines for JMHS would be in effect. Exceptions to deadlines would be determined by the principal. (Such things as time constraints, receptiveness of the Alternative School in accepting students after deadlines are passed and other factors may be considered).

Note: Students are expected to follow the rules and regulations of the Alternative School. Otherwise, consequences of the Alternative School, including possible dismissal, may be imposed.

D. Students with Disabilities

An individualized education program shall specify how graduation credit is to be earned by an eligible handicapped student. Primary consideration must be given to the completion of learning outcomes prescribed for all students.

A special education (IEP) committee determines that the approved IGO's in the required and elective areas of study are reasonable for a particular student. Changes may be made to the delivery of IGO's through learning environment, teaching strategies, media/resources, and evaluation techniques if such changes are deemed necessary by the IEP committee and are specified in the IEP. A student who masters the individualized education program IGO's shall be awarded a standard diploma.

If the special education IEP committee determines that a student cannot successfully achieve the IGO's necessary to earn a standard diploma, the individualized education program shall specify the alternative IGO's which are appropriate to meet the needs of the student. A student who completes the alternative IGO's as specified in his/her individualized education program shall be awarded a modified diploma stating that the student has met the goals and objectives of an individualized education program.

E. Attendance

Attendance for all four years during grades 9-12 is important to attain full benefit from the educational programs offered in the schools of West Virginia. Therefore, all students shall be scheduled for the full instructional day for all four years. Exceptions may be made by county boards of education to accommodate placement into college courses, advanced vocational programs, or for other compelling circumstances as previously discussed.

County boards of education shall develop policies to define the circumstances under which students may attend school fewer than four years and/or may be scheduled for less than the full instructional day.

F. Evaluating Credits for Transfer Students

Students who transfer into West Virginia from schools approved by other state systems may not always have completed the required units needed for graduation

in West Virginia. In most instances, there will be credit for a course which is quite similar to one of the required units, and credit can be awarded for the work completed. If the student who transfers in can be scheduled into any additional subjects needed to complete the West Virginia requirements, this should be done. In the cases of seniors and some juniors, such scheduling may not be feasible or possible. In such cases, the school may appeal to the State Superintendent of Schools for permission to use a substitute for the requirement or to waive the requirement. In the case of determining credit, if the sending school has awarded credit to a student for academic work, this would be accepted by James Monroe High School.

G. Evaluating Grades for Home Schooled Students

For students who have been home-schooled, documentation must be given to the school that essentially indicates the course of study, grade, and the justification for the grade. Every attempt to provide the student with a transcript based upon that documentation shall be made. An analysis of the courses of study for each year of high school shall be examined and a decision made by a committee of the guidance counselor and principal's designee, as well as the home schooling teacher.

H. Evaluation of Grades for Transfer Students/Grade Conversions

Every attempt will be made to accommodate grades for students transferring into Monroe County's schools in a manner that is fair to the student. Grades are converted to letter grades based on (when possible) the grading scale provided by the school, otherwise, grades will be matched with the Monroe County grading scale. Grade point averages will be determined based upon the James Monroe High School grading scale. When the conversion of grades is necessary, the transferred letter grade shall be given a numerical value most comparable to our county scale with the same letter grade as that of the transferred grade.

For example, a transferred 88/B-, the highest B- possible from the transferring school, would convert to our highest numerical B-, i.e. an 82. The lowest numerical B- would transfer as an 80 and so on. In the case of an "F", the difference between our lowest passing grade, 60, and the lowest passing grade from the transferring school would be subtracted from the transferred numerical "F". For example, a 64/F on a 65 passing scale is one point from passing. This would convert to a 59 on our scale, one point from passing and five points (the difference between 65 and 60) lower than the actual score (64). A 55/F would become a 50. A 43/F would become a 38 and so on. All letter grades have a three point (high, middle, low) spread on our scale except for the A, A-, B, C, D. In such cases, convert to the highest numerical score within the appropriate range,

i.e., a high A-/96 would convert to our score of 94. A middle A-/95 would become a 92, etc.

In cases where there is no numerical grade on the transcript to accompany the transferred letter grade, an effort shall be made to get the numerical grade from the sending school. Failing that, the grade awarded for the "F" shall be 59.

I. Transfer Students and Graduation Awards

Students must have been enrolled at James Monroe High School for three of the last four semesters in order to be eligible for valedictorian or salutatorian awards.

E. Students Who Do Not Complete Requirements in Four Years

If a student has been enrolled continuously for four years in grades 9-12 but has not accumulated the required number of units, the student shall be expected to meet the graduation requirements which were in effect when he entered ninth grade. Since the student has attended four full years, he or she would not be required to attend the full day.

3.0 PROGRAM ASSURANCE

A. Documentation

1. A unit of credit is awarded to indicate successful completion of two semesters or 8100 minutes in a course. A one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) unit of credit is awarded to indicate successful completion of one semester or 4050 minutes in a course. Denominations fewer than one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) must be approved by the Board. [Note: Advisory has been previously approved and is awarded $\frac{1}{4}$ credit per semester.]
2. A diploma is awarded to indicate successful completion of specific graduation requirements.

B. Program Improvement

The evaluation and revision process shall occur periodically on an as needed basis.

C. Management Information System

1. Attendance

Each county shall submit an annual report, by school, of exceptions to the attendance requirement contained in this document, to the West Virginia Department of Education by June 15 of each fiscal year. The report shall include the birth date, grade, sex, compelling circumstances, exception made, and effective date. A subsequent summative presentation by the State Department of Education will be made to the West Virginia Board of Education.

2. Alternatives to the Unit of Credit

Each school which includes any grades from 9-12 must include in its annual classification report a summary of alternatives accepted for units of credit.

4.0 CRITERIA FOR CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

Unless mandated by the state, no certificate of attendance will be issued.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS

- A. Alternative School - is made available for those students who have been expelled from, withdrawn, or placed out of the regular program and only with the approval of the superintendent. It operates after school hours and provides one-on-one assistance with an individual alternative education plan designed to help the student re-enter the regular program with little or no academic loss. See Monroe County Policy IGBH - Alternative School Policy.
- B. Homebound Instruction - is provided for those students who are medically unable to attend school; who are placed in an alternative setting for disciplinary reasons; or who are placed in the home setting because of an Individual Education Plan (IEP). See Monroe County Policy IGBG - Homebound Instruction.
- C. Diplomas for Veterans - awarded to veterans of World War I, World War II, the Korean Conflict, and the Vietnam Conflict. WV Legislative action in 2000 provided a process for awarding veterans who left school prior to graduation the opportunity to receive a standard high school diploma from the county in which they attended high school. The diploma may not be from the high school the veteran attended since that school may no longer exist. The process for applying for a diploma begins with the Office of Veterans Affairs. The county receives notification from the WV Department of Education of a veteran's eligibility for a diploma.

- D. Home Schooling - is available to parents who wish to instruct their children at home. WV Law §18-8-1 provides guidelines for applying for “Exemption B” Home Schooling. Application information may be received by contacting the office of Student Services at the Board of Education Office.

6.0 EFFECTIVE DATE

Unless otherwise noted, this policy is effective for students entering ninth grade during the 2001 - 2002 school year.

Adopted by Board Action: September 4, 2001