



SCHOOL BOARD ACTION REPORT

DATE: October 10, 2017
FROM: Dr. Larry Nyland, Superintendent
LEAD STAFF: Michael Tolley, Associate Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, mftolley@seattleschools.org, (206) 252-0017; Kyle Kinoshita, Chief of Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction, kdkinoshita@seattleschools.org, (206) 252-0050; Caleb Perkins, Director of Career and College Readiness; cbperkins@seattleschools.org, (206) 252-0062

For Introduction: November 1, 2017
For Action: November 15, 2017

1. TITLE

Amending Policy No. 2415, High School Graduation Requirements

2. PURPOSE

This Board Action Report makes edits to Board Policy No. 2415, in order to respond to changes in State law. The changes remove a minimum GPA requirement imposed by the district to bring district graduation requirements more in line with state requirements and to reduce the problems associated with this requirement.

3. RECOMMENDED MOTION

I move that the School Board amend Board Policy No. 2415, High School Graduation Requirements, as attached to the Board Action Report.

4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

a. Background

According to WAC 180-51-068 and following the Washington State Board of Education's (SBE) approval of our two-year waiver of implementation, District students in the class of 2021 are required by Washington State to earn 24 credits to graduate.

It is the policy of the Seattle School Board that, in addition to meeting all graduation requirements set forth by the State of Washington, all District high school students meet the following requirements in order to graduate:

In order to graduate, students will be required to have at least a 2.0 or above cumulative GPA and a 2.0 cumulative GPA or above in all courses in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies and Science. For purposes of this board-adopted graduation requirement *only*, the GPA will be calculated in a way that treats an "E" grade the same as an "N" grade.

The 2.0 GPA graduation policy language presents several challenges to students, families and school staff. The problematic implications include:

- It creates two separate calculations for a student's GPA, a transcript GPA that includes "E" grades in the weighting and a graduation GPA that does not.
- This means that, for students who have enough credits but are on the edge of meeting graduation GPA requirements, failing a class may become more desirable than passing a class with a "D" grade.
- Students may pass every class required for graduation by the state and not be eligible to graduate, if the student has a high number of "D" grades that drop the GPA below 2.0.
- Because "E" grades are dropped from the district graduation GPA calculation, many students currently meet the graduation GPA requirement without a 2.0 GPA on their transcript.
- It allows for a potential unfair scenario where a student with a 1.8 official transcript GPA might graduate while another student with a 1.9 official transcript GPA might not.

Since Seattle Public Schools added the 2.0 graduation requirement there have been external, objective measures of student academic performance put in place to demonstrate academic proficiency including Reading, Writing, Mathematics and Science State Assessments.

In March 2015, the District created a 24-Credit Graduation Requirement Task Force to study how the District should respond to changing state requirements for graduation. The Task Force issued recommendations in 2016. After reviewing the issues cited above, the Task Force recommended revising Board Policy No. 2415 by removing the 2.0 GPA requirement.

Given the increased credit requirements and the implementation of state exit exams in the time since the SPS GPA requirement was instituted, the Task Force felt the 2.0 requirement serves as an unnecessary barrier to graduation.

Other amendments to Policy No. 2415 to reflect findings from stakeholder and community engagement conducted in 2017 are not included in this motion but may be brought in a future motion.

b. Alternatives

- Continue with a 2.0 GPA requirement, but remove the language requiring both core and cumulative GPA and dropping "E" grades. The result would be: In order to graduate, students must have at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA. This would be an increase to graduation requirements and potentially decrease graduation rates. It would take the District further out of alignment with state requirements.
- Do not amend Policy No. 2415. This is not recommended because the policy would continue to be out of alignment with state policy.
- Delay amendment of Policy No. 2415. This is not recommended because there are already students in our high schools who need to meet the new state graduation requirements.

c. Research

In Washington State, Seattle is one of only two districts that require a minimum GPA in addition to all other graduation requirements.

5. FISCAL IMPACT/REVENUE SOURCE

The revenue source for this motion is N/A.

This motion has no immediate fiscal impact as it does not affect the structure of credit offerings. However, discussion of the structure of credit offerings in 2017 may lead to future amendments to this and other policies, which may result in fiscal impact.

Expenditure: One-time Annual Multi-Year N/A

Revenue: One-time Annual Multi-Year N/A

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

With guidance from the District’s Community Engagement tool, this action was determined to merit the following tier of community engagement:

Not applicable

Tier 1: Inform

Tier 2: Consult/Involve

Tier 3: Collaborate

The 24-Credit Task Force engaged with the community extensively in discussions about the district’s graduation requirements generally and these specific components of these policies in particular. For example, the task force committees’ outreach and data collection activities included:

- o 19 student focus groups at nine high schools involving more than 650 students
- o A family survey sent to middle and high school families (and open to elementary families) with over 1,500 respondents
- o Two community meetings

Going forward, we plan to continue to inform the community on updates to the district’s graduation requirements.

7. EQUITY ANALYSIS

After using the racial equity analysis toolkit to review this proposed action, it is determined that this change in policy will enhance students’ equitable access to earning their diploma.

8. STUDENT BENEFIT

As stated above, amending this policy will remedy the issues raised and provide more clarity for students.

9. WHY BOARD ACTION IS NECESSARY

- Amount of contract initial value or contract amendment exceeds \$250,000 (Policy No. 6220)
- Amount of grant exceeds \$250,000 in a single fiscal year (Policy No. 6114)
- Adopting, amending, or repealing a Board policy
- Formally accepting the completion of a public works project and closing out the contract
- Legal requirement for the School Board to take action on this matter
- Board Policy No. _____, [TITLE], provides the Board shall approve this item
- Other: _____

10. POLICY IMPLICATION

This would result in a change to Board Policy No. 2415.

11. BOARD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION


This motion was discussed at the Curriculum and Instruction Policy Committee meeting on October 10. The Committee reviewed the motion and moved the item forward for consideration by the full Board.

12. TIMELINE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Upon approval of this motion, Policy No. 2415, High School Graduation Requirements, will be amended and the new version of the policy will be posted online.

13. ATTACHMENTS

- Policy No. 2415 - clean (for approval)
- Policy No. 2415 - redline (for reference)

	<p>HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS</p>	<p>Policy No. 2415 DATE Page 1 of 3</p>
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It is the policy of the Seattle School Board that in addition to meeting all graduation requirements set forth by the State of Washington, all District high school students meet the following requirements in order to graduate:

1. Students in the class of 2020 or earlier must have a minimum of 21 credits in order to graduate; students in the class of 2021 or beyond must have a minimum of 24 credits in order to graduate. Students are urged to examine their post-high school plans, and to take the appropriate credits that will allow them to achieve their postgraduate goals. Additionally, students are encouraged to gain proficiency in many areas of the curriculum. Individual schools may require additional credits for graduation; to do so, the school must receive a written waiver from their Executive Director of Schools, the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, and the Superintendent.
2. The Board recognizes the importance and is supportive of community service by requiring students to participate in service learning activities, which are jointly developed by the District and school sites. Students are required to complete 60 hours of service learning before graduation.

Students Completing the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program

Beginning in Fall 2011, students who fulfill the requirements of an international baccalaureate (IB) program are considered to have met state high school graduation standards, so long as:

1. The student meets the requirements for the certificate of academic achievement or the certificate of individual achievement;
2. The student meets the provision regarding study of the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the state of Washington; and
3. The student meets all graduation requirements required by Seattle Public Schools or by the student's school that are in addition to state minimum requirements, unless those requirements are waived by the student's principal or designee.

Fulfilling the requirements of an international baccalaureate program means the student has:

1. Completed and passed all required IB courses as scored by the school;
2. Passed all internal assessments as scored by the school;
3. Successfully completed all required projects and products as scored by the school; and
4. Completed the final examinations administered by the international baccalaureate organization in each of the required subjects under the IB diploma program.

A student and his/her parent or guardian will be required to sign the “International Baccalaureate Option Form” indicating that the student and family understand that the waiver from state minimum graduation requirements only applies for students who fulfill the requirements of the IB program; should a student fail to meet the requirements, or if a student leaves the program prior to completion, he or she may be required to fulfill state and Seattle Public Schools minimum graduation requirements.

Graduation and Participation in Commencement

1. Students must be enrolled and attending a school for the semester immediately preceding graduation to be eligible to graduate from that school. Students who are participating in Running Start or who have properly obtained dual-enrollment in another school district or approved program may graduate from their affiliated District high school.
2. A student must have met all state graduation requirements or fulfilled the requirements of the International Baccalaureate program, and have met or waived all District graduation requirements, in order to participate in commencement, unless the student has a right to participate in commencement as a matter of state or federal law.

The Superintendent or the Superintendent’s designee(s) shall annually create, post, and distribute a *Graduation Requirements Bulletin* for each graduating class detailing all graduation requirements, including requirements set forth by the State of Washington, a breakdown of the areas in which students must earn credit, and a process by which district requirements may be waived. The *Graduation Requirements Bulletin* and the *K-12 Counseling Manual* serve as the administrative procedures to further implement this Policy.

Adopted: February 2012


Revised: DATE, January 2017; June 2014; August 2013

Cross Reference: 2420; K-12 Counseling Services Manual, Graduation Requirements Bulletin

Related Superintendent Procedure: N/A

Previous Policies: C15.00, G10.00

Legal Reference: RCW 28A.155.045 Certificate of individual achievement; RCW 28A.230 Compulsory Coursework and Activities; RCW 28A.230.090 High school graduation requirements or equivalencies - Reevaluation of graduation requirements – Review and authorization of proposed changes – Credit for courses taken before attending high school – Postsecondary credit equivalencies; RCW 28A.230.120 High school diplomas – Issuance – Option to receive final transcripts – Notice; RCW 28A.230.170 Study of constitutions compulsory - Rules; 28A.320 Provisions applicable to all districts; ; RCW 28A.600.300-400 Running start program; RCW 28A.635.060 Defacing or injuring school property – Liability of pupil, parent or guardian – Withholding grades, diploma, or transcripts – Suspension and restitution – Voluntary work program as alternative – Rights protected; RCW 28A.655.061 High school assessment system – Certificate of academic achievement requirements – Exemptions – Options to retake high school assessment – Objective alternative assessment – Student learning plans;; WAC 180-51 High school graduation requirements; WAC 392-121-182 Alternative Learning Experience Requirements; WAC 392-169 Special service programs - Running Start program; WAC 392-348 Secondary Education; WAC 392-410 Courses of studies and equivalencies; ESHB 1412
Management Resource: *Policy News*, June 2013, June 2012

 <p>SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS</p>	<p>HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS</p>	<p>Policy No. 2415 January 4, 2017 <u>DATE</u> Page 1 of 3</p>
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