



## **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. 2420, High School Grade and Credit Marking

### **2. PURPOSE**

This Board Action Report makes edits to Board Policy No. 2420, in order to respond to changes in State law. The changes ensure district policy matches state policy and gives school staff the flexibility they need to support students in graduating from high school ready for college and career.

### **3. RECOMMENDED MOTION**

I move that the School Board amend Board Policy No. 2420, High School Grade and Credit Marking, as attached to the Board Action Report.

### **4. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

#### **a. Background**

Current Board Policy No. 2420 states that:

Students will be awarded high school academic credit through successful completion of courses taught to content standards by earning a passing grade according to the district's relevant grading policies or Counseling Services Manual provision. One high school credit is equivalent to 150 hours of planned instructional activities or satisfactory completion of an approved Alternative or Equivalency Course of Study. A school may receive an exemption from the 150 hours of planned instructional activities per credit requirement through the process outlined in the superintendent's procedure.

Originally, this language matched state requirements. However, the 150 hours time-based definition of a credit was changed in 2011 as part of the State Board of Education's (SBE's) overhaul of the graduation requirements. The thinking of the SBE was that a "non-time-based" policy would:

- Place the focus on student-centered learning.

- Allow districts more flexibility to meet the increased credit requirements. For example, a seven period day may provide students more opportunities to meet the new 24 credit requirement, but would provide fewer hours per credit.
- Allow districts to determine, and individualize, how much course time is needed for students to meet the state’s standards.

Districts may now stipulate in policy their own definition of a credit as either earned by a passing grade or earned through competency and mastery.

The current language presents several challenges to students, families and school staff. The main challenge is that it prevents schools from determining, and individualizing, how much course time is needed for students to meet the state’s standards. Moreover, additional requirements or constraints on graduation may serve as barriers to graduation for students who have met all of the state’s requirements. As a result, some high schools submit waivers for this requirement every year. However, given that only some high schools get this flexibility, there is inequity across the system in how this requirement is addressed.

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 that the District amend Board Policy No. 2420 to eliminate all references to a high school credit being equivalent to 150 hours of planned instructional activity.

**b. Alternatives**

- Do not amend Policy No. 2420. This is not recommended because additional requirements or constraints on credit earning opportunities may serve as barriers to graduation for students who have met all of the state’s requirements.
- Delay amendment of Policy No. 2420. This is not recommended because there are already students in our high schools who need to meet the new state graduation requirements.

**c. Research**

SBE website: <http://www.sbe.wa.gov/faq/highschoolcredits.php#three>

**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 the components of these policies being addressed in this Board Action Report 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, staff 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 in the thinking of the State Board of Education in 2011, amending this policy will benefit students by:

- Placing the focus of course work on student-centered learning, not merely seat time.
- Allowing schools more flexibility to meet the increased credit requirements.
- Allowing schools to determine, and individualize, how much course time is needed for students to meet the state’s standards.

**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. 2420.

**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. 2420, High School Grade and Credit Marking, will be amended and the new version of the policy will be posted online.

**13. ATTACHMENTS**

- Policy No. 2420 - clean (for approval)
- Policy No. 2420 - redline (for reference)

 <p>SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS</p>	<p>HIGH SCHOOL GRADE &amp; CREDIT MARKING POLICY</p>	<p>Policy No. 2420</p> <p>DATE</p> <p>Page 1 of 5</p>
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It is the policy of the Seattle School Board that its high school students receive grades and credits in a manner that is understandable, accurate, and consistent across the District.

1. Grades

The District shall employ a uniform eleven-point weighted grading system at the high school level, awarding the following marks:

A A- B+ B B- C+ C C- D+ D E

A “D” mark is the lowest passing grade; an “E” mark indicates failure. The Superintendent or the Superintendent’s designee shall establish and post a Seattle School District Uniform Grading Scale, which details the corresponding percentage grade range for each of the eleven grade marks, with Honors courses receiving an additional .5 Quality Point and courses eligible to receive college credit from an accredited institution, such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, College in the High School and Running Start courses receiving an additional 1.0 Quality Point. The marks of “P”, “N”, “W”, and “I” may be used only under specific circumstances in the manner set forth in the *K-12 Counseling Services Manual*.

If a student retakes a course to attempt to earn a higher grade, the highest grade received will be counted towards the student's grade point average. However, a record of all classes taken, including the grades received, will remain on the student's transcript and the student will receive credit towards graduation for only one of the courses.

2. Credits

- A. Students will be awarded high school academic credit for successful completion of a specified unit of study. Successful completion of a specified unit of study means the following:
  - a. Earning a passing grade according to the district’s relevant grading policies or Counseling Services Manual provision; and/or

- b. Demonstrating proficiency/mastery of content standards as determined by the district; and/or
    - c. Successfully completing an established number of hours of any planned alternative instructional activities as determined by the district.
  - B. Students enrolled in middle school may earn high school credit for:
    - a. Courses taken at a District high school if the academic level of the course exceeds the requirements for middle school, and the course is on the Seattle Public Schools approved course list.
    - b. Courses taken at a District middle school that meets or exceeds the requirements for the same high school course and which are on the Seattle Public Schools approved course list. For a middle school course to be eligible as a course equivalent to a high school course, it must be taught by a teacher qualified to teach the course at the high school level. Only students who demonstrate mastery of content standards by earning a passing grade in a middle school course deemed equivalent to a high school course will be eligible for high school credit.
    - c. Courses taken in another district or online during the middle school grades, if the courses are on the Seattle Public Schools approved course list. For courses from another district to count for high school credit in SPS they must already be on a student's transcript when they transfer to SPS or the transferring student/family must provide a transcript and verification of existing policy allowing this credit in their previous district. Students wishing to receive high school credit for online courses taken during middle school must gain approval through the completion of an Equivalency Course of Study Form prior to enrolling in the course.
  - C. Students who meet standard on state exams required for graduation may recover credit for previously failed courses in the following ways:
    - a. Math: Students may recover one-half (.5) Algebra credit for a previously failed Algebra course by meeting standard on the Algebra EOC Exam, Algebra Makeup exam or Algebra Collection of Evidence. Students may recover one-half (.5) Geometry credit for a previously failed Geometry course by meeting standard on the Geometry EOC Exam, Geometry Makeup exam or Geometry Collection of Evidence.
    - b. Science: Students may recover one-half (.5) science credit for a previously failed 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade science course by meeting standard on the Science HSPE or may recover one-half (.5) credit in

a previously failed Biology class by meeting standard on the Biology EOC Exam or Biology Collection of Evidence.

- c. Language Arts: Students may recover one-half (.5) Language Arts credit for a previously failed 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade required Language Arts course by meeting standard on both the Reading and Writing HSPE or Reading and Writing Collection of Evidence.
- d. In all of the situations outlined above unique course codes will be created and will substitute for a course that was previously failed. Failed courses remain on transcript.

### 3. Grade and Credit Changes

A grade and/or credit change can only be made by the teacher of record for the specific course at issue or by the Principal of the school where the course was taken and the change is being requested due to either a math error or bias. If the student has left the school where the course at issue was taken, any grade and/or credit change by either the teacher of record or the Principal must be reviewed and approved with signature by the Regional Executive Director of Schools.

### 4. Promotion and Retention

High school grade level standing is determined by a combination of credit attainment and/or chronology and, in the case of Home Based Instruction students, age. After each semester, standing will be updated according to the following table:

<b><u>Grade Level</u></b>	<b><u>Promotion Criteria</u></b>
Grade 9	Successful Promotion from 8 <sup>th</sup> , 0.00-4.99 credits
Grade 10	5.0-9.99 credits or completion of one year of high school
Grade 11	9.99-14.99 credits or completion of two years of high school
Grade 12	15* credits or completion of three years of high school.

\*14 credit promotion applies for students in the classes of 2014-2015. For students in the class of 2016 and beyond, senior promotion will occur when 15 credits have been earned.

Being placed at a given grade level does not eliminate the need to complete all local and state graduation requirements if a student is attempting to earn a diploma through Seattle Public Schools.

### 5. High School Enrollment for Home Based Instruction Students

Students for whom a “Declaration of Intent to Home School” form is on file with Seattle Public School shall be enrolled in high school according to the following schedule:

- Freshman/9<sup>th</sup> grade if age 14 by August 31 of the year wishing to enroll

- Sophomore/10<sup>th</sup> grade if age 15 by August 31 of the year wishing to enroll
- Junior/11<sup>th</sup> grade if age 16 by August 31 of the year wishing to enroll
- Senior/12<sup>th</sup> grade if age 17 by August 31 of the year wishing to enroll

Students will be assigned the appropriate grade level during the enrollment process. Being placed at a given grade level does not eliminate the need to complete all graduation requirements if the student is attempting to earn a diploma through Seattle Public Schools.

A student must have attained at least Junior/11<sup>th</sup> grade status in order to enroll in Running Start, per the Running Start regulations. For the purposes of Running Start enrollment only, a student may be considered a Junior/11<sup>th</sup> grade either by reaching age 16 as described above *or* by taking the English and Mathematics Compass exams and placing into 100-level or credit-earning college classes. The Compass exam is given at the community colleges and students are responsible for paying the exam fee.

The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee(s) shall maintain the *K-12 Counseling Services Manual* as the administrative procedures that further implement this Policy.

Adopted: December 2011

Revised: DATE; February 2012; June 2012; November 2012, July 2014

Cross Reference: Policy No. 2410; Policy No. 3114; K-12 Counseling Services Manual


Related Superintendent Procedure:

Previous Policies: D15.00

Legal References: RCW 28A.150.240(g) Basic Education Act of 1977

Management Resources:



 <p>SEATTLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS</p>	<p>HIGH SCHOOL GRADE &amp; CREDIT MARKING POLICY</p>	<p>Policy No. 2420</p> <p><del>July 2, 2014</del></p> <p><u>DATE</u></p> <p>Page 1 of 5</p>
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- b. Demonstrating proficiency/mastery of content standards as determined by the district; and/or
- c. Successfully completing an established number of hours of any planned alternative instructional activities as determined by the district.

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- (3)c. Courses taken in another district or online during the middle school grades, if the courses are on the Seattle Public Schools approved course list. For courses from another district to count for high school credit in SPS they must already be on a student's transcript when they transfer to SPS or the transferring student/family must provide a transcript and verification of existing policy allowing this credit in their previous district. Students wishing to receive high school credit for online courses taken during middle school must gain approval through the completion of an Equivalency Course of Study Form prior to enrolling in the course.

- C. Students who meet standard on state exams required for graduation may recover credit for previously failed courses in the following ways:
- a.—Math:
    - ~~i.—Class of 2012 and earlier may recover one-half (.5) credit in a 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade math course that was previously failed by meeting standard on the Math WASL/HSPE or one state EOC math test.~~
    - b.a. Class of 2013 and beyond, Students may recover one-half (.5) Algebra credit for a previously failed Algebra course by meeting standard on the Algebra EOC Exam, Algebra Makeup exam or Algebra Collection of Evidence. Students may recover one-half (.5) Geometry credit for a previously failed Geometry course by meeting standard on the Geometry EOC Exam, Geometry Makeup exam or Geometry Collection of Evidence.
    - e.—Science:
      - d.b. Class of 2013 and beyond, Students may recover one-half (.5) science credit for a previously failed 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade science course by meeting standard on the Science HSPE or may recover one-half (.5) credit in a previously failed Biology class by meeting standard on the Biology EOC Exam or Biology Collection of Evidence.
      - e.—Language Arts:
        - f.c. Class of 2012 and beyond, Students may recover one-half (.5) Language Arts credit for a previously failed 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> grade required Language Arts course by meeting standard on both the Reading and Writing HSPE or Reading and Writing Collection of Evidence.
        - g.d. Class of 2013 and beyond, Students—In all of the situations outlined above unique course codes will be created and will substitute for a course that was previously failed. Failed courses remain on transcript.

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The Superintendent or the Superintendent’s designee(s) shall maintain the *K-12 Counseling Services Manual* as the administrative procedures that further implement this Policy.

#### **Exemption Procedure**

~~The Superintendent is authorized to develop a procedure for schools to request and receive an exemption from the 150 hours of planned instructional activities per credit requirement, as necessary. The superintendent’s procedure will include the criteria by which the Superintendent, or his/her designee, will grant an exemption to this requirement.~~

Adopted: December 2011

Revised: DATE; February 2012; June 2012; November 2012, July 2014

Cross Reference: Policy No. 2410; Policy No. 3114; K-12 Counseling Services Manual

Related Superintendent Procedure:

Previous Policies: D15.00

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