

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTSEffective: February 8, 2024

I. Graduation Information

Each principal will inform all students and their parents at least annually of the following:

- A. Maryland's graduation requirements.
- B. The student's progress toward fulfilling the graduation requirements in:
 - 1. Course credits,
 - 2. Maryland Comprehensive Assessment Program (MCAP),
 - 3. Service Learning,
 - 4. Applicable Individualized Education Program (IEP) requirement for graduation.
- C. The results of each MCAP assessment taken by the student.
- D. A plan for appropriate assistance, if applicable.
- E. Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)'s schedule for MCAP assessment administration.

II. Enrollment**A. Course Load**

Students are expected to enroll in a full schedule of courses each year that they are in attendance, with the exception that students in their fourth year of attendance may take less than a full schedule in order to work or attend college, provided they have prior permission of the principal.

B. Alternatives to 4-Year Enrollment Requirement**1. Early College Admission Program**

A student may participate in an early college admission program if:

- a. The student is accepted for early admission to an accredited college before high school graduation;

- b. All MCAP and student service requirements have been met;
- c. A written request by the student and parent is made to and approved by the local Superintendent of Schools certifying the early admission acceptance;
- d. The student's program for the first year of college is approved by the local Superintendent of Schools if this program is included toward the issuance of a diploma; and
- e. At the conclusion of the program or after one year, a written request for a Maryland High School Diploma is submitted to the Superintendent together with a transcript or letter from the college to the high school principal indicating that the student has successfully completed a year of college work.

2. Early Admission to Approved Vocational, Technical, or Other Postsecondary School Program

A student may receive a diploma by meeting COMAR requirements of an early admission program to an approved vocational, technical, or other postsecondary school program if:

- a. The student is accepted for early admission by an approved vocational, technical, or postsecondary school program before high school graduation;
- b. All MCAP and student service requirements have been met;
- c. A written request by the student and parent is made to and approved by the local Superintendent of Schools certifying the early admission acceptance;
- d. The student's program for the first year of the postsecondary program is approved by the local Superintendent of Schools if this program is included toward the issuance of a diploma; and
- e. At the conclusion of a full year of study, a written request for a Maryland High School Diploma is submitted to the Superintendent together with a transcript or letter from the postsecondary school to the high school principal indicating that the student has successfully completed a year of postsecondary schoolwork.

3. Other

Beyond those procedures specifically listed in policy, these procedures, or the Catalog of Approved High School Courses, the principal will prescribe all

rules and regulations for students involved in any exception to the four-year high school attendance requirement. This is especially true with respect to the procedures by which a student may enter and leave the school building when the school is in session.

C. Early Graduation Option

1. Students have the option to graduate after three years of attendance provided all state assessment, credit, student service learning, and career preparation requirements have been met. A written request from the parent and student must be made to the principal.
2. It is recommended, but not required, that this request be made during the fourth marking period of the sophomore year. Approval must be given by the Superintendent/designee or principal. An approval process will be published in the Catalog of Approved High School Courses. High school students will be informed of this and other alternatives to the traditional high school graduation and attendance requirements as a normal part of the school counseling program.
3. Students who are graduating early are considered eleventh graders until the beginning of the fourth marking period when they will be moved to twelfth grade. Student eligibility for the State Merit Scholastic Awards is calculated in October and early graduates will not be considered.

D. A student who enters the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) in the twelfth grade will be granted a waiver from locally established graduation requirements unless the student chooses to fulfill the requirements.

E. Eligibility for Athletic and Extracurricular Activities

Senior students who have not waived the fourth year of attendance will be entitled to participate in athletic and extracurricular activities subject to Section II.B.3. above and Policy 9070 Academic Eligibility for High School Extracurricular Activities.

III. Alternative Sources of Credit

A. Credit for High School Courses Taken in Middle School

High school courses which are offered at the middle school level are eligible for high school credit:

1. The student's passed course will count toward the credits for graduation requirement.
2. The student's course grade will be recorded on the high school transcript.

3. The student's grade will not be calculated into the high school grade point average.

If a student re-takes one of the high-school courses taken in middle school for which credit was earned:

- a. The high school grade will be calculated into the GPA, and
- b. Only one credit will be awarded.

B. Credit for Courses Through Colleges or Other Institutions

1. One high school credit will be awarded for completion of each course offered through a college or other institution, provided the course is substantially equivalent to a course in the Catalog of Approved High School Courses. Students will seek approval from the principal/designee prior to taking the course and provide a course syllabus. Providing a course syllabus is not required from Howard Community College. The principal/designee will make final decisions as to credits awarded after consultation with appropriate curriculum staff.
2. Credit toward high school graduation will be given for courses offered by accredited colleges that: (1) meet the local school system policies and procedures; (2) have prior approval of principal/designee; (3) are aligned with the Maryland College and Career Ready Standards or an elective credit for graduation requirements; and (4) prepare students to earn an industry-recognized credential or college credits.
3. In addition, students who wish to pursue a course that is not offered at their high school or that does not appear in the Catalog of Approved High School Courses may do so by enrolling in an approved course at a 2- or 4-year college or online institution provided prior approval is obtained from the high school principal/designee. One high school credit in the specific language will be awarded for each college course successfully completed.
4. The credits awarded toward high school graduation will be recorded as transfer credits on the transcript in accordance with Policy 8020 Grading and Reporting: Middle and High School.
5. Students who are awarded credits in courses which are part of the MCAP must still meet applicable MCAP requirements for those courses.

C. Home Instruction

While enrolled in Home Instruction, students do not receive grades, credits, or a public school diploma. If a student previously in Home Instruction enrolls in HCPSS, the school will assess the student in accordance with COMAR 13A.10.01.05 (Placement in Public School) to determine appropriate instruction

and if any credits are to be awarded for the time in Home Instruction. Students requesting high school credits who did not attend an MSDE approved nonpublic school, must provide a portfolio documenting mastery of content to be evaluated by appropriate curriculum staff to determine if credit is awarded. Refer to Policy 8020 for grading of Home Instruction credits.

D. Credit by Exam

Courses for which credit by examination is available will be brought to the Board for approval. Courses for which credit by examination is approved will be designated in the Catalog of Approved High School Courses.

IV. Assistance for Graduation

Appropriate Assistance Programs To Assist Students In Meeting Graduation Requirements

A. Assistance programs may include:

1. Specifically designed programs offered by the school system as part of the school day during the regular school year.
2. Specifically designed programs offered by the school system as an after school program.
3. Summer school courses.
4. Other programs offered outside of the school system, provided the programs have prior approval by the principal/designee.

B. Cost

1. Tuition may be charged for original-credit programs offered outside the school day or beyond the school year.
2. In the event that this causes undue hardship, the Superintendent/designee may grant a waiver of tuition associated with any option offered by the school system.

V. Student Service Requirements

- A. The Maryland State Board of Education stipulates that all students in Maryland public schools must complete student service requirements in order to earn a high school diploma. Most HCPSS students or Maryland public school transfer students complete the service requirement at the middle school level. Those students who have not completed the requirement prior to entering high school, or who transfer into HCPSS from out-of-state or nonpublic schools, will be required to complete the following service learning:

Grade Level of First Enrollment into HCPSS Between Grades 6-12	Maximum Number of Hours Required
6 th , 7 th , or 8 th grade	75 Hours
9 th grade	75 Hours
10 th grade	50 Hours
11 th grade (first semester)	40 Hours
11 th grade (second semester)	30 Hours
12 th grade (first semester)	15 Hours
12 th grade (second semester)	10 Hours

- B. Students should see their school counselor for more information on how to fulfill these requirements.

VI. Monitoring

Policy 8030 implementation procedures will be overseen by the Division of Academics.

VII. History¹

ADOPTED: October 26, 1989
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¹ Key: ***Adopted***-Original date the Board took action to approve a policy; ***Reviewed***-The date the status of a policy was assessed by the Superintendent's Standing Policy Group; ***Modified***-The date the Board took action to alter a policy that based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee did not require a comprehensive examination; ***Revised***-The date the Board took action on a that policy based on the recommendation of the Superintendent/designee needed a comprehensive examination; ***Effective***-The date a policy is implemented throughout the HCPSS, typically July 1 following Board action.