**Update on Ohio’s New High School   
Graduation Requirements**

Ohio House Bill 487 recently established new requirements for earning a high school diploma in Ohio. Thank you for your patience as we waited for the new graduation law to come out of the Ohio General Assembly. Here is a summary:

* The new graduation requirements take effect with the class of 2018—students who are entering ninth grade for the first time in the 2014-2015 school year.
* Students in the classes of 2015, 2016 and 2017 and those who are repeating ninth grade this school year will continue to operate under Ohio’s current graduation requirements, including taking the Ohio Graduation Tests in the spring of their 10th-grade years.

**Required courses**

The new requirements did not change the current courses or number of course credits that students must complete to be eligible for graduation. View that information [here](http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Testing/News/New-High-School-Graduation-Requirements/GradReq_2018.pdf.aspx).

**Assessments**

In addition to course credits, students must earn points toward graduation on seven end-of-course exams. These exams will replace the Ohio Graduation Tests.

The courses in which students take an end-of-course exam will be: English I and II, algebra I, geometry, integrated math I and II, physical science, American history and American government. Districts have the option to use the state end-of-course exams to replace their current course final exams and use the state’s test as part of the class grade. This will help avoid double testing in future years.

Students can earn from 1-5 points for each exam, based on their performance.

5 – Advanced

4 – Accelerated

3 – Proficient

2 – Basic

1 – Limited

Students who take physical science, American history or American government as part of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate or college dual credit programs can use their scores from the programs’ end-of-course exams in place of the state end-of-course exam scores to accumulate graduation points.

A student who earned high school credit in any of the above courses before July 1, 2014, automatically will receive a score of three points per course exam toward the total points needed for graduation. Middle school students this year who take one of these courses for high school credit must take the corresponding state end-of-course exam in this school year.

**Graduation points**

The State Board of Education has not yet approved the minimum number of points a student must accumulate to become eligible for a high school diploma. However, the Board’s Graduation Requirements Committee will propose 18 points as the minimum for graduation eligibility. Of those points, students must earn a minimum of four total points across the English end-of-course exams, four total points across the math exams, and six total points across the science and social studies exams.

**More flexibility for students and families**

Students who do not earn the required number of graduation points can still meet the requirements for a diploma if they earn a remediation-free score on a national college admission test.

Students also can qualify for graduation by earning an approved industry-recognized credential *and* achieving a workforce-readiness score on a related job skills assessment. The selection of those assessments is in progress.

**American History and Government**

In 2013, Ohio implemented interim end-of-course exams in American history and government to align with state standards that incorporate the teaching of historic documents. Those tests will be replaced in the spring of 2015 with new end-of-course exams. However, students who are on block schedules or are taking semester-length classes may take the existing interim exams this fall. Next fall, such students would take the new end-of-course exams in American history and American government.

Please note that students who are still subject to passing the OGT must take those exams in addition to the end-of-course tests in American history and government.

**What’s next?**

Although House Bill 487 established clear-cut requirements for high school graduation, we still have to work out some of the details for implementing them. Here are tasks the Ohio Department of Education still must complete and when we expect to finish them.

1. **Finalize a graduation and end-of-course exam point system**

The State Board of Education must finalize the point system after getting public input.

At its most recent meeting, the State Board’s graduation requirements committee recommended 18 total points as the minimum for graduation eligibility. In September, the State Board will consider the committee’s recommendations and seek public input.

1. **Integrate “substitute” exams into the point system**

The law says that students taking physical science, American history or American government through Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate or college dual credit programs may apply points from these exams toward graduation in place of the state’s end-of-course exams. The State Board will determine how this will work. To accurately calibrate these more rigorous exams to the state end-of-course exams, we will need some time to compare their rigor to our new state tests.

1. **Select job skills and college admission tests and their passing scores**

This will be completed over the next year.

1. **Determine how these new graduation requirements will apply to students in dropout prevention and recovery programs.**

The Ohio Department of Education will be working with stakeholders on this with the hopes of completing the task this winter.

The department will notify you via *EdConnection* as we finalize the items of business that still remain. Click [here](http://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Testing/News/New-High-School-Graduation-Requirements/GradReq_2018.pdf.aspx) for a tool outlining Ohio’s new high school diploma requirements that is suitable for sharing with students and families.

If you have any questions on the new graduation requirements, please email [gradrequirements@education.ohio.gov](mailto:gradrequirements@education.ohio.gov).