



Kentucky Department of  
**E D U C A T I O N**

Kentucky Minimum High School Graduation Requirements  
Frequently Asked Questions

**2024-2025**

## Kentucky Minimum High School Graduation Requirements

[704 KAR 3:305](#) establishes the minimum requirements necessary for entitlement to a Kentucky public high school diploma.

This document provides support in understanding the minimum high school graduation requirements as outlined in 704 KAR 3:305.

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## List of Acronyms

AA-AAAS	Alternate Assessment Aligned with Alternate Academic Achievement Standards
AP	Advanced Placement
ARC	Admissions and Release Committee
ASL	American Sign Language
CAI	Cambridge Advanced International
CPE	Council on Postsecondary Education
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation
CTE	Career and Technical Education
EGP	Early Graduation Program
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act
IB	International Baccalaureate
IC	Infinite Campus
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individual Education Program
ILP	Individual Learning Plan
ILPA	Individual Learning Plan Addendum
JROTC	Junior Reserves Officers' Training Corps
KAS	<i>Kentucky Academic Standards</i>
KBE	Kentucky Board of Education
KDE	Kentucky Department of Education
MCF	<i>Model Curriculum Framework</i>
MTSS	Multi-tiered System of Supports
PBC	Performance-Based Credit
PE	Physical Education
SBDM	School-Based Decision Making Council
VPA	Visual and Performing Arts

## Associated Statutes and Regulations

### Kentucky Revised Statutes (KRS)

<a href="#"><u>KRS 156.160</u></a>	Promulgation of administrative regulations by the KBE
<a href="#"><u>KRS 156.395</u></a>	Definition of instructional materials
<a href="#"><u>KRS 156.027</u></a>	Preferential procurement – materials in alternative formats for students with disabilities
<a href="#"><u>KRS 158.005</u></a>	Character education – definition
<a href="#"><u>KRS 158.100</u></a>	Programs required of school districts – additional programs permitted – virtual high school
<a href="#"><u>KRS 158.140</u></a>	Admission to high school, promotion, classification, diploma – alternative diploma
<a href="#"><u>KRS 158.141</u></a>	Passing grade on civics test required for high school graduation
<a href="#"><u>KRS 158.1411</u></a>	Financial literacy requirements
<a href="#"><u>KRS 158.1413</u></a>	Essential workplace ethics instruction program – required characteristics
<a href="#"><u>KRS 158.1415</u></a>	Curriculum for instruction on human sexuality – written consent of parents – notification
<a href="#"><u>KRS 158.142</u></a>	Early high school graduation program requirements – certificate – scholarship
<a href="#"><u>KRS 158.196</u></a>	Instructional materials standards and concepts – documents and speeches to be included
<a href="#"><u>KRS 158.197</u></a>	Elective courses on religious scripture
<a href="#"><u>KRS 158.281</u></a>	Individualized education program – definitions
<a href="#"><u>KRS 158.302</u></a>	Cardiopulmonary resuscitation training required for high school students
<a href="#"><u>KRS 158.622</u></a>	Advanced placement course – dual credit programs, credit for virtual high schools
<a href="#"><u>KRS 158.645</u></a>	Capacities required of students in public education system
<a href="#"><u>KRS 158.6451</u></a>	Goals for Commonwealth’s schools – Model curriculum framework
<a href="#"><u>KRS 158.6459</u></a>	Intervention strategies for accelerated learning – Individualized learning plan
<a href="#"><u>KRS 160.345</u></a>	School-based decision making – composition – responsibilities
<a href="#"><u>KRS 164.002</u></a>	Definitions related to advanced course options
<a href="#"><u>KRS 164.4785</u></a>	American sign language to qualify for foreign language credit

### Kentucky Administrative Regulations (KAR)

<a href="#"><u>13 KAR 2:020</u></a>	Guidelines for admission to state-supported postsecondary education institutions
<a href="#"><u>701 KAR 5:100</u></a>	School-based decision making guidelines
<a href="#"><u>704 KAR Ch 8</u></a>	Kentucky Academic Standards
<a href="#"><u>704 KAR 3:303</u></a>	Required academic standards
<a href="#"><u>704 KAR 3:305</u></a>	Minimum requirements for high school graduation
<a href="#"><u>704 KAR 3:455</u></a>	Instructional resource – definition
<a href="#"><u>704 KAR 3:535</u></a>	Full-time enrolled online, virtual and remote learning programs
<a href="#"><u>704 KAR 7:140</u></a>	Authentic high school diploma to an honorable discharged veteran
<a href="#"><u>704 KAR 19:002</u></a>	Alternative education programs
<a href="#"><u>707 KAR 1:002</u></a>	Definitions – special education
<a href="#"><u>707 KAR 1:320</u></a>	Individual education program

# Helpful Links and Resources

[Accountability](#)

[Advanced Coursework](#)

[Career and Technical Education](#)

[Course Standards Documents](#)

[Considerations for Implementing HB 535 \(2024\) Civic Literacy Requirement](#)

[Data Standard Student Enrollment](#)

[Digital Learning Guidelines](#)

[Early Graduation Program](#)

[High School Mathematics Matrix Standards by Course for 2019-2020 and Beyond](#)

[Individual Learning Plan](#)

[Kentucky Academic Standards \(KAS\)](#)

[Minimum High School Graduation Requirements Freshmen Classes 2018-2019 through 2020-2021 and Thereafter](#)

[Multi-Tiered System of Supports](#)

[Model Curriculum Framework \(MCF\)](#)

[Performance-Based Credit](#)

[Postsecondary Readiness](#)

[Promoting Equitable Access to Advanced Coursework in Middle School Guidance for District and School Leaders](#)

[Searchable State Course Code Database](#)

[Student Information System – Alternative Education Programs and ILPA](#)

[Utilizing Interdisciplinary Courses in Compliance with Highly Qualified Teacher Policies](#)

[Virtual and Performance-Based Course Set-Up and Attendance Verification](#)

## Section 1: Definitions

**"Continuity of services plan"** means a plan that outlines the ways in which a student will receive access to essential services that will end if the student graduates early. See Section 11 for additional information.

**"Early Graduation Certificate"** means a certificate, awarded by the district and signed by the principal and superintendent, that shall qualify the recipient to be awarded a high school diploma and a scholarship award equal to one-half (1/2) of the state portion of the average statewide per pupil guaranteed base funding level, to be used at a Kentucky public two (2) year community and technical college or a Kentucky four (4) year public or non-profit independent institution accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. See Section 5 for additional information.

**"Early Graduation Program" or "EGP"** means an optional, criteria-based program in which a student may receive a diploma from the school district, an Early Graduation Certificate, and a scholarship award upon successful completion of all program requirements provided in Section 5 of this administrative regulation in three (3) academic years or less. See Section 5 for additional information.

**"Graduate early"** means a student is awarded a diploma from the district, in under four (4) academic years from the start of grade 9, based upon meeting the minimum credit requirements of this administrative regulation and additional requirements as may be imposed by a local board of education. See Section 5 for additional information.

**"Individual Learning Plan" or "ILP"** is defined under 704 KAR 19:002, Section 1(6) and means a "comprehensive framework for advising students in grades 6 through 12 to engage in coursework and activities that will best prepare them to both realize college and career success and become contributing members of their communities." See Section 2 for additional information.

## Section 2: Individual Learning Plans

### **Q: What is an ILP?**

A: The ILP is a student-directed, multi-year, comprehensive framework that maps academic plans, personal/social growth and career development activities while considering the student's unique, self-defined interests, needs and goals for postsecondary success.

The development of an ILP is required for ALL students beginning in grade 6 and can be thought of as both an instrument and a process to engage students in planning, while simultaneously deepening their understanding of the relevance of course selections and learning opportunities (in and out of school) in attaining postsecondary education/training and long-term career and life goals.

The ILP process promotes relevant communication between students, school staff, and families, and supports school and district improvement efforts in being responsive to students' interests and needs.

The ILP shall not be a substitute for the statement of transition service needs for students with disabilities as provided in 707 KAR 1:320.

### **Q. When must the student's ILP be established?**

A. Section 2(6) provides that the "development of the ILP for each student shall be established **within the first ninety (90) days of the sixth grade year** and shall be focused on career exploration and related postsecondary education and training needs."

Regulation requires that middle schools and high schools work cooperatively to ensure that each student and parent receives information and advising regarding the relationship between education and career opportunities.

### **Q: What are the minimum requirements for the ILP?**

A: All students in grades 6-12 are required to participate in their district's ILP program in order to meet the district's requirements. All districts must minimally meet the requirements indicated in the ILP self-implementation rubric. As a reminder, the rubric contains the minimum requirements for helping students reach their post-secondary plans.

### **Q. How often must the ILP be reviewed?**

A. Per Section 2(4), "[a] school shall maintain each student's ILP. The ILP shall be readily available to the student and parent and reviewed at least annually by the student, parents and school officials."

### **Q: Are schools required to implement an ILP for students in an alternative setting like alternative programs, home hospital, etc.?**

A: Yes. Both the ILP and ILPA must be established and implemented for all students in alternative settings. The ILP is required for all students. Section 2(6) requires the development of an individual learning plan for **each student** within the first 90 days of the sixth grade year.

The KDE's Student Information System-Alternative Education Programs and ILPA webpage provides resources for developing the ILPA for students in alternative education programs.



## Section 3: Minimum Requirements for High School Graduation

(Applies *only* to students entering grade 9 on or before the first day of the 2018-2019 academic year)

**Q: What are the minimum high school graduation requirements for students who entered high school on or before the first day of the 2018-19 school year?**

A: See the *Minimum High School Graduation Requirements Freshmen Classes 2018-2019 through 2020-2021 and Thereafter* chart.

**Q. What are the age requirements for high school?**

A. Per KRS 158.100(1), “[e]ach school district shall provide an approved preschool school program through twelve (12) grade school service... An approved high school service for all children of high school grade under twenty-one (21) years of age residing in the district shall be provided...”

**Q: Are the 2018-2019 requirements still relevant now that the new requirements have been implemented?**

A: Yes. Per KRS 158.100, schools and districts are required to provide services for all students in high school under 21 years of age.

## Section 4: Minimum Requirements for High School Graduation

(Applies to *a//*students entering high school in 2019-2020 and thereafter)

### **Q: What are the current graduation requirements?**

A: The Kentucky minimum high school graduation requirements are provided under 704 KAR 3:305. Requirements are outlined in the Kentucky Minimum Graduation Requirements for Students Entering High School in 2019-2020 and Thereafter chart.

### **Q: What are the foundational and personalized credits required of students?**

A: In order to receive a high school diploma, each student in a public school must earn a minimum of at least 22 credits for high school graduation.

Section 4(4) requires each student to complete the following 10 foundational credits:

- English/language arts - two (2) credits (English I and II) to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area
- Social studies - two (2) credits to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area
- Mathematics - two (2) credits (Algebra I and Geometry) to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area
- Science - two (2) credits that shall incorporate lab-based scientific investigation experiences and include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area
- Health - one-half (1/2) credit to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area
- Physical education - one-half (1/2) credit to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area
- Visual and performing arts - one (1) credit to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area or a standards-based specialized arts course based on the student's individual learning plan

In addition to the foundational credits, Section 4(5) requires each student to also earn the following 12 personalized credits:

- Two (2) additional English/Language Arts credits that include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area and are aligned to the student's individual learning plan
- Two (2) additional mathematics credits that include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area and are aligned to the student's individual learning plan
- One (1) additional science credit that includes the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area and is aligned to the student's individual learning plan
- One (1) additional social studies credit that includes the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area and is aligned to the student's individual learning plan
- Academic and career interest standards-based learning experiences - six (6) credits including four (4) standards-based learning experiences based on the student's individual learning plan

In addition to the foundational and personalize credits required for high school graduation, students must also meet the following:

- Demonstrate performance-based competency in technology as approved by the Kentucky Department of Education
- Pass a civics test as required by KRS 158.141
- Beginning with students entering grade 9 on or after the first day of the 2020-2021 academic year,

successfully complete one (1) or more courses or programs that meet the financial literacy requirements pursuant to KRS 158.1411 and standards as established in 704 KAR Chapter 8

More can be found on the *Minimum Graduation Requirements for Students Entering High School in 2019-2020 and Thereafter* chart.

**Q: Can a school district require a minimum score on a state test to meet graduation requirements?**

A: 704 KAR 3:305, Section 8(2) states that “[a] local board shall not adopt any high school graduation requirements that include achieving a minimum score on a statewide assessment as established in KRS 158.140.” KRS 158.140(6) also provides that “any high school graduation requirements adopted by a local board shall not include achieving a minimum score on a statewide assessment administered under KRS 158.6453.”

In terms of the ACT specifically, the ACT examination is considered a “statewide assessment administered under KRS 158.6453.” Per KRS 158.6453(5)(b), the state student assessments shall include “a college admissions examination to assess English, reading, mathematics, and science in the spring of grade eleven.”

However, pursuant to 704 KAR 3:305, Section 8(2) and 158.140(6), a district cannot adopt any high school graduation requirement that includes achieving a minimum score on a statewide assessment (including the ACT examination).

**Q: What support must schools provide to students who do not meet the college admissions examination benchmarks for English, reading and/or mathematics?**

A: Per KRS 158.6459, if a high school student’s highest score on the college admissions examination is below the systemwide standards established by the CPE for entry into a credit-bearing course at a public postsecondary institution, the student shall be provided the opportunity to participate in accelerated learning designed to address the identified academic deficiencies prior to high school graduation.

A high school, in collaboration with its local district, must develop and implement accelerated learning that provides supplementary support for students. Districts and schools have the autonomy to develop and implement a transitional course or intervention to address remediation needs.

**Q: Can schools offer online or virtual courses that meet minimum graduation requirements?**

A: Yes. A high school student’s enrollment should be captured in IC via the course setup. Students taking courses online should be enrolled with a state course code that corresponds to the content of the online course they are taking (for example, Algebra 1 should be coded 270304 Algebra 1).

Per the “Digital Learning Guidelines,” courses provided by digital learning providers must meet the KAS aligned to the specific course. Any standards not covered by the digital learning provider should be supplemented by an on-site classroom teacher.

704 KAR 3:535 provides the regulatory requirements for full-time, enrolled online, virtual and remote learning programs. See the Virtual and Performance-Based Course Set-Up and Attendance Verification and Virtual and Attendance-based Course Set-Up for more information.

**Q: Can a CTE teacher teach a mathematics, science or social studies course?**

A: CTE teachers may teach a mathematics, science or social studies course if they hold a current certification within the academic area or are team-teaching the course with a certified content teacher

(certifications for courses can be checked in the Searchable State Course Code Database). This is considered an interdisciplinary course. Students may get credit for both the content area and CTE pathway in this scenario.

Interdisciplinary career and technical/core academic courses require that a teacher certified in the content area and a CTE teacher certified in the respective career and technical area work together in planning, teaching and evaluating student learning to ensure all aspects of the *KAS* for the specific academic course is addressed. The Utilizing Interdisciplinary Courses in Compliance with Highly Qualified Teacher Policies document can be accessed for additional information.

**Q: Can a CTE course also count as a credit toward another graduation requirement?**

A: Yes. Any high school course outside of the required foundational courses listed under Section 4(4) can be used as a personalized third or fourth-year course **provided that the remaining required *KAS* addressed in their entirety during the third-year course, the fourth-year course or through the combination of the third/fourth-year courses.**

For example, a CTE mathematics course, outside of algebra 1 and geometry, can be used as a personalized credit provided that the remaining *KAS for Mathematics* are addressed in their entirety in the third year course, fourth year course, or through the combination of third/fourth year courses.

In this example, the course may be taught by either a math-certified teacher or the appropriate program area CTE teacher. **However, for the courses to count as a math credit, when taught by the CTE teacher as the teacher of record (which is considered interdisciplinary), it is required that the math certified teacher and CTE certified teacher work together in planning, teaching, and evaluating student learning to ensure that all aspects of the *KAS for Mathematics* are addressed.**

**Q: How do we know what standards should be covered in a required course?**

A: Course standards documents are available for all required courses on the Course Standards Document webpage provided on [kystandards.org](http://kystandards.org). All courses must be aligned to the *KAS*.

**Q: Are there documents available detailing the standards that must be met for different personalized course options?**

A: Yes. Documents are available on the Course Standards Document webpage provided on [kystandards.org](http://kystandards.org) that detail the *KAS* required through a combination of foundational and personalized course options for different content areas.

**Q: Where can I find a list of certifications that allow a teacher to teach a certain course?**

A: The certifications that allow a teacher to teach a certain course can be found in the details box for each course listed in the Searchable State Course Database.

**Q: Can districts have graduation requirements above and beyond the minimum graduation requirements provided under 704 KAR 3:305?**

A: Yes. While the state sets minimum graduation requirements, districts may include additional local requirements over and above the minimum high school graduation requirements provided in 704 KAR 3:305.

**Q: Do private schools need to follow the state's minimum graduation requirements?**

A: No. However, students wishing to be admitted to a public postsecondary institution in Kentucky are still required to meet the same pre-college standards as public-school students. Therefore, students must be

afforded the opportunity to complete the required pre-college curriculum as established under 13 KAR 2:020.

**Q: The minimum graduation requirements state that students must demonstrate performance-based competency in technology. What are those requirements?**

A: A district may create its own competency requirements based on the alignment to the *KAS for Technology*.

**Q: If a student takes a high school course in middle school, must it be accepted towards graduation?**

A: Yes. According to KRS 158.622(3)(b), "Each school district shall:

Accept for credit toward graduation and completion of high school course requirements an advanced placement, a high school equivalent, or a Kentucky Virtual High School course taken by a student in grades 5, 6, 7 or 8 if that student attains performance levels expected of high school students in that district as determined by achieving a score of "3" or higher on a College Board AP examination or a grade of "B" or better in a high school equivalent or a Kentucky Virtual High School course."

## Career Studies and Financial Literacy

### **Q: Does Kentucky have standards for Career Studies?**

A: Yes, the *KAS for Career Studies* outline the minimum content standards Kentucky students should learn within each grade-band. The standards address what is to be learned but do not direct how learning experiences are to be designed or what resources should be used.

### **Q: How can students meet the requirement for financial literacy?**

A: Schools may choose to offer different options, depending on a student's ILP.

- Students choosing a Business or Family and Consumer Science pathway may take a course such as:
  - Money Skills – 201010
  - Personal Finance – 060170
- Students may take one of the following courses as a math credit:
  - Money Skills for Mathematics – 201011
  - Personal Finance (Mathematics Credit) – 080719
- Districts may partner with postsecondary institutions to offer a dual credit or articulated credit course
- Schools may develop a program, or combination of course offerings in a variety of instructional formats (e.g., modules, online learning)
- Schools also may choose to implement the standards systematically by section through academic advising or enrichment sessions
- Resources to support financial literacy can be found within the *KAS for Career Studies* in addition to the Financial Literacy Resources provided on the KDE website.

## English

**Q: Are students required to take one English/Language Arts (ELA) credit per each year of high school?**

A: 704 KAR 3:305, Section 4 requires four English credits. However, students are not required to take one English credit per each year of high school unless it is required in local policy.

Beginning with students who enter grade 9 on or after the first day of the 2019-2020 academic year, in order to receive a high school diploma, each student in a public school shall earn a total of at least twenty-two (22) credits for high school graduation, four of which must be in ELA:

- Two (2) credits (English I and 2) to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area.
- Two (2) additional ELA credits that include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area and are aligned to the student's individual learning plan.

**Prior to the 2019-2020 school year, students were required to take an ELA course each year of high school. For students who entered grade 9 on or after the first day of the 2019-2020 academic year, students are required to earn a total of four ELA credits. There is no longer a requirement for ELA to be taken each year of high school so long as the student earns all four ELA credits.**

**Q. Can an Advanced Placement (AP) English course be substituted for a required foundational English course?**

A. Yes. Per 704 KAR 3:305, Section 6 (1), “[a] local board of education may substitute an integrated, applied, interdisciplinary, occupational, technical, or higher level course for a required course if the alternative course provides rigorous content.”

**Q: Can students receive one of their required ELA credits by taking a transitional course?**

A: No. Per KRS 158.6459, if a high school student’s highest score on the college admissions examination is below the systemwide standards established by the CPE for entry into a credit-bearing course at a public postsecondary institution, the student shall be provided the opportunity to participate in accelerated learning designed to address the identified academic deficiencies prior to high school graduation. A high school, in collaboration with its local district, must develop and implement accelerated learning that provides supplementary support for students.

Districts and schools have the autonomy to develop and implement a transitional course or intervention to address remediation needs. The English or reading transitional course may be embedded into an English course or courses. However, a transitional course in English or reading **does not satisfy as an English credit for graduation**. It is important to remember that this transitional intervention should be measured and monitored to address the student’s needs around college readiness in reading and likewise in English.

## Mathematics

### **Q: Are students required to take one math credit per each year of high school?**

A: 704 KAR 3:305, Section 4 requires four math credits. However, students are not required to take one math credit per each year of high school unless it is required in local policy.

Beginning with students who enter grade 9 on or after the first day of the 2019-2020 academic year, in order to receive a high school diploma, each student in a public school shall earn a total of at least twenty-two (22) credits for high school graduation, four of which must be in mathematics:

- Two (2) credits (Algebra I and Geometry) to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area.
- Two (2) additional mathematics credits that include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area and are aligned to the student's individual learning plan.

**Prior to the 2019-2020 school year, students were required to take math courses each year of high school. For students who entered grade 9 on or after the first day of the 2019-2020 academic year, students are required to earn a total of four math credits. There is no longer a requirement for math to be taken each year of high school so long as the student earns all four math credits.**

### **Q: Algebra 2 is no longer a course specifically listed under the requirements for high school graduation. Do the standards still need to be taught?**

A: Although a course entitled Algebra 2 is no longer a specific requirement, there are additional standards not aligned to the math foundational courses, Algebra 1 and Geometry, that are still required for all students. These remaining required standards must be taught during the third course, the fourth course or through a combination of third/fourth courses.

For guidance regarding the required *KAS for Mathematics*, consult the *High School Mathematics Matrix Standards by Course for 2019-2020 and Beyond* document. This document illustrates the standards covered in Algebra 1 and Geometry and the remaining standards that need to be taught in the third and/or fourth courses.

### **Q: Can any mathematics course be used as a third and fourth year-personalized mathematics course?**

A: Any high school mathematics course outside of the two foundational courses (Algebra 1 and Geometry), can be used as a personalized third or fourth-year credit provided that the remaining required *KAS for Mathematics* are completely addressed during the third-year course, the fourth-year course or through the combination of the third/fourth-year courses. Keep in mind that how schools/districts cover those remaining required standards is a local decision.

For guidance regarding the specific *KAS for Mathematics* that need to be addressed, refer to the *High School Mathematics Matrix Standards by Course for 2019-2020 and Beyond*.

### **Q: Does a financial literacy course satisfy the third or fourth-year mathematics credit requirement?**

A: Any mathematics course outside of the two foundational courses (Algebra 1 and Geometry), can be used as a personalized third or fourth-year course provided that the remaining required *KAS for Mathematics* are completely addressed during the third-year course, the fourth-year course or through the combination of the third/fourth-year courses. For guidance regarding the specific *KAS for Mathematics* that need to be addressed, see the *High School Mathematics Matrix Standards by Course for 2019-2020 and Beyond* document.



**Q: Can students receive one of their required math credits by taking a transitional course?**

A: No. Per KRS 158.6459, if a high school student's highest score on the college admissions examination is below the systemwide standards established by the CPE for entry into a credit-bearing course at a public postsecondary institution, the student shall be provided the opportunity to participate in accelerated learning designed to address the identified academic deficiencies prior to high school graduation. A high school, in collaboration with its local district, must develop and implement accelerated learning that provides supplementary support for students.

Districts and schools have the autonomy to develop and implement a transitional course or intervention to address remediation needs. The math transitional course may be embedded into a math course or courses. However, a transitional course in math **does not satisfy as a math credit for graduation**. It is important to remember that this transitional intervention should be measured and monitored to address the student's needs around college readiness in relation to mathematics.

**Q: If a student takes a high school course in middle school, must it be accepted towards graduation?**

A: Yes. Should a middle school student meet the provisions set forth in KRS 158.622(3)(b) (provided below), the district must accept the course as credit toward high school graduation.

KRS 158.622(3)(b) requires school districts to "[a]ccept for credit toward graduation and completion of high school course requirements an advanced placement, a high school equivalent, or a Kentucky Virtual High School course taken by a student in grades 5, 6, 7 or 8 if that student attains performance levels expected of high school students in that district as determined by achieving a score of "3" or higher on a College Board AP examination or a grade of "B" or better in a high school equivalent or a Kentucky Virtual High School course."

A high school course code is utilized to grant high school credit to middle school students who have met these requirements by achieving a score of "3" or higher on a College Board AP examination or a grade of "B" or better in a high school equivalent or a Kentucky Virtual High School course.

**Q. If a student receives credit for a high school math course while still in middle school, is the student still required to receive four math credits once in high school?**

A. No. If a student received a "B" or better in a high school equivalent math course (as required under KRS 158.622) while still in middle school, the student must earn only three more credits to meet the minimum math requirements for high school graduation provided under 704 KAR 3:305, Section 4.

**Q: Can Algebra 1 or Geometry be substituted with a different course?**

A: Algebra 1 and Geometry may be substituted; however, the substituted course(s) must cover the *KAS for Mathematics* that have been identified as Algebra 1 and Geometry in the "High School Mathematics Standards by Course" document. The *KAS for Mathematics* outlines the minimum content Kentucky students should learn. These standards are not a set of instructional or assessment tasks, but rather statements of what students should be able to do after instruction. Decisions on how best to help students meet these program goals are left to local school districts and teachers.

The *KAS for Mathematics* does not dictate curriculum or teaching methods; learning opportunities and pathways will continue to vary across schools and school systems and educators should make every effort to meet the needs of individual students, based on their pedagogical and professional impressions and information.

## Science

### **Q: Which science courses meet minimum graduation requirements?**

A: 704 KAR 3:305, Section 4 requires three science credits.

Beginning with students who enter grade 9 on or after the first day of the 2019-2020 academic year, in order to receive a high school diploma, each student in a public school shall earn a total of at least twenty-two (22) credits for high school graduation, three of which must be in science:

- Two (2) credits that shall incorporate lab-based scientific investigation experiences and include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area.
- One (1) additional science credit that includes the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area and is aligned to the student's individual learning plan.

### **Q: The state assessment for accountability in science occurs in grade 11. How can we personalize a third credit in science while still ensuring students have had meaningful learning experiences aligned to the *KAS for Science*?**

A: Third year courses can be personalized to meet the needs of students based on their ILP. These personalized third year science courses must ensure that students have access to all remaining *KAS for Science* for this subject that are not associated with the identified foundational courses. These remaining *KAS for Science* should be embedded within the curriculum so all students are prepared for the state-required assessments.

### **Q: Is there a sequence that schools could offer that would provide access to all the *KAS for Science*?**

A: Yes, there are several offerings that provide access to all the *KAS for Science*:

- Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Earth/Space (note: this is a four-course offering)
- Biology, Introduction to Chemistry and Physics, and Earth/Space
- Biology with Earth/Space, Chemistry with Earth/Space and Physics with Earth/Space
- Integrated Science I, Integrated Science II and Integrated Science III
- Conceptual Science I, Conceptual Science II and Conceptual Science III.

While the first three offerings may be in any sequence, Integrated Science and Conceptual Science should be provided in the order given to ensure students have the proper background knowledge to be successful at the next level of the sequence. In addition, it is not recommended that schools offer an Integrated Science or Conceptual Science course with traditional science courses.

### **Q: Can a Forensic Science or Anatomy/Physiology course count as a third-year science course?**

A: Third year science courses can be personalized to meet the needs of students based on their ILP. These personalized third year science courses must ensure that students have access to all remaining *KAS for Science* for this subject that are not associated with the identified foundational courses. The remaining *KAS for Science* should be embedded within the curriculum so all students are prepared for the state-required assessments.

## Social Studies

### **Q: Which social studies courses meet minimum graduation requirements?**

A: 704 KAR 3:305, Section 4 requires three social studies credits.

Beginning with students who enter grade 9 on or after the first day of the 2019-2020 academic year, in order to receive a high school diploma, each student in a public school shall earn a total of at least twenty-two (22) credits for high school graduation, three of which must be in social studies:

- Two (2) credits to include the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area.
- One (1) additional social studies credit that includes the content contained in the Kentucky academic standards for this content area and is aligned to the student's individual learning plan.

### **Q: What must be included in the three credits required for social studies?**

A: Three credits for social studies are required for high school graduation. These credits must incorporate the inquiry practices of questioning, investigating, using evidence and communicating conclusions and the four social studies disciplines of civics, economics, geography and history and the standards therein.

Districts and schools can arrange the essential content within the three-credit requirement to best meet their needs. Course codes aligned to standards have been provided to meet a traditional approach as well as an integrated approach. Both the traditional approach and the integrated approach allow for students to cover all adopted *KAS* during the course sequence.

### **Q: The state assessment for accountability in social studies occurs in grade 11, which would be the third year of high school. How can we personalize a third credit in social studies while still ensuring students have had meaningful learning experiences aligned to the *KAS for Social Studies*?**

A: Third year courses can be personalized to meet the needs of students based on their ILPs. These personalized third year social studies courses must ensure that students have access to the *KAS* for this subject. The *KAS for Social Studies* should be embedded within the curriculum so all students are prepared for the state-required assessments.

### **Q: How should districts configure the credit bearing social studies course offerings?**

A: Districts and schools can arrange the essential high school social studies content within the three-credit requirement to best meet the needs of their students. A local board of education may substitute an integrated, applied, interdisciplinary or higher-level course for a required course if the alternative course provides rigorous content and addresses the same academic expectations.

### **Q. Have the civics test requirements changed?**

A. The current civics test requirements provided under KRS 158.141 will remain in place for the 2024-2025 school year. However, [House Bill 535 \(2024\)](#) amended KRS 158.141 to require, **beginning with students entering grade 9 in the 2025-2026 academic year**, a one-half credit course in civic literacy or a civics test for graduation. For additional information, access the Considerations for Implementing HB 535 Civic Literacy Requirement supplemental guidance document.

## Physical Education (PE)/Health Education

### **Q: Can JROTC count as the .5 credit requirement for PE?**

A: Yes. Per KRS 156.160, JROTC courses can count as a PE course.

### **Q: Must cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) be taught in PE or health education?**

A: Yes. KRS 158.302, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation Training Required for High School Students, establishes that every public high school shall provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation training to students as part of the health course or the PE course that is required for high school graduation or the JROTC course that meets the PE requirement. The training shall:

- (a) Be based on the American Heart Association's Guidelines for CPR and Emergency Cardiovascular Care or other nationally recognized, evidenced-based guidelines;
- (b) Incorporate psychomotor skills training to support cognitive learning; and
- (c) Make students aware of the purpose of an automated external defibrillator and its ease and safety of use. The training does not have to be provided by a certified instructor or result in students being certified in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.”

### **Q: Can JROTC count as the .5 health credit requirement?**

A: JROTC may only count as a health credit if all *KAS for Health Education* are addressed and the teacher holds the appropriate certification to teach a health education course.

### **Q: Can marching band count as the .5 PE credit requirement?**

A: Marching band only may be substituted for a required PE course if all standards found in the *KAS for Physical Education* are addressed and the teacher holds the appropriate certification to teach a physical education course.

### **Q: Can students who participate in sports have the option of counting that as their .5 PE credit requirement?**

A: Sports participation only may be substituted for a required PE course if all standards found in the *KAS for Physical Education* are addressed and the teacher holds the appropriate certification to teach a PE course.

## Technology

**Q: The minimum graduation requirements state that students must demonstrate performance-based competency in technology. What are those requirements?**

A: A district may create its own competency requirements based on the alignment to the *KAS for Technology*.

**Q: How do students demonstrate performance-based competency in technology?**

A: There are multiple ways this requirement can be satisfied through performance-based demonstrations by students. In order to award successful performance-based competencies, districts (and schools) must establish a policy for student demonstration in performance-based competency in technology. Performance-based competency in technology may be awarded for courses, credits or programs with the following characteristics:

- Technology standards-based student technology leadership program(s) (STLP), work-based learning experiences including internship, cooperative-learning experience, technology-related CTE pathway completion (including relevant certifications), technology-related apprenticeship, or other supervised learning experiences in the school and the community where learning with technology is demonstrated.
- Technology standards-based portfolios, a collection of shared student-created digital products that demonstrate performance-based competency in technology (transformative learning with technology), including 8th grade, senior year or capstone projects.
- Course work and/or structured content that leads to demonstration and performance of learning competencies in technology:
  - Technology standards-based online or other technology-mediated courses
  - Technology standards-based dual credit or other equivalency courses
  - Technology standards-based recognized certifications

**Q: Must a computer science course be offered to satisfy the technology requirement for graduation?**

A: No. Earning a computer science credit is not a minimum requirement for high school graduation.

**Q: What guidance is available for districts to establish a local policy for student demonstration in performance-based competency in technology?**

A: As highlighted in the *KAS for Technology*, in order to award successful, performance-based competencies, districts (and schools) must establish a policy for student demonstration in performance-based competency in technology that:

- Provides procedures for developing successful demonstrations of performance-based technology competency awards;
- Identifies successful performance descriptors and/or demonstrations of transformative learning with technology;
- Establishes evaluation and reporting procedures;
- Addresses content standards from the *KAS for Technology*;
- Identifies the extent (if at all) to which integration of performance-based competency in technology is embedded in other content area competency demonstrations;
- Allows students to demonstrate competency and earn credit for learning acquired outside of school or in prior learning experiences;
- Allows students to pursue work-based learning experiences through internships, externships, apprenticeships, cooperative learning experiences and other learning experiences in the school and community; and

- Allows for students meeting computer science standards to be considered successful in meeting the demonstration of performance-based competency in technology.

**Q: Are there technology standards that must be addressed in order for students to demonstrate performance-based competency in technology as required for graduation?**

A: Yes. The *KAS for Technology* provides a framework for integrating technology into all content areas and reflects the basic digital skills required for each student to be competitive in the global economy. The main concepts delivered through the *KAS for Technology* equip students to demonstrate digital competencies in becoming computational thinkers, creative communicators, digital citizens, empowered learners, global collaborators, innovative designers and knowledge constructors.

For students to attain the required technology competencies, instruction should provide opportunities for students to gain and demonstrate technology skills that build throughout their K-12 educational experiences.

**Q: If a computer science class is offered, does it have to count as an elective?**

A: Based on course standards, the teacher of record and district board decisions, a computer science course *can* qualify as an elective science course or as a third or fourth mathematics personalized course if the *KAS* for those content areas are met. Many computer science courses are also part of career pathways as well. If these classes are part of the pathway and not used as a personalized science or mathematics class, they would be considered electives.

## Virtual Courses

**Q: Are all virtual courses considered performance-based?**

A: No. Performance-based courses are often connected to a lack of Carnegie units (defined as at least 120 hours of instructional time in one subject) and defined as credits earned by a student outside of the traditional structure of a 120-hour instructional course. Virtual courses may or may not be offered in a traditional, 120-hour instructional course.

**Q: What guidance/support can KDE provide to districts on alternate ways technology can serve as curriculum/assist in content areas without certified teachers?**

A: KRS 156.395 defines instructional materials as tools that are used to facilitate student learning as defined in administrative regulation. 704 KAR 3:455 defines instructional resources as any print, non-print or electronic medium designed to assist student learning.

KRS 160.345(2)(g), as expressed in KDE guidance, establishes that each district's superintendent has the authority to select a school's curriculum, textbooks, instructional materials, and student support services after consultation with the SBDM council and the local board of education. Likewise, there must be a reasonable review and response period for stakeholders in accordance with the local board of education policy before the superintendent makes the final decision regarding curriculum, textbooks, instructional materials, and student support services. Additionally, KRS 160.345(2)(g) establishes that "the school council shall consult with the school media librarian on the maintenance of the school library media center, including the purchase of instructional materials, information technology, and equipment."

The local SBDM council and local board of education establish appropriate school and district policies governing online course enrollment, parameters, course credits, etc.

Each digital learning resource, online and blended learning course must meet or exceed and be aligned in scope and sequence to the approved KAS in 704 KAR 3:303 and 704 KAR 3:305 Chapter 8. The local school district assures that all students have access and opportunity to learn the standards contained in the KAS (General Assurance 40). When appropriate, these resources and courses align with Kentucky course descriptions and bear course code assignments established by 704 KAR 3:540.

Digital learning content may be obtained from a vendor, built by a highly qualified content teacher, or a combination of both. A content-appropriate certified teacher should review and endorse all digital learning resources, online and blended course content. Online or blended courses should be reviewed by a local review committee (content-specific certified teacher, administrative designee, district technology coordinator designee, and a curriculum/instructional coach if available) before enrolling students in the courses.

Currently, basal textbooks (print or digital) or individualized learning programs shall follow state guidelines of review and notification as established in KRS 156.395-476 and 704 KAR 3:455.

The local school district certifies that the textbook/instructional materials purchasing plans for all schools serving grades P-8 have been approved by the superintendent and the local board of education and are on file in the district office. The plans address the requirements as stated in KRS 156.439 and 704 KAR 3:455 (Textbook and Instructional Materials Assurance 1).

Online courses have components that provide access to the course content any time, any place and at the student's own pace. Online courses and digital learning content offer students personalized learning, as well as college- and career-prep courses in a variety of subjects to meet student needs regardless of physical location. From a structural and growth perspective, student learning experiences are personalized based on the following: student's diagnostic data, learning style and learning needs, which allow for student choice, voice and pace. Structures should be in place in each school where online courses and digital content are implemented to achieve such diagnostics and ensure learning progression. Additionally, credit may be given based on performance or seat time. Performance-based courses award academic credit when learning is successfully demonstrated regardless of the number of instructional hours. Additionally, the KBE has approved 704 KAR 3:535 to allow for students (K-12) who are enrolled full-time in a virtual school, program or academy to be counted "in-attendance" for purposes of recording daily attendance.

If an online course has been assigned to a highly qualified teacher, then a building level course steward may oversee the implementation of the course if provided within the school building. Teacher course stewards are trained in the delivery of online/blended learning, embedding the principles of the "Model Curriculum Framework." As detailed in the Kentucky Digital Learning Guidelines, students taking an online course or blended learning course have access to a highly qualified teacher or content mentor for two-way communication, collaboration, questions and/or tutoring.



## Visual and Performing Arts (VPA)

**Q: Does an art/music/theater/dance class count as the high school graduation requirement?**

A: A VPA course that includes the standards contained in the KAS for Visual and Performing Arts may count for the required VPA credit. A VPA course that shows continuity with the student's ILP and includes the standards contained in the KAs for a specialized art form also may count for the VPA credit.

**Q: Do students have to take a survey course of the visual and performing arts in order to graduate?**

A: No. Course code 500111 High School Survey Course of the visual and performing arts is one option for the visual and performing arts requirement. Students also may receive credit through the completion of a visual and performing arts course that aligns to the *KAS for Visual and Performing Arts* and is based on the student's ILP. A visual and/or performing arts course that shows continuity with the student's ILP and includes the standards contained in the KAS for a specialized art form also may count for the visual and performing arts credit or a specialized art form also may count for the visual and performing arts credit.

**Q: Can students receive visual and performing arts credit through another content area course such as social studies or world language?**

A: No. The minimum high school graduation requirements allow for a credit to be earned in the visual and performing arts through the completion of the survey course or a standards-based arts course that aligns to *the KAS for VPA* and is based on a student's ILP.

**Q: Can Introduction to Media Arts Course (code 480901) count for the Visual and Performing Arts requirement?**

A: A visual and/or performing arts course, aligned to the *KAS for VPA*, that shows continuity with the student's ILP may satisfy the visual and performing arts requirement for graduation.

## World Languages

**Q: Are world languages included in the minimum graduation requirements?**

A: No. World languages are not included as a minimum graduation requirement provided under 704 KAR 3:305. However, pre-college curriculum, as specified by the CPE, requires two credits of a world language or competency equivalent. World languages also may be included as part of a student's required personalized credits and local boards of education may include a world language requirement as part of local graduation requirements. Please refer to the *KAS for World Language* when designing programs.

**Q: Can American Sign Language (ASL) count as a world language credit?**

A: Yes. The state of Kentucky officially recognizes ASL as a world language per KRS 164.4785, and the KDE officially recognizes ASL credits as an elective in high school.

## Section 5: Early Graduation Program

Visit the [KDE's Early Graduation Program \(EGP\) webpage](#) and [FAQ](#), for more information, including the new requirements for the 2024-2025 academic year.

## Section 6: Substituting Courses

### **Q: Can a district substitute a course for a high school graduation requirement?**

A: Yes. Substitution of a course is possible, but rigor should not be sacrificed. Section 6 of 704 KAR 3:305 states:

- (1) A local board of education may substitute an integrated, applied, interdisciplinary, occupational, technical or higher-level course for a required course if the alternative course provides rigorous content.
- (2) For students with disabilities, a local board of education may substitute a functional, integrated, applied, interdisciplinary, occupational, technical or higher-level course for a required course if the alternative course provides rigorous content. These shall be based on grade-level content standards and may be modified to allow for a narrower breadth, depth or complexity of the general grade-level content standards.

All classes used for substitution also must be based on grade-level content standards. How students achieve or master those standards may be differentiated to personalize education for students with IEPs.

### **Q: Can English 1 or 2 be substituted with a different course?**

A: Beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, English 1 and 2 may be substituted; however, the substituted course(s) must cover the *KAS for Reading and Writing*, grade 9-10 standards, for reading literature, reading informational text, composition and language.

The *KAS for Reading and Writing* outlines the minimum content standards Kentucky students should learn in each grade-level English course; specifically, the standards establish what students should know and be able to do at the conclusion of a course. Thus, the standards address what is to be learned but do not address how learning experiences are to be designed or what resources should be used.

### **Q: Can Algebra 1 or Geometry be substituted with a different course?**

A: Algebra 1 and Geometry may be substituted; however, the substituted course(s) must cover the *KAS for Mathematics* that have been identified as Algebra 1 and Geometry in the “High School Mathematics Standards by Course” document. The *KAS for Mathematics* outlines the minimum content Kentucky students should learn. These standards are not a set of instructional or assessment tasks, but rather statements of what students should be able to do after instruction. Decisions on how best to help students meet these program goals are left to local school districts and teachers. The *KAS for Mathematics* does not dictate curriculum or teaching methods; learning opportunities and pathways will continue to vary across schools and school systems and educators should make every effort to meet the needs of individual students, based on their pedagogical and professional impressions and information.

## Section 7: Performance-Based Credit (PBC)

### **Q. What types of credit can be awarded toward high school graduation?**

A. Districts have flexibility in the type of credit awarded toward high school graduation. Per 704 KAR 3:305, Section 7(2), “A local board of education shall award credit toward high school graduation based on:

- (a) A standards-based Carnegie unit credit that shall consist of at least 120 hours of instructional time in one (1) subject; or
- (b) A performance-based credit based on standards, regardless of the number of instructional hours in one (1) subject.”

Should a local board of education choose to award performance-based credit, Section 7(4) requires the local board to “establish a policy for a performance-based credit system that includes:

- (a) The procedures for developing performance-based credit systems and for amending the system;
- (b) The conditions under which each high school may grant performance-based credits and the related performance descriptors and assessments;
- (c) Objective grading and reporting procedures;
- (d) Content standards established in 704 KAR 3:303 and 704 KAR Chapter 8;
- (e) The extent to which state-provided assessments will be used in the local performance-based credit system;
- (f) The ability for students to demonstrate proficiency and earn credit for learning acquired outside of school or in prior learning; and
- (g) Criteria to ensure that internships, cooperative learning experiences, and other learning experiences in the school and community are:
  - 1. Designed to further student progress towards the individual learning plan;
  - 2. Supervised by qualified instructors; and
  - 3. Aligned with state and local content and performance standards.”

### **Q: Are students required to have 120 hours of seat time in order to receive performance-based credit for a course?**

A: Districts have flexibility in the type of credit awarded toward high school graduation. 704 KAR 3:305, Section 7(2) allows a local board of education to award credit toward high school graduation based on a performance-based credit based on standards, regardless of the number of instructional hours in one (1) subject.

Credit toward high school graduation may be awarded for satisfactory demonstration of learning based on content standards described in the KAS and a rigorous performance standards policy established by the board of education. A school shall establish performance descriptors and evaluation procedures to determine if the content and performance standards have been met. Additional information can be found in the KDE’s performance-based credit webpage.

### **Q: How is a course for performance-based credit set up in IC?**

A: For specific guidance on setting up performance-based courses in IC, consult the Virtual and Performance-Based Course Set-Up and Attendance Verification document.

## Section 8: District-Awarded Diploma

**Q: Must the district award a student's diploma once all state and local requirements for graduation have been met?**

A. 704 KAR 3:305(8)(1) states that "[a] student who satisfactorily completes the requirements of this administrative regulation and additional requirements as may be imposed by a local board of education... shall be awarded a graduation diploma."

Therefore, the district must award a student's diploma once all state and local high school graduation requirements have been met.

**Q: Can a school district require a minimum score on a state test to meet graduation requirements?**

A: No. 704 KAR 3:305, Section 8(2) states that "[a] local board shall not adopt any high school graduation requirements that include achieving a minimum score on a statewide assessment as established in KRS 158.140." KRS 158.140(6) also provides that "any high school graduation requirements adopted by a local board shall not include achieving a minimum score on a statewide assessment administered under KRS 158.6453."

In terms of the ACT specifically, the ACT examination is considered a "statewide assessment administered under KRS 158.6453." Per KRS 158.6453(5)(b), the state student assessments shall include "a college admissions examination to assess English, reading, mathematics, and science in the spring of grade eleven." However, pursuant to 704 KAR 3:305, Section 8(2) and 158.140(6), a district cannot adopt any high school graduation requirement that includes achieving a minimum score on a statewide assessment (including the ACT examination).

**Q: Do local school districts have the authority to honor a student's request to delay receipt of their diploma despite meeting all state and local requirements for graduation?**

A. Pursuant to KRS 158.140(2), students who meet all state and local graduation requirements shall receive a high school diploma from the school district. Districts do not have the flexibility of allowing a student to defer a diploma and graduate with a different cohort. Once the student meets all state and local minimum requirements for graduation, the diploma shall be issued. Once the diploma is issued, the student's final grade point average (GPA) should be calculated and cannot be altered at a later date to reflect additional or updated coursework as part of the final GPA or credits toward graduation. High school transcripts must contain an accurate account of the student's final academic standing at the time the diploma is issued.

**Q: When is the last day a student can be reported as earning a diploma with their graduating class?** A: For students who are not enrolled in summer school, June 30 is the target date for reporting the graduation date. July 31 is the last day to report summer graduates in order for the students to receive credit and graduate with their cohort.

**Q: Which end status should I select for students who transfer, graduate, withdraw, etc.?**

A: See page 11 the Data Standard Student Enrollment document for a list of end status options and their purposes.

## Section 9: Special Recognition

**Q: What are the limitations for recognizing students?**

A: Students benefit from special recognition as a result of their diverse accomplishments. However, the decision to award special recognition is at the discretion of the local district.

**Q: Can a school district award a diploma posthumously?**

A: According to KRS 158.140, local school boards may award a diploma indicating graduation from high school to any student posthumously with the high school class the student was expected to graduate.

**Q: Can a school district award an authentic high school diploma to US veterans from World War II, the Korean conflict or the Vietnam War?**

A: Yes. Per KRS 158.140, a local board of education shall award an authentic high school diploma to an honorably discharged veteran who did not complete high school prior to being inducted into the United States Armed Forces during:

1. World War II, as defined in KRS 40.010;
2. The Korean conflict, as defined in KRS 40.010; or
3. The Vietnam War. As used in this paragraph, "Vietnam War" means the period beginning August 5, 1964, and ending May 7, 1975. However, for a member of the United States Armed Forces serving in Vietnam prior to August 5, 1964, the period shall begin February 28, 1961.

The process and requirements for awarding an authentic high school diploma can be found under 704 KAR 7:140.

## Section 10: Students with Disabilities

### **Q: What is an IEP?**

A: 707 KAR 1:002, Section 1 (34) defines an “individual education program” or “IEP” as a written statement for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised in accordance with 707 KAR 1:320.

### **Q: Are students with disabilities required to meet the minimum high school graduation requirements?**

A: Yes. Any student earning a regular diploma must meet the minimum high school graduation requirements.

Students eligible to receive special education services under the IDEA are required to meet the graduation requirements prescribed by 704 KAR 3:305. However, students with disabilities are entitled to the services and supports identified in their IEPs as required under the IDEA.

### **Q: How does the ARC ensure graduation requirements are being met?**

A: The IEP, including the student’s multi-year course of study is developed by the ARC. The ARC must review a student’s IEP and progress at least once a year but may meet as often as necessary. The ARC determines how to best meet the established goals of the IEP and graduation requirements.

### **Q: How does the requirement for transition services in the ILP correspond to the requirement for transition services in the IEP?**

A: Nothing in the graduation requirements displaces the rights of a student with an IEP, and this includes transition services outlined in 707 KAR 1:320.

While every student must have an ILP that addresses transition requirements, students with IEPs must also have a statement of the transition service needs that includes postsecondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessments related to education, employment, training and independent living skills. The IEP transition services must be in alignment with the student’s ILP as outlined in 707 KAR 1:320, Section 7 (1).

### **Q: Do students with disabilities have to pass the civics exam in order to graduate?**

A: Yes. KRS 158.141 requires all students seeking to earn a regular high school diploma to pass a civics test composed of 100 questions drawn from those that are set forth within the civics test administered by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to persons seeking to become naturalized citizens. Students may take the test as many times as necessary and must answer at least 60% of the questions correctly. If a student passed a similar test within the previous five years, the student does not have to take the civics test. Appropriate accommodations for testing as established by a student's IEP are required by the IDEA and defined in KRS 158.281 or by a Section 504 Plan as defined in KRS 156.027.

[House Bill 535 \(2024\)](#) amended KRS 158.141 to require, **beginning with students entering grade 9 in the 2025-2026 academic year**, a one-half credit course in civic literacy *or* a civics test for graduation. The current civics test requirements provided under KRS 158.141 will remain in place for the 2024-2025 school year. For additional information, access the Considerations for Implementing HB 535 Civic Literacy Requirement supplemental guidance document.

Schools and districts must meet the requirements and accommodations of a student's individualized education program (IEP) as defined in KRS 158.281 or a Section 504 Plan as defined in KRS 156.027.



**Q: Do students with disabilities have to complete a course or program in financial literacy in order to graduate?**

A: Yes. KRS 158.1411 requires that, beginning with the entering grade 9 class of the 2020-2021 school year, successful completion of one or more courses or programs that meet the *KAS in Career Studies and Financial Literacy* is a graduation requirement for all students.

**Q: Are students with disabilities required to be assessed through the state assessment?**

A: Yes. Federal regulation 34 CFR § 200.6, "Inclusion of all Students," requires that a student with a disability working toward a diploma must be assessed with an assessment aligned with the KASs for the grade in which the student is enrolled. As part of Kentucky's assessment system, districts and schools must provide appropriate accommodations for each student with a disability; for example, the ability to use assistive technology consistent with nationally recognized accessibility standards necessary to measure the academic achievement of the student.

**Q: Do the minimum graduation requirements apply to those students participating in the Alternate Assessment?**

A: No. KRS 156.160(1)(e) governs the eligibility for an alternative high school diploma for students with disabilities whose IEP indicates that, in accordance with 20 U.S.C. sec. 1414(d)(1)(A):

- The student cannot participate in the regular statewide assessment; and
- An appropriate alternate assessment has been selected for the student based upon a modified curriculum and an individualized course of study.

KRS 158.140 governs the classifications and awarding of diplomas. Upon successful completion of all state and local board requirements, the student shall receive:

- (b) A diploma indicating graduation from high school; or
- (c) An alternative high school diploma if the student has a disability and has completed modified curriculum and an individualized course of study pursuant to requirements established by the KBE in accordance with KRS 156.160.

Only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (i.e., less than 1 percent of the total student population statewide), for whom traditional assessments would be an inappropriate measure of progress, may take Kentucky's AA- AAAS. The AA-AAAS was developed to provide schools and programs with a valid and reliable means of assessing the instruction provided. Kentucky's AA-AAAS continues to meet federal requirements outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

The act requires that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may take an AA-AAAS and limits the number of students that a state may assess with an AA-AAAS to no more than 1 percent of all students in the grades assessed in a state. (U.S. Department of Education Policy Memo to States, Aug. 27, 2018). Whether a student should participate in the AA-AAAS is a decision made by the student's ARC.

Only students completing the corresponding modified curriculum and individualized course of study, aligned to the KAS and participating in the AA-AAAS, are eligible to earn an alternative high school diploma.

## Section 11: Continuity of Services Plan

### **Q: What is a continuity of services plan?**

A: Continuity of services plan outlines the ways in which a student will receive access to essential services that will **end if the student graduates early**.

### **Q: Do all students need a continuity of services plan?**

A: No. If a student wishes to graduate early, the school district must ensure the creation of a continuity of services plan for **any student identified as a homeless child pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 11434, a migratory child pursuant to 20 U.S.C. 6399, or youth engaged in foster care pursuant to KRS 620.020(5)**.

The completion of a transition plan for children aging out of foster care, as described by 42 U.S.C. 675(5)(H), shall meet the requirements outlined in this section.

### **Q. What is required of schools and districts in implementing a continuity of services plan?**

A. The local school district is required to engage in meaningful consultation with a school-based mental health services provider, as defined by KRS 158.4416, on the creation of a continuity of services plan prior to graduation.