

# **Section III**

## **High School Grades 9-12**

# GENERAL EDUCATION: HIGH SCHOOLS GRADES 9 – 12

## A. Admission and Placement of Students

### 1. Admissions

- a. Evidence that the parent resides in the school's designated zone is required for each student enrolling in the Alachua County school system (e.g., utility bill, bill of sale or deed for house, lease agreement, rent receipt, homestead exemption receipt, or verification through a home visit by a school official). Students who move away from their parents' residence shall be assigned to the school attendance zone in which their parents reside unless a legal guardianship has been awarded to an adult with whom the student resides.
- b. A birth certificate or other evidence of age is required for enrollment.
- c. Students transferring from an out-of-state school must provide a certificate of immunization or a valid certificate of exemption.
- d. Students transferring from an out-of-state school must provide a health certificate completed within the twelve (12) months just prior to enrollment or HRS Form 680.
- e. The parent or guardian must complete an Emergency Card when enrolling a student and will be asked to provide the student's social security number. Since it is not always possible to reach a parent by phone, the number of an available emergency contact is mandatory.
- f. Teachers will teach the Sunshine State Standards, Student Performance Standards, Benchmarks, and Grade Level Expectations as established by the State of Florida

Instruction will include age-appropriate study of the history and content of the Declaration of Independence, including national sovereignty, natural law, self-evident truth, equality of all persons, limited government, popular sovereignty, and inalienable rights of life, liberty, and property and how they form the philosophical foundation of our government. Instruction will also include the United States Constitution, flag education (proper flag display and flag salute), elements of civil government, the history of the Holocaust, African –American history, the history of the state, the study of Hispanic contributions to the United States, the study of women's contributions to the United States, character education, Veteran's Day, free enterprise and consumer education.

A complete list of state curriculum mandates can be found in the section titled "General Procedures for Promotion".

### 2. Placement and Classification in High School

- a. Placement in Grade 9

Placement in grade 9 is dependent upon successful completion of grade 8. Specific requirements are given in Section II, Promotion and Placement within the Middle Schools, of the Pupil Progression Plan. However, the following exceptions may be made:

Middle school students completing high school courses in middle school may be admitted to the next course in the sequence upon entering high school provided that 1) the student earns a semester grade of A or B each semester; 2) the completed middle school course is comparable

to the course offered at the high school; and 3) the student passes a comprehensive final examination with a score of 70% or higher.

Middle school students who make a “C” (2.0 on a 4.0 scale) or below in a high school course in middle school are encouraged to confer with their parents and high school personnel before going on to the next level course. Middle school students taking high school courses for high school credit who get a grade of C, D, or F may replace that grade with a grade of C or higher in a comparable course.

- a. Classifying of students in grades 10, 11, and 12
- b. The classification of students in grades 10, 11, and 12 is based upon the number of credits earned in high school, as follows:

Classification	Credits Earned
Grade 10	4
Grade 11	10
Grade 12	16
Graduation	24

Students may be promoted from one grade classification to the next at the semester if credit requirements are met.

Progress monitoring is required for any student who scores Level 1 or Level 2 on FCAT Reading or Mathematics. A student who is not meeting proficiency in reading and mathematics (Level 3 or higher) shall be covered by one of the following plans to target instruction and identify ways to improve his/her academic achievement:

- A federally required plan such as an IEP
- A school-wide system of progress monitoring for all students
- An individualized progress monitoring plan

\*\*Students entering a school from a school system whose graduation credit requirement and/or school day is different from the school of entry may be placed in a grade by the principal and given an individually prescribed program designed for completion of credits.

c. **Student Promotion and Retention**

Pupil promotion is based on evaluation of each student’s achievement of the Sunshine State Standards. Each student’s progression from one grade to another is based, in part, upon proficiency in reading, writing, science, and mathematics. Parents must be informed of their students’ progress in meeting academic standards. Evaluation of proficiency on the Sunshine State Standards includes classroom performance, daily observation, and formal and informal assessments of competency in reading, writing, science, and mathematics. Each student who does not meet specific levels of performance as determined by the district school board in reading, writing, science, and mathematics for each grade level, or who does not meet specific levels of performance as determined by the commissioner on statewide assessments at selected grade levels, must be provided with additional diagnostic assessments to determine the nature of the student’s difficulty and areas of academic need.

The school in which the student is enrolled must develop, in consultation with the student's parent, and must implement a progress monitoring plan designed to assist the student in meeting state and district expectations for proficiency

If a student has been identified as having a deficiency in reading, the K-12 Comprehensive Reading Plan shall include instructional and support services to meet the desired levels of performance.

A student who scores Level I on FCAT Reading must be enrolled and must complete an intensive reading course the following year.

A student who scores Level 2 on FCAT Reading shall be placed in an Intensive Reading class or a content area course in which reading strategies are delivered, as determined by a diagnosis of the student's reading needs.

For each year in which a student scores Level 1 or Level 2 on FCAT Mathematics, the student must receive remediation the following year. These courses may be taught through applied, integrated, or combined courses.

Indicators of the student's proficiency include teacher assessment, norm-referenced tests, statewide tests, diagnostic assessment, and grade point average (GPA).

Remediation options may include strategies within the regular class, tutorial support, extended school year, extended day activities, home strategies, contracted academic services, drop-out prevention coursework, and intensive mathematics, reading, writing/language arts courses.

The allocation of remedial and supplemental instruction resources for students shall occur in the following priority:

- ◆ students who are deficient in reading by grade 3
- ◆ students who fail to meet performance levels required for promotion consistent with the district's plan for student progression.

Students who have met all requirements for the standard high school diploma except passing the grade 10 FCAT or an alternate assessment must be provided the following learning opportunities:

- ◆ participation in an accelerated high school equivalency diploma preparation program during the summer
- ◆ upon receipt of a certificate of completion, be allowed to take the College Placement Test and be admitted to remedial or college coursework at a state community college as appropriate
- ◆ participate in an adult general education program until he/she masters subjects requested for high school graduation
- ◆ Beginning in the 2008 – 2009 school year, a college readiness assessment shall be administered to all high school students, prior to grade 12, with defined FCAT scores and who have indicated an interest in post-secondary education. Students scoring at or above the minimum score and enrolling in a community college within two (2) years will not be required to enroll in remediation courses. Students scoring below the minimum level will have access to remediation to the extent practicable.

**d. Compulsory Attendance**

A student who reaches the age of 16 years during the school year is not subject to compulsory school attendance beyond the date upon which he or she attains that age if the student files a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment with the district school board. The declaration must acknowledge that terminating school enrollment is likely to reduce the student's earning potential and must be signed by the student and the student's parent. The school district must notify the student's parent of receipt of the student's declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment. [s. 1003.21(1)2(c)F.S.; s.1008.25 F.S.]

The student's guidance counselor or other school personnel must conduct an exit interview with the student to determine the reasons for the student's decision to terminate school enrollment and actions that could be taken to keep the student in school. The student must be informed of opportunities to continue his/her education in a different environment, including, but not limited to, adult education and GED test preparation. Additionally, the student must complete a survey in a format prescribed by the Department of Education to provide data on student reasons for terminating enrollment and actions taken by schools to keep students enrolled.

**e. Maximum Age for High School Students**

High school students pursuing a regular high school diploma must be able to graduate from school prior to their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday. Permission for students to attend high school to pursue a regular high school diploma after their birthday will be made on an individual basis by the high school principal and the superintendent designee.

**B. Graduation Requirements**

To be enrolled in high school, students must register for and attend a complete schedule of classes at the school unless they are participating in an approved dual enrollment program, are home education students attending a regularly scheduled class period at the zoned school, or are students who have earned a certificate of completion and are entitled to return to school for remediation.

For high school graduation, students shall earn a minimum of 24 credits in grades 9 through 12 or earn the appropriate credits to meet one of the accelerated graduation options. No student may be required to take more than the maximum number of credits, unless remediation is required in English and mathematics. Students may elect to take additional credits in any area.

Students will have access to enroll in courses available through the Florida Virtual School. Credit will be awarded for successful completion of these courses. [s.1001.42(21)F.S.]

Passing scores on FCAT Reading and Mathematics are required for graduation. A student who takes the FCAT three times without earning a passing score may use concordant scores on the ACT or SAT as an alternative assessment to satisfy the high school graduation requirement.

Participation in the FCAT is mandatory for all students attending public school, except as otherwise prescribed by the Commissioner of Education. Each student must participate in the statewide assessment tests as required by s. 1008.22 F.S. If a student does not participate in the statewide assessment, the district must notify the student's parent and provide the parent with information regarding the implications of such nonparticipation. If modifications are made in the student's instruction to provide accommodations that would not be permitted on the statewide assessment tests, the district must notify the student's parent of the implications of such instructional modifications. A parent must provide signed consent for a student to receive instructional modifications that would not

be permitted on the statewide assessments and must acknowledge in writing that he or she understands the implications of such accommodations. [s.1008.25(3)(c)(6)F.S.]

Beginning with the 2008 – 2009 school year, each public school is prohibited from suspending a regular program of curricula for purposes of administering practice tests or engaging in other test-preparation activities for the FCAT. However, schools may engage in the following test-preparation activities:

- Distributing to students the sample test books and answer keys published by the Department of Education
- Providing individualized instruction in test-taking strategies, without suspending the school's regular program of curricula, for a student who scores Level 1 or Level 2 on a prior administration of the FCAT
- Providing individualized instruction in the content knowledge and skills assessed, without suspending the school's regular program of curricula, for a student who scores Level 1 or Level 2 on a prior administration of the FCAT or a student who, through a diagnostic assessment administered by the school district, is identified as having a deficiency in the content knowledge and skills assessed.
- Incorporating test-taking exercises and strategies into curricula for intensive reading and intensive mathematics intervention courses.
- Administering a practice test or engaging in other test-preparation activities for the FCAT which are determined necessary to familiarize students with the organization of the FCAT, the format of the test items, and the test directions, or which are otherwise necessary for the valid and reliable administration of the FCAT as set forth in State Board of Education rule.

A dependent child of a member of the U.S. Armed Forces who enters a public school at grade 12 from out-of-state or from a foreign country and provides satisfactory proof of attaining a score on an approved alternative assessment that is concordant to a passing score on the grade 10 FCAT shall satisfy the assessment requirements for a standard high school diploma. [s.1003.43(5)(a) F.S.]

No student may be assigned to a grade level based solely on age or other factors that constitute social promotion. [s.1008.25 F.S.]

Remedial and compensatory courses taken in grades 9 through 12 may only be counted as elective credit. [s.1003.43 (2)F.S.]

Remedial instruction provided during high school may not be in lieu of English and Mathematics credits required for graduation.

No student may be granted credit toward high school graduation for enrollment in any Level I course except when an assessment of the student indicates that a more rigorous course of study would be inappropriate. In such cases a written assessment of the need must be included in the student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP) or in a Student Performance Plan signed by the principal, the guidance counselor and the parent or guardian of the student or the student if the student is 18 years of age or older.

Students must earn a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale to meet graduation requirements. Students may earn more than 24 high school course credits.

## **Definition of credit:**

For graduation requirements, one full credit means a minimum of 135 hours of bona fide instruction in a designated course of study that contains student performance standards.

A failing grade of “F”, or below average passing grade of “D”, for a given course will not be used in calculating the final grade point average if the student repeated the course and received a higher passing grade. For the purpose of graduation, grade averaging of the two semesters for a year long course will be permitted when one is a failing grade and the other grade is “C” or higher.

A student enrolled in a full-year course shall receive one-half credit if the student successfully completes either the first half or the second half of a full-year course but fails to successfully complete the other half of the course and the averaging of the grades obtained in each half would not result in a passing grade.

A student enrolled in a full-year course shall receive a full credit if the student successfully completes either the first half or the second half of a full-year course but fails to successfully complete the other half and the averaging of the grades obtained in each half would result in a passing grade, provided that the student meets district policies for class attendance, homework, participation, and other indicators of performance, such as a passing grade on the final exam. [s.1003.436 F.S.]

## **Workforce Preparation**

All schools K-12 should document the manner in which they have prepared students to enter the workforce, including information regarding the provision of accurate, timely career and curricular counseling to students. This information shall include:

1. information about available career opportunities;
  2. educational requirements associated with each career;
  3. educational institutions that prepare students for each career;
  4. student financial aid;
  5. school procedures for identifying individual student interests and aptitudes;
  6. recommended high school coursework that prepares students for success in college coursework;
  7. availability of applied instruction;
  8. availability of support services to help students who need assistance to successfully complete instruction necessary to enroll in postsecondary education or enter the workforce;
  9. availability of technical instruction and workplace-based learning.
10. information on the ability to earn advanced college credit in Career and Technical programs of study towards Applied Technology programs of study at the post-secondary level. [s.1006.02 F.S.]

Prior to each student’s graduation from high school, the school shall assess the student’s preparation to enter the workforce in terms of employability skills and shall provide the student and the student’s parent or guardian with the results of this assessment. The Department of Education has determined

that since FCAT assesses certain standards from the U.S. Secretary of Labor’s report on necessary skills for the workforce (SCANS), the FCAT can serve as this assessment. [s.1006.02 F.S.]

Beginning with students entering grade 9 in 2009 2010 and thereafter, each high school student must have an electronic Personal Education Plan (ePEP) that is updated annually.

## **Grade Forgiveness**

Students must include any course grade not replaced according to the district forgiveness policy in the calculation of the cumulative grade point average. All courses taken must be included in the grade point average calculation unless the grade has been forgiven by retake. Required courses shall be limited to replacing a grade of “D” or “F” with a grade of “C” or higher earned subsequently in the *same* or *comparable* course. Elective courses shall be limited to replacing a grade of “D” or “F” with a grade of “C” or higher earned subsequently by retaking the same or comparable course or *another* course. Middle school students taking high school courses for high school credit who get a grade of C, D, or F may replace that grade with a grade of C or higher in a comparable course. Such students may repeat a course for forgiveness with grades above a “D”. Any course grade not replaced according to a district forgiveness policy shall be included in the calculation of the cumulative GPA required for graduation.

## **Diploma Options**

At the beginning of each school year, parents of students in or entering high school must be notified of the opportunity and benefits of advanced placement, IB, AP, AICE, dual enrollment, and Florida Virtual School courses.

Students who enter the ninth grade in the 2006 – 2007 school year and thereafter may select one of the three high school graduation options:

- Completion of the 24 credit general requirements for high school graduation.
- Completion of a 3-year standard college preparatory program requiring a minimum of 18 academic credits.
- Completion of a 3-year career preparatory program requiring a minimum of 18 academic credits.

Students must select one of the graduation options by the end of their ninth grade year. A student and the student’s parent must meet with designated school personnel to receive an explanation of the relative requirements, advantages, and disadvantages of each program option on the Accelerated Graduation/18 Credit Program Request form. The student must submit a signed parental consent to the principal and guidance counselor to enter one of the 3-year graduation options. Certain exceptions exist for students who transfer from a private school or from out-of-state schools after ninth grade.

If a student and a parent do not select a graduation option, the student shall be considered to have selected the 24-credit option.

### **1. Requirements for the Four-Year, Standard 24-credit Diploma Option**

The receipt of a Standard diploma indicates the student completed the minimum criteria for high school graduation.

The following requirements apply to students entering grade 9 in 2007 – 2008 and thereafter.

In accordance with s.1003.43 F.S. the requirements for standard diploma are listed below. See the current Alachua County High School Course Description Book for detailed course offerings.

Students must complete a minimum of 24 credits, which shall be distributed as follows:

- a. English 4 credits  
At least four credits in English with concentration in composition, literature, and reading for information are required. ESOL credits will count toward the 4 credits in English.
  
- b. Mathematics 4 credits  
A minimum of four credits in mathematics is required. One of these credits must be Algebra I, a series of courses that is its equivalent, or a higher level mathematics course for those who mastered Algebra I prior to high school. Students are encouraged to take Geometry and Algebra II as part of their mathematics preparation.
  
- c. Science 3 credits  
A minimum of three science credits is required. Two of these courses must have a laboratory component. Agriscience Foundations I counts as one of the science credits.
  
- d. Social Studies 3 credits  
A minimum of three credits in social studies is required. These include:
  - 1 credit in World History
  - 1 credit in American History
  - ½ credit in American Government
  - ½ credit in Economics
  
- e. Physical Education 1 credit  
One full credit of physical education is required for graduation. This includes:  
For students who entered grade 9 in or before the 2006 – 2007 school year, the physical education requirements is as follows:  
One-half (.50) credit in Personal Fitness and one-half (.50) credit in any other Physical Education course.  
Those students may use the following exemptions to meet their Physical Education requirement:
  - Participation in two full seasons of interscholastic sports at the junior varsity/varsity level and a grade of “C” or higher on the competency test for Personal Fitness. No credit will be earned with satisfying the Physical Education requirement through interscholastic sports participation.
  - Completion of one semester with a grade of “C” or better in a marching band class or in a physical activity class that requires participation in marching band activities as an extracurricular activity shall satisfy .50 credit in Physical Education. This .50 credit shall

not be used to satisfy the Personal Fitness requirement or the requirement for adaptive physical education under an individual education plan (IEP) or 504 plan.

- A Reserve Officer Training Class (ROTC), a significant component of which is drills, shall satisfy .50 credit requirement in Physical Education. This .50 credit shall not be used to satisfy the Personal Fitness requirement or the requirement for adaptive physical education under an individual education plan (IEP) or 504 plan.

Students entering grade 9 in 2007 – 2008 and thereafter may fulfill the 1.0 credit in Physical Education through one of the following course options:

- 1.0 credit in Health Opportunities through Physical Education (HOPE)
- 1.0 credit in HOPE (PE variant)
- .50 credit in Personal Fitness and .50 credit in any other physical education course.

Students entering grade 9 in 2007 – 2008 and thereafter may use the following exemptions to meet their Physical Education requirement:

- Participation in two full seasons of interscholastic sports at the junior varsity or varsity level and a grade of “C” or higher on the competency test for Personal Fitness No credit will be earned with satisfying the Physical Education requirement through interscholastic sports participation.
- Completion of one semester with a grade of “C” or better in a marching band class, physical activity class with marching band activities or dance shall satisfy .50 credit requirement in Physical Education or .50 credit in Performing Arts. This .50 credit shall not be used to satisfy the Personal Fitness requirement or the requirement for adaptive physical education under an individual education plan (IEP) or 504 plan.
- Completion of two years of ROTC shall satisfy the 1.0 credit requirement in Physical Education (HOPE) and the 1.0 credit requirement in Performing Arts. This credit may not be used to satisfy the Personal Fitness requirement or the requirement for adaptive physical education under an individual education plan (IEP) or 504 plan.

- f. Students who entered grade 9 in the fall of 2006 or before must satisfy these additional requirements for a standard diploma:

1.0 credit in Practical and/or Performing Arts  
.50 credit in Life management Skills  
8.5 credits in Electives

Students entering grade 9 for the first time in the fall of 2007 and thereafter must satisfy these additional requirements for a standard diploma:

1.0 credit in Fine Arts/Performing Arts or designated Practical Arts  
4.0 credits in a Major Area of Interest (MAI)  
4.0 credits in Electives

- g. Major Area of Interest 4 credits

Students entering grade 9 in 2007 – 2008 and thereafter must earn four credits in a major area of interest (MAI), such as sequential courses in a career and technical program, fine and performing arts, or an academic content area. Students may revise major areas of interest each year as part of the annual course registration process and should update their educational plan to reflect such revisions.

Students enrolled full-time in an International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum or Advanced Certificate of Education (AICE) curriculum are not required to be enrolled in a major area of interest.

- h. Electives Minimum of 4 credits

Three of these elective courses may be in a minor area of interest selected by the student as part of his/her educational plan.

Students may earn a maximum of .50 credit in social studies and .50 elective credit for student completion of unpaid voluntary community or school service work. Students choosing this option must complete a minimum of 75 hours of service in order to earn the .50 credit in either category of instruction. Credit may not be earned for service provided as a result of court action. Principals are responsible for approving specific volunteer activities. [s.1003.43(1)(k) F.S.]

Students may earn high school credit for volunteer activities and nonacademic activities which have been approved for such credit by the State Board of Education. [s.1003.43(3) F.S.] See the current Alachua County High School Course Description Book for detailed offerings.

No student may be granted credit toward high school graduation for enrollment in the following courses or programs:

- ◆ More than 9 elective credits in remedial programs
- ◆ More than 1 credit in exploratory career education courses as defined in s. 1003.01 (4) (a).
- ◆ More than 3 credits in practical arts family and consumer sciences classes as defined in s. 1003.01 (4)(a).
- ◆ Any Level I course unless the student's assessment indicates that more rigorous course of study would be inappropriate, in which case a written assessment of the need must be included in the student's individual education plan or in a student performance plan, signed by the principal, the guidance counselor, and the parent of the student, or the student if he/she is 18 years of age or older. [s.1003.43(7) F.S.]

## 2. **International Baccalaureate Diploma**

The International Baccalaureate Diploma curriculum may be substituted to meet state graduation requirements. [s. 1003.43]

## 3. **Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE)**

The AICE Diploma may be substituted to meet state graduation requirements.

### 3. Accelerated Graduation Options

Students who enter grade 9 in the 2006 – 2007 school year and thereafter may select one of the following accelerated graduation options.

Designated school personnel shall meet with the student and student’s parents to explain the relative requirements, advantages, and disadvantages of each graduation option. A student must have written consent of the parent to enroll in one of the accelerated options.

The district may not establish requirements for accelerated graduation options in excess of those required by statute.

Selection of an accelerated graduation option must be completed by the student prior to the end of grade 9. The deadline for selection of the accelerated graduation option may be extended until the end of first semester of grade 10 for students who enter a Florida public school after grade 9 upon a transfer from a private school or another state or who was prevented from choosing a graduation option due to illness. If a student and parent do not select a graduation option, the student shall be considered to have selected the standard four-year, 24 credit option.

### 4. Requirements for the Three-Year, 18-credit College Preparatory Diploma Option

- ◆ 4 credits in English (major concentration in composition and literature)
- ◆ 3 credits in mathematics (Algebra I or higher) from the list of courses that qualify for state university admission.
- ◆ 3 credits in natural science (two of which must include a lab component)
- ◆ 3 credits in social sciences (1 credit in World History, 1 credit in American History, .50 credit in American Government, .50 credit in Economics)
- ◆ 2 credits in the same second language (or demonstrated proficiency in another language)
- ◆ 3 credits in electives
- ◆ At least 6 of the 18 credits required for this program must be received in classes that are offered pursuant to the International Baccalaureate program, the Advanced Placement program, dual enrollment, Advanced International Certificate of Education or specifically listed or identified by the Department of Education as rigorous pursuant to s.1009.531 (3)

Students pursuing the accelerated 3-year high school college preparatory graduation option are required to:

- Earn passing scores on the FCAT or scores on a standardized text concordant with passing scores on the FCAT as defined in s.1008.22(9)
- Achieve a cumulative weighted grade point average of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, in the courses required for the college preparatory 3-year high school graduation option.
- Receive a weighted or un-weighted grade that earns at least 3.0 points, or its equivalent, to earn course credit toward the 18 credits required for the college preparatory accelerated 3-year high school graduation option.

All 18 credits required for the three-year college preparatory program, including three electives, must satisfy the course distribution requirements for state university admissions.

## 5. Requirements for the Three-Year, 18-credit Career Preparatory Diploma Option

- ◆ 4 credits in English (major concentration in composition and literature)
- ◆ 3 credits in mathematics (must include Algebra I or its equivalent)
- ◆ 3 credits in natural science (two must include a lab component)
- ◆ 3 credits in social sciences (1 in World History, 1 in American History, .50 in American Government, .50 in Economics)
- ◆ 3 credits in a single career and technical education program, 3 credits in career and technical certificate dual enrollment, or 5 credits in career and technical education courses
- ◆ 2 credits in elective courses (unless 5 credits are earned in vocational/career/technical)

Students pursuing the accelerated 3-year career preparatory high school graduation option are required to:

- Earn passing scores on the FCAT or scores on a standardized test that are concordant with passing scores on the FCAT as defined in s.1008.22(9)
- Achieve a cumulative weighted grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, in the courses required for the career preparatory accelerated 3-year high school graduation option.
- Receive a weighted or unweighted grade that earns at least 2.0 points, or its equivalent, to earn course credit toward the 18 credits required for the career preparatory accelerated 3-year high school graduation option.

If, at the end of grade 10, the student is not on track to meet the credit, assessment, or grade-point average requirements of the accelerated graduation option selected, the school shall notify the student and parent of the following:

- ◆ The requirements that the student is not currently meeting
- ◆ The specific performance necessary in grade 11 for the student to meet the accelerated graduation requirements
- ◆ The right of the student to change to the 4-year graduation option

A student who selected one of the accelerated 3-year graduation options shall automatically move to the 4-year program if the student:

- ◆ Exercises his/her right to change to the 4-year program
- ◆ Fails to earn 5 credits by the end of grade 9 or fails to earn 11 credits by the end of grade 10
- ◆ Does not achieve a score of 3 or higher on the grade 10 FCAT Writing Assessment
- ◆ By the end of grade 11 does not meet the course requirements and/or the GPA requirements for the accelerated option

Each district school board shall provide each student in grades 6-12 and their parents with the 3-year and 4-year graduation options. Selection of one of the graduation options is exclusively up to the student and parent. If the student and parent fail to select a graduation option, the student shall be considered to have selected the 24-credit graduation requirement.

Students selecting one of the three-year programs must be treated equally with students graduating via the 24-credit program in all ways including eligibility for valedictorian, salutatorian, Talented 20, and Bright Futures.

## **6. Certificate of Completion**

Students who have completed the required coursework for graduation but have not earned passing scores on the FCAT or have not achieved a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 are eligible to receive a certificate of completion. The certificate of completion does not carry any of the privileges of a standard high school diploma. The awarding of a certificate of completion is limited to those students choosing the 24-credit graduation option and is not applicable to three-year programs. Any student who is otherwise entitled to a certificate of completion may elect to remain in the secondary school either as a full-time student or a part-time student for up to 1 additional year and receive special instruction designed to remedy his/her identified deficiencies.

## **7. Common Placement Test (CPT)-Eligible Certificate of Completion Followed by Continued Education**

Students who meet all requirements for graduation with a standard diploma except earning passing scores on the Grade 10 FCAT are eligible for a CPT-eligible certificate of completion.

Students who receive a CPT-eligible certificate of completion may enroll directly in community college or postsecondary career and technical education programs. Students may enroll in college credit courses if they pass the CPT with scores that meet the cutoff for admission into college credit courses. Students who do not meet the cutoff score are eligible to enroll in remedial coursework at the community college.

## **C. Grade Point Average**

The grade point average for all students in grades 9 through 12 will be calculated at the end of each semester. Students whose grade point average is 2.5 or less will be identified in accordance with s.1003.43 (2) F.S. The parent or guardian of each student with a grade point average of 2.5 or less shall be notified at the end of each semester that the student is at risk of not meeting the requirements for graduation. The notice shall contain an explanation of the types of assistance which have been put in place to assist the student in meeting the grade point average requirement. Identified students will be offered assistance by means of one or more of the following:

Counseling	Summer School
Special Help	Remedial Courses
Different Courses	After-school Tutoring Sessions
Study Hall	Saturday Tutoring Sessions

## D. Grading System 9 – 12

The following scale is used to convert quantifiable achievement to alphabetic symbols in middle and high school level courses. Grade points will be used to calculate grades for each marking period.

Percent Achievement of Course Objectives	Grade Points	Progress Level
A = 90-100	4.0	Outstanding
B+ = 87-89	3.0	
B = 80-86	3.0	Above Average
C+ = 77-79	2.0	
C = 70-76	2.0	Average
D+ = 67-69	1.0	Acceptable
D = 60-66	1.0	Lowest
F = 0-59	0.0	Failure
I = 0	0.0	Incomplete

Students may not be exempted from academic performance requirements based on practices or policies designed to encourage student attendance. A student's attendance record may not be used in whole or in part to provide an exemption from any academic performance requirement. [s.1003.33(2) F.S.]

## E. Class Conduct Grades 9 – 12

The following symbols are used to denote class conduct:

S = Satisfactory

N = Needs Improvement

U = Unsatisfactory

No national origin minority or limited English proficient student shall be subjected to any disciplinary action solely because of his/her use of a language other than English. This does not abrogate any rules, standards, or guidelines as specified in the School Board of Alachua County Code of Student Conduct.

## F. Report Cards and Student Progress Reports to Parents

The district school board must report to the parent the student's results on each statewide assessment test. Progress reporting must be provided to the parent in writing in a format adopted by the district school board. The final report card for a school year shall indicate end-of-year status regarding performance or nonperformance at grade level, acceptable or unacceptable behavior and attendance, and promotion or non-promotion.

[s. 1003.33(1) F.S.]

Progress reports will be issued to students during each marking period.

All high schools will establish a procedure to notify parents and students of the students's graduation status for any student planning to graduate at the end of the current school year. Such notification will be issued after the first nine-week grading period is completed.

Schools will provide documentation of this procedure to the district.

## **G. Class Ranking**

A numerical ranking of students by class on the basis of academic achievement is permitted only at the high school level. Ranking shall be determined on the basis of grade point average, awarded as follows:

A	=	4	grade points
B+	=	3	grade points
B	=	3	grade points
C+	=	2	grade points
C	=	2	grade points
D+	=	1	grade point
D	=	1	grade point
F	=	0	grade point

An additional weighted ranking and grade point average shall be computed. This weighted ranking by class shall be calculated on the basis of a grade point average determined by courses designated as honors, advanced, Advanced Placement, college-level dual enrollment, Pre-International Baccalaureate, and International Baccalaureate, and AICE, Pre-AICE, Pre-AP weighted ranking are as follows:

A	=	5	grade points
B+	=	4.5	grade points
B	=	4	grade points
C+	=	3.5	grade points
C	=	3	grade points
D+	=	2.5	grade points
D	=	2.0	grade point
F	=	0	grade point

College-level dual enrollment courses are weighted the same as honors or advance placement courses in calculating a weighted grade point average [s.1007.271(16)F.S.]

## **I. Summer School/Extended School Year**

If eligible, students may attend school beyond the 180-day term to:

- ◆ earn credit for a course previously failed if graduation requirements have not been met
- ◆ participate in a program indicated in the IEP for exceptional students

The principal, or designee at a given school, shall determine student eligibility for attendance at the summer session. The district shall determine specific program offerings for the extended school year.

## **I. Transfer of Credits**

The Board shall recognize high school credits awarded by accredited public and private day schools, public and private boarding schools, the Florida Virtual School, and Santa Fe Community College. The principal has the authority to grant credits awarded by other institutions, agencies, or individuals and they will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

The Board shall recognize a maximum of three (3) credits awarded from the following institutions: the State University System High School Extension program, and the public Adult Education program.

A maximum of (2) elective credits may be awarded toward graduation for successful completion of the University of Florida/Santa Fe Community College Upward Bound Program. These elective credits may be in the areas of language arts, mathematics, science, computer education, and conversational Spanish. The Upward Bound Program will specify in writing the course number(s) and the amount of credit to be awarded in the course(s). Students must master the district and state performance standards for all courses for which they receive credit through the Upward Bound Program.

Credits earned in nonpublic schools which are not accredited by a recognized state or regional agency shall be validated by the principal. The State Uniform Transfer of High School Credits Rule states that credits and grades earned and offered for credit shall be based on official transcripts and shall be accepted at face value subject to validation required by receiving school's accreditation. If the student does not possess an official transcript or is a home education student, credits (not grades) shall be validated through performance during the first semester. A student transferring into a school shall be placed at the appropriate sequential course level and to receive credit should have a minimum grade point average of 2.0 at the end of the first semester.

Alternative validation procedures must be used when the student does not meet the 2.0 GPA scholastic performance standard at the end of the first semester.

### **Alternative Validation Procedures**

- ◆ Portfolio evaluation by the superintendent or designee
- ◆ Written recommendation by a Florida certified teacher selected by the parent and approved by the principal
- ◆ Demonstrated performance in courses taken in dual enrollment or at other public or private schools.

- ◆ Demonstrated proficiencies on nationally-normed standardized subject area assessments. Student must be allowed at least 90 days from the date of transfer to prepare for this assessment
- ◆ Demonstrated proficiencies on the FCAT. Students must be allowed at least 90 days from the date of transfer to prepare for this assessment.
- ◆ Written review of the criteria used for a given subject provided by the former school.

Validation procedures must be determined and agreed upon by the teacher, principal, and parent. Students must be allowed all of the options listed under validation procedures.

A school has until the end of the first semester to validate an official transcript, and then all credits and grades are to be accepted at face value. For students who do not have an official transcript or are from a home education program, the credits will be validated and granted at the end of the first semester based on scholastic performance.

Students who enter a Florida public school at the eleventh or twelfth grade from out of state or from a foreign country shall not be required to spend additional time in a Florida public school in order to meet the high school course requirements if the student has met all requirements of the school district, state, or country from which he or she is transferring. Such students who are not proficient in English should receive immediate and intensive instruction in English language acquisition. However, to receive a standard high school diploma, a transfer student must earn a 2.0 grade point average and pass the grade 10 FCAT required in s. 1008.22(3) or an alternate assessment as described in s. 1008.22(9).

Grades for home schooling may be awarded if a certified teacher from the student's zoned school, having voluntarily examined a portfolio of the student's work in the course and, if appropriate, having administered the end of year test, attests (with the principal's approval) that the course standards have been met and awards a grade for the course.

Students have access to courses available through Florida Virtual School. The district accepts credit for the successful completion of these courses.

Students who have met all requirements for the standard high school diploma except for passing the grade 10 FCAT or an alternate assessment by the end of grade 12 must be provided the following learning opportunities:

- Participation in an accelerated high school equivalency diploma preparation program during the summer upon receipt of a certificate of completion and be allowed to take the College Placement Test and be admitted to remedial or credit courses at a state community college, as appropriate.
- Participation in an adult general education program for such time as the student requires to master English, reading, mathematics, or any other subject required for high school graduation. A student attending an adult general education program shall have the opportunity to take the grade 10 FCAT an unlimited number of times in order to receive a standard high school diploma.

Students who have been enrolled in an ESOL program for less than two school years and have met all requirements for the standard high school diploma except passing the grade 10 FCAT or alternate assessment may receive immersion English language instruction during the summer

following their senior year. Students receiving such instruction are eligible to take the FCAT or alternate assessment and receive a standard high school diploma upon passage of the grade 10 FCAT or the alternate assessment.

The superintendent shall be responsible for notifying all students of the consequences of failure to receive a standard diploma, including the potential ineligibility for financial assistance at postsecondary educational institutions.

## **J. Program Options**

### **1. Career and Technical Education**

The School Board of Alachua County offers a variety of career and technical education programs that prepare students for employment in specific occupations and enrollment in post secondary education. High school students are eligible to enroll in specific programs as part of their planned sequence of coursework leading to a high school diploma. Program offerings vary among high schools and include the areas of Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources, Architecture & Construction, Arts, A/V Technology & Communication, Business Management & Administration, Education & Training, Finance, Health Science, Hospitality & Tourism, Human Services, Information Technology, Law, Public Safety, & Service, Manufacturing, Marketing, Sales & Service, Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM), Transportation, Distribution, & Logistics. Career employability skills instruction is incorporated in all Career and Technical courses.

For specific program and course information please see the Alachua County High School Course Description book and/or the District Tech Prep Advisement Guide for Tech Prep programs of study.

#### **a. Tech Prep**

Tech Prep is an articulated Career and Technical Education program to post secondary institutions. The School Board of Alachua County cooperates with Santa Fe Community College and The School Board of Bradford County as a Regional Tech Prep Consortium. These programs outline a jointly approved pathway for students to articulate from high school programs to the college level in a variety of career related programs. Students completing these programs may be eligible to receive advanced program and/or credit standing based upon successful completion of the high school course sequence and a competency exam given by the college. Further information regarding Tech Prep is available through the office of Career and Technical Education, the District Course Description Handbook, and the District Tech Prep Advisement Guide.

#### **Magnet Programs**

The district offers a variety of academic and career/technical magnet programs at the high school level. Admission is by application only. Selection criteria are available from each program. Priority for admission will be given to students currently enrolled in district-run Alachua County Public Schools.

b. **Career Magnet Academies**

Magnet Career and Technical Academies are also provided at specific high schools. Students in Alachua County may apply for admission to these academies and begin enrollment in the ninth grade. Specific admission criteria have been set for each academy and admission is by application only. The academies provide opportunities for students to prepare for specific careers through school and work-based learning experiences.

Specific academy information is found in the District Course Description Book and the District Tech Prep Advisement Guide, and on the district web page ([www.sbac.edu](http://www.sbac.edu)).

c. **Course Substitution**

Limited substitution for required academic credits is permitted as follows:

- ◆ Students enrolled in the JROTC program who successfully complete levels, I, II and III may substitute one JROTC credit for Physical Science (2003310) to satisfy one of the three science requirements needed for graduation.
- ◆ Upon completion of the JROTC program (Air Force, Navy) students may substitute, on a curriculum equivalency basis, one JROTC credit to satisfy to the Practical Arts graduation requirement.
- ◆ Upon completion of the Air Force JROTC Leadership Education I and II (180400 and 180410) or Naval Science I and II (1802300 and 1802310) students may substitute, on a curriculum equivalency basis, one JROTC credit for .50 credit in Health I-Life Management Skills (0800300) to satisfy the Life Management Skills requirement needed for graduation.
- ◆ Students completing two years of ROTC shall satisfy the 1.0 credit requirement in PE and the 1.0 credit requirement in Performing Arts. This credit may not be used to satisfy the Personal Fitness requirement or Adaptive PE under an IEP or 504 plan.
- ◆ A student who completes a Career and Technical Program or JROTC Program and substitutes part of that program for Applied Math I, Applied Math II, Business English I, Business English II, or Physical Science may not take any of these courses and receive additional credit. A course that has been used to substitute on one subject area may not be used to substitute for any other subject area.
- ◆ Students enrolled in the Academy of Agriscience at Santa Fe High School who complete the Vet Assisting I, II and III (8111510, 8111540, 8111550) may substitute that course sequence for one (1.0) credit in Anatomy and Physiology (2000350).

2. **Dual Enrollment**

- a. The Academic Dual Enrollment program allows eligible high school students to take college-level courses and receive both college credit and credit toward a high school diploma.

Students shall be informed annually of the dual enrollment program as an educational option and a mechanism for acceleration.

Students taking college-level courses under the Academic Dual Enrollment program will not be charged registration, matriculation, or tuition fees by the University of Florida, Santa Fe

College, St. Petersburg Junior College, Tallahassee Community College, and Lake City Community College.

- b. The Dual Enrollment Program in Technology and Applied Sciences is available to 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students who are at least 16 years old. Students apply to the program through their high school counselor and if accepted take both their career related courses and their academic courses (either high school or college level) at Santa Fe Community College. Acceptance into the program in general and a student's particular program of choice is based on 1) pre-admission test scores which indicate the ability to succeed in the required course work, 2) the recommendation of the student's high school counselor, 3) the parent's permission, and 4) the student's acceptance of personal responsibility necessary for the college campus environment.

Students in the Institute of Culinary Arts may be eligible for dual enrollment courses through Johnson and Wales.

All credits earned are transferred back to the local high school from which the student graduates. College courses taken while in the program also remain on the student's permanent college transcript.

The State Board of Education shall determine the number of post secondary credit hours earned through dual enrollment pursuant to s.1007.271 that satisfy the requirements of a district's inter-institutional articulation agreement according to s.1007.235 and that equal one full credit of the equivalent high school course identified pursuant to s.1007.271 (6).

Absent such determination by the State Board of Education, dual enrollment students will earn .50 credit for each 3-hour course completed.

To qualify for dual enrollment programs, the student must demonstrate readiness for college-level coursework and achieve the requisite GPA for the specific program requested.

- c. Part-time dual enrollment is available to students in certain Career and Technical Education programs through Santa Fe College and Lake City Community College (i.e., Academy of Health Professions' Dental Aide, Allied Health and First Responder, and the School of Construction at SFCC programs). Students must meet the college's requirements for enrollment.

### 3. **Advanced Placement College Courses**

When enrollment is sufficient, high schools provide Advanced Placement courses for qualified students and offer students the option of participation in the Advanced Placement Examination Program. Many colleges recognize passing scores for college credit and/or advanced standing.

Each school district, community college, and state university may conduct advanced placement instruction within dual enrollment courses. Each joint dual enrollment and advanced placement course shall integrate, at a minimum, the course structure recommended by the College Board and the structure that corresponds to the common course number. No student shall be funded through both programs for enrollment in a course provided through this section. No student shall be reported for advanced placement funding who fails to meet the examination requirement for such funding.

Postsecondary credit for student completions of a joint dual enrollment and advanced placement course shall be awarded, based on the stated preference of the student, as either dual enrollment or

advanced placement credit; however, an award of advanced placement credit shall be limited to students who score a minimum of 3, on a 5-point scale, on the Advanced Placement Exam. No student shall claim double credit based on the completion of a single joint dual enrollment and advanced placement course, nor shall any student enrolled be required to complete the Advanced Placement Exam. Students enrolled in Advanced Placement courses shall be exempt from the payment of any fees for the examinations. [s.1007.272 F.S.]

#### **4. International Baccalaureate Program**

The International Baccalaureate Program, offered under the auspices of the IB Organization, is available as a magnet program at Eastside High School. The IB offers a traditional rigorous college preparatory program that culminates in an IB Diploma. Many colleges and universities recognize the IB Diploma for college credit and/or advanced standing. Students may apply for the pre-IB program during the high school registration process.

Students enrolled in IB courses shall be exempt from paying examination fees for the IB examinations.

#### **5. Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE)**

The Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE), offered under the auspices of Cambridge University, is a magnet program at Gainesville High School. The AICE program is a rigorous, internationally recognized course of study for academically talented students that culminates in the AICE Diploma. Many colleges and universities recognize the AICE diploma for college credit and/or advanced standing. Application to the AICE program is done during the spring registration process.

Students enrolled in AICE courses shall be exempt from paying examination fees for AICE examinations.

#### **6. Early College Admission**

Qualified high school seniors shall be provided the opportunity to complete requirements for graduation by attending an accredited college and successfully completing a normal class load at that college. High school credit shall be awarded for college or university level coursework successfully completed at accredited institutions. This course work is also creditable toward the associate or baccalaureate degree. Qualifications for early college admission include:

- a. Eighteen (18) credits which include all required credits in specific subject areas except English IV, American Government, and Economics requirements.
- b. Overall unweighted grade point average of 3.5 through first semester, grade 11.
- c. Parent permission.
- d. Completed application form.
- e. Letter stating reasons for application.
- f. Approval of school-level faculty committee.
- g. Acceptance by an accredited college.

A normal course load with a “C” average or above must be maintained during the first year in college. Students enrolled in early admission are exempt from the payment of registration, matriculation, and lab fees.

#### **7. Travel Study**

The Board shall neither sponsor nor recognize student travel study for credit toward promotion or graduation.

#### **8. Home Education**

Home education students may participate in dual enrollment, career and technical dual enrollment, early admission, and credit by examination. Credit earned by home education students through dual enrollment shall apply toward the completion of a home education program that meets the requirements of [s.1002.41 F.S.]

#### **9. Adult Education**

Students who are 16 years of age or older and have discontinued high school are eligible to enroll in the Adult Education Program. Students, grades 9-12, may take after normal school hours Adult Education classes with permission from their home school (limited to three (3) credits).

Students who have been expelled from the regular school program are not eligible to enroll in the Adult Education Program during the period of expulsion. Students who withdraw from the regular school program and enter the Adult Education Program must have specific Board approval to re-enter the regular school program. The Board may delegate this responsibility to a district level administrator. Veterans enrolled in the Adult Education Program may be granted two (2) elective credits for one (1) year or more of honorable military service.

Graduation requirements for adult students are the same as specified for regular high school students in school board policy with the following exceptions:

- a. Credit in physical education is not required and shall be substituted with elective credit.
- b. The laboratory component of the science credit is waived.
- c. Courses in comprehensive art, art portfolio, ceramics/pottery, drawing, painting, creative photography, sculpture, dance, drama, musical theatre, instrumental music, or vocal music may be taken and, if satisfactorily completed by adult secondary students, shall satisfy the performing arts requirement for graduation.

#### **10. Credit by Examination**

Secondary students may generate postsecondary credit by receipt of a specified minimum score on nationally standardized general or subject area examinations. These examinations and the corresponding minimum scores required for an award of credit shall be delineated by the State Board of Education in a statewide articulation agreement. [s.1007.27(7)F.S.]

## **11. High School Equivalency Diploma (GED)**

The High School Equivalency Diploma is awarded in accordance with State Board of Education Rule 6A-6.21, FAC, which states that the District Superintendent may award State High School Equivalency Diplomas based on successful testing under the following conditions:

- a. The qualifying of individuals and the administration of the procedures shall be under the direction of the supervisor of the Adult Education Program.
- b. A candidate shall be at least 18 years of age and not enrolled in a regular day school.
- c. Individuals who are 16-18 years old may make application to take the test if they are officially withdrawn from school and meet the requirements as set by the district. For specific information related to underage candidates, the individual should contact the Adult Education Program of the Alachua County Public Schools.
- d. Candidates must submit individual applications that provide essential personal data, education and training records, and information regarding residence.
- e. Out-of-county applicants over the age of 18 are eligible to test in Alachua County.
- f. Out-of-county applicants under the age of 18 cannot test except in their home county.
- g. Candidates shall reside in the State at the time of application.
- h. Candidates will pay a fee as established by the Florida Department of Education, for the complete five (5)-test battery at the time the application is submitted.
- i. A standard score of 410 or above on each of the five parts of the test and a total score of 2250 are required to be eligible to receive the High School Equivalency Diploma (GED).

## **12. The GED Exit Option**

High school students who meet the following eligibility criteria may be eligible for the GED Exit Option:

- a. 16 years of age, or older, and currently enrolled in a PK-12 program
- b. Enrolled in courses that meet high school graduation requirements
- c. Overage for grade, behind in credits, low GPA, and/or in jeopardy of not graduating with cohort group.
- d. Class or peer group with whom they entered kindergarten is graduating, or has graduated.
- e. Minimum reading level at seventh grade, as documented by the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) reading component or other test to determine grade level proficiency.
- f. Acceptable scores on the official GED Practice Tests, administered under student testing conditions.
- g. Completed a minimum of three years in high school.
- h. Passing scores on Grade 10 FCAT
- i. Recommended by the guidance counselor and/or principal.
- j. Parent permission is granted.

This option may not be used for early graduation, and will be an additional option at the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) sites, but will not replace the GED option currently available at DJJ sites.

### **Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program**

The Bright Futures Scholarship Program consists of three types of awards:

1. the Florida Academic Scholarship
2. the Florida Medallion Scholarship
3. the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship

Students and parents should consult with their guidance counselors for specific information about qualifying for the Florida Academic Scholars Award and the Florida Medallion Scholars Award.

The Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars Award recognizes and rewards both academic achievement and career and technical preparation by high school students. A student is eligible for the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars award if the student meets the general eligibility requirements for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship program and:

1. completes a career and technical program at the secondary level of at least 3 credits
2. earns a minimum score on each sub section of the CPT, ACT or SAT. Composite scores are not accepted.
3. earns a minimum weighted GPA of 3.0 on all required courses; and
4. earns a minimum un-weighted GPA of 3.5 on a 4.0 scale for secondary career and technical courses comprising the career and technical program.

### **Florida Ready-to-Work Credential**

Students who successfully pass designated assessments and complete designated programs of study may earn the Florida Ready-to-Work Credential. The credentials may be earned at the bronze, silver, or gold level.

### **Standard High School Diploma Designations**

Beginning with the 2008 – 2009 school year the following designations are added to the standard high school diploma, as applicable:

- Major Area of Interest
- Completion of four (4) or more accelerated college credit courses in AP, IB, AICE or dual enrollment
- Career Education certification
- Florida Ready-to-Work Credential

# Exceptional Student Education

## High School

### Student Rights for Instruction

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 2004* states that students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible.

Modifications to the general curriculum occur only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that mastery of the general curriculum with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. In addition, children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education, related services, and accommodations or modifications designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment and independent living. The needs and services of the student are documented on the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

### Promotion and Placement

Grade placement for students with disabilities is determined by the same criteria for promotion and placement as for all students based on credits earned. All requirements for general education students also apply to exceptional students who may earn credits while in special education, general education, or vocational education courses. While enrolled in a special education class, the student may earn credit toward a regular course if the course is equivalent to the regular course.

In accordance with Florida Statute 1003.43, an exceptional student course will be deemed to be equivalent to a regular course only if the enrolled students are required to meet regular student performance standards as outlined in official course frameworks. Exceptional students will be required to master the content to the same extent required of non-exceptional students, with the understanding that certain teaching accommodations may be utilized. Acceptable accommodations include:

- ◆ An increase or decrease in the instructional time
- ◆ Variations of instructional strategies
- ◆ Teacher instruction or student response through special communication systems
- ◆ Classroom and district test administration procedures and other evaluation procedures may be modified as specified in Rule 6A-1.0943, FAC., to accommodate the student's disability.

To assure exceptional students the opportunity to meet graduation requirements the following strategies are allowed:

- ◆ Assignment of the exceptional student to an exceptional class for a basic course with the same student performance standards as those for non-exceptional students, and/or
- ◆ Assignment of the exceptional student to a basic education class for instruction to accommodate the student's exceptionality.

The strategy(s) chosen would be based upon an assessment of the student's needs and shall reflect this decision in the student's individual educational plan. [S.1003.43 F.S.]

Courses designated as exceptional student courses may be used for elective credit for a standard diploma or credit toward a special diploma.

## Diploma Options

Florida offers all students options regarding the course of study leading to a high school diploma. For students with disabilities, the diploma option decision occurs through the IEP process during the student's eighth grade year or during the school year of the student's fourteenth birthday. The student is invited to participate in this meeting. The team should select the diploma option that best prepares the student for educational and career goals after high school. The diploma option decision is revisited at each annual IEP meeting.

## Standard Diploma

The **standard diploma** is a high school diploma earned by most students with disabilities who graduate from a Florida high school. To earn a standard diploma, students with disabilities must meet the graduation requirements set by the State of Florida and the local school district. These requirements are detailed in the general education section of the Pupil Progression Plan with the following additional considerations:

**FCAT Waiver:** For certain students with disabilities who have IEPs, a waiver may be considered for the FCAT requirement. A waiver can be granted if the IEP team determines that the FCAT does not accurately measure a student's ability, even with allowable accommodations. Students who are seniors pursuing the traditional 24-credit standard diploma program are eligible for an FCAT waiver.

To be considered for a waiver from the FCAT graduation requirement, the student must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Be identified as having a disability as defined in Section 1007.02 (2), F.S.,
2. Have a current Individual Educational Plan (IEP),
3. Be a senior or a student with disabilities who remains enrolled seeking a standard diploma for whom the FCAT is the required graduation test,
4. Have demonstrated mastery of the Grade 10 Sunshine State Standards (SSS),
5. Have taken the grade 10 FCAT with appropriate, allowable accommodations at least twice including March of the senior year or if not continuously enrolled in public school in Florida, at least once during each year of enrollment in grades 10, 11, or 12,
6. Have participated in intensive remediation for FCAT Reading and FCAT Math if passing scores were not earned in the assessments, and
7. Be progressing toward meeting the state's 24 credit/course and 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA) requirements and any other district requirements for graduation with a standard diploma

Students with a disability who transfer to Florida from another state in the 12<sup>th</sup> grade are eligible to be considered for the waiver. However, students must be provided with every opportunity to take and pass the FCAT. For example, a 12<sup>th</sup> grade student who enrolls in a Florida public school from another state at the beginning of the school year must take the FCAT during the October and March administrations. However, a 12<sup>th</sup> grader who enrolls in a Florida public school in January may only take the March FCAT and shall still be considered for the waiver.

## **Special Diploma**

**Special diplomas are available to student with disabilities who are not able to meet the requirements for a standard diploma. Two special diploma options are available for students with disabilities. Special diplomas are available to certain students with disabilities who have been properly identified as:**

- Specific learning disability
- Emotionally or behavioral disabilities
- Intellectual disabilities
- Deaf or hard-of-hearing
- Orthopedic impairment
- Other health impairment
- Traumatic brain injury
- Language impaired
- Autism spectrum disorder
- Dual sensory impaired

**Students who are identified solely as hospital/homebound, visually impaired or speech impaired are not eligible for a special diploma.**

# Special Diploma Option 1

## Courses or Subject Required for a Special Diploma 1

The following courses or subjects shall be required for graduation for students who are seeking a Special Diploma  
 1. *Courses in each of these categories can be either exceptional student education courses or their corresponding regular education courses.*

<b>Minimum of 8 credits selected from Academic, Supported, or Participatory Levels:</b>
Academic or Life Skills courses
Functional Living Skills courses
Cognitive and Linguistic Skills course
<b>Minimum of 4 credits selected from:</b>
Vocational, Career, Technical courses
Life Management and Transition courses
Life Sustaining and Environmental Interaction Courses
<b>Minimum of 12 Electives to include:</b>
1 credit of physical education or specially designed physical education
11 credits of electives
<b>24 Total Credits</b>
* 1 credit in Language Arts and 1 credit of Math may be awarded to a student who has earned six (6) or more vocational/career credits.

**Sunshine State Standards for Special Diploma Access Points:** Student must demonstrate proficiency of the Sunshine State Standards Access Points. The Sunshine State Standards Access Points are assessed by the Florida Alternate Assessment at three levels of functioning.

- *Independent Level:* Students are able to perform the skills for each benchmark on their own.
- *Supported Level:* Students require ongoing use of prompting or supervision in order to perform the skills for each benchmark.
- *Participatory Level:* Students require extensive personal assistance to be able to participate in activities of daily living.

Proficiency of the Sunshine State Standards Access Points at the appropriate level for the student is demonstrated through successful completion of ESE courses and evidenced either by successfully passing the FCAT or through the Florida Alternate Assessment. Students who qualify for exemption from the FCAT due to significant cognitive impairments must be assessed with the Florida Alternate Assessment.

### Extended Time to Meet Graduation Requirements

Students with disabilities who have not earned a standard diploma may stay in school until the end of the school year in which they turn 22 years of age. This also applies to students with disabilities who have been awarded a special diploma, certificate of completion, or special certificate of completion. The district must continue to offer services until the end of the school year in which the student turns 22 years old, or until the student earns a standard diploma, whichever comes first. Services may include academic supports, vocational training, or transition services including supports for accessing post-secondary services, independent living, and job placement agencies.

Also, if a student earns a special diploma, he/she may enroll in Adult Education and work towards earning a standard diploma or a General Education Development (GED) diploma to facilitate access to postsecondary education. He/she also may enroll in vocational/technical schools, in adherence to their guidelines for placement. (s.1007.02, F.S.)

## **Transfer Student Pursuing Special Diploma Option 1**

Students who enter an Alachua County Public School their eleventh or twelfth grade year from another Florida public school, state, or foreign country shall not be required to spend additional time in Alachua County Public Schools in order to meet the Special Diploma Option 1 course requirements, if the student has met all requirements of the school district, state, or country from which he/she is transferring.

## **Special Diploma-Option 2**

Special Diploma Option 2 is an individually designed, flexible option based on mastery of employment and community competencies. This option may be selected for a student age 16 and older that has had previous job experiences. Following selection of this option, students are required to be employed in paid jobs in the community for 180 days (2 semesters).

In order for a student to receive a Special Diploma under this option, procedures for selection of the appropriate employment and community competencies in accordance with Rule [6A-1.0996 FAC], require that a student must:

- Achieve all annual goals and short term objectives related to employment and community competencies specified by the Transition IEP,
- Be successfully employed in a community-based job for 180 days (2 semesters), at or above minimum wage, for a minimum of 30 hours per week (unless physically or emotionally incapable as a consequence of the student's disability) in compliance with the requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act, and
- Demonstrate mastery of competencies specified in the Graduation Training Plan

*Graduation Training Plan.* The Graduation Training Plan identifies the following elements:

- Competencies the student is expected to demonstrate related to employment
- Competencies needed by the student related to living in the community
- Criteria used to determine mastery of employment and community competencies
- Work schedule and the number of hours per week the student will work
- Description of the student's supervision related to employment to be provided by school district personnel, including location and frequency.

## **Certificate of Completion**

The regular certificate of completion is available to any student who passes the required courses in high school but doesn't achieve the required GPA and did not pass the Grade 10 FCAT. Students with disabilities who are eligible for a regular certificate of completion may also choose to graduate under Special Diploma Option 1. The special certificate of completion is available to students with disabilities who do not meet all graduation requirements for a special diploma.

## **Movement Between Diploma Options**

A student may move between various diploma options. The decision regarding whether a student chooses a course of study leading to a Standard Diploma or Special Diploma is reviewed annually. For a student to move from a **Standard Diploma** to **Special Diploma** Option 1 or 2, the IEP committee must meet and revise the IEP to reflect change of diploma option. The IEP committee will determine which standard diploma option courses taken meet the requirement for Special Diploma 1. Regular education courses may be substituted for any special diploma subject area as determined at the IEP meeting.

## **Reporting Student Progress**

### **Report Cards/Grading Procedures**

Report card grades for students with disabilities are first determined by the same criteria for grades for all students, with some additional considerations. Students with disabilities may receive report card grades in general education or special education classes that are based on instructional level rather than grade placement if determined appropriate by the IEP team. Accommodations/Modifications to the general curriculum are documented on the student's IEP as appropriate. The standard report card is used for a vast majority of students with disabilities. However in limited cases, the IEP team may opt to use an alternate report card when the standard report card would be ineffective in communicating the progress of the student

### **Parent Notification of Student Progress**

Parents of students with disabilities will be regularly informed as to their student's progress toward the annual goals of the IEP and the extent to which the progress is sufficient to enable the student to achieve the goals by the end of the year. Progress towards IEP goals and statement of likelihood of attainment is sent home with the report cards.

## **Guidelines for Determining Appropriate Accommodations/Modifications for Students with Disabilities**

### **Accommodations to the General Curriculum**

Consistent with the accountability requirements of *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA)*, the vast majority of students with disabilities in Florida are expected to demonstrate mastery of the Sunshine State Standards, participate in the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT), and graduate high school with a standard diploma. In order to achieve this expectation, students with disabilities must be provided access to the general curriculum to the maximum extent possible with appropriately designed instruction and accommodations. An accommodation is intended for those students who would be denied meaningful participation in instruction and assessment without the accommodation. Accommodations allow a student with a disability the same access to instruction and assessment as students without disabilities. Accommodations for instruction and assessment are determined at the IEP meeting and indicated on the student's IEP.

The following guidelines should be considered when making individual accommodations decisions:

- Accommodations are adjustments made to the way skills and concepts are taught and assessed but do not affect the expected outcomes in relation to the Sunshine State Standards.
- Accommodations should facilitate an accurate demonstration of what the student knows or can do.
- Accommodations should remove or neutralize the limiting effects of the student's disability by altering the presentation, response, schedule, setting, use of assistive devices, or test administration in appropriate ways.
- Accommodations should not change the intent of the instruction or test. (i.e. the educational goal or skill measured by the test).
- Accommodations should not be used to compensate for lack of achievement.
- Accommodations should not provide the student with unfair advantage or interfere with the validity of the test. They must not change the underlying skills that are being measured by the test.
- Test accommodations must be the same or nearly the same as accommodations used by the student in completing the classroom instructional and assessment activities.
- Accommodations must be necessary to allow the student to demonstrate knowledge, ability, skill, or mastery required by the assessment.

### **Testing Accommodations**

Rule [6A-1.0943, FAC] permits test accommodations for any student with a disability who has a current IEP. Expanded accommodations on state and district assessment are authorized for students with disabilities through executive order. Allowable accommodations are detailed in the test administration manuals under the following categories:

- Flexible Presentation
- Flexible Responding
- Flexible Scheduling

- Flexible Setting
- Use of Assistive Technology

## **Parent Notification of Testing Accommodations**

A parent must provide signed consent for a student to receive instructional accommodations and/or modifications that would not be permitted on the statewide assessments and must acknowledge in writing that he or she understands the implications of such accommodations and/or modifications.

## **Modifications to the General Curriculum**

Modifications are changes in the way skills and concepts are taught and assessed, AND modifications are changes in expected outcomes and curricular standards. When students are unable to meet the expectations of the general curriculum, the expectations are modified. Modifications to the curriculum are generally used in coordination with an assessment that is compatible with the modified expectations. The general education curriculum may be modified to meet the student's needs. All modifications are addressed in the student's IEP.

The following guidelines should be considered when making modifications decisions:

- Curricular modifications should be considered only after all types of accommodations have been exhausted.
- The IEP team must consider the long-term impacts of lowering the expectations for students.
- Students with a disability who are not challenged to reach the same level of achievement as the non-disabled classmates in elementary or middle school may find that they are not ready for a program that leads to a standard diploma in high school.
- A student's priority educational needs may be different from the general curriculum specific in the Sunshine State Standards for the academic subject areas. For example, a student with a moderate or severe disability may need to learn how to care for personal needs and develop interpersonal communication skills. The student's annual goals would reflect the student's needs in personal care, socialization, and interpersonal communication, and not the academics of the regular school program.
- Students who require modified standards or an alternate curriculum may meet the criteria for exemption from FCAT and therefore be required to participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment through grade 11.

## **Guidelines for Exemptions of Selected Students from State or District Assessment**

In order to be excluded from FCAT, a student must meet the following requirements according to Rule [6A-1.0943, FAC]:

- The student's demonstrated cognitive ability prevents the student from completing required coursework and achieving the Sunshine State Standards, even with appropriate and allowable course accommodations, and

- The student requires extensive direct instruction to accomplish the application and transfer of skills and competencies needed for domestic, community living, leisure and vocational activities.

When deciding whether a student should or should not participate in FCAT, the Florida Department of Education has suggested that IEP teams consider the following:

- Is the student unable to master the Sunshine State Standards, even with appropriate and allowable accommodations?
- Is the student's demonstrated cognitive ability the primary reason for the inability to master these standards?
- Is the student participating in a modified or functional curriculum based upon competencies in the Sunshine State Standards for Special Diploma for all academic areas?
- Does the student require extensive direct instruction in functional academics and vocational competencies as well as domestic, community living, and leisure activities?
- Does the student have deficits in adaptive behavior as demonstrated by the inability to function effectively and independently in everyday living skills (interpersonal and social interactions) across a variety of settings?

If the IEP team cannot answer "yes" to all of the questions, the student should participate in the FCAT, with allowable accommodations, as appropriate.

If the IEP team determines that the student meets the criteria for exemption from FCAT, the student must participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment.

## **Extended School Year**

For students eligible for Exceptional Student Education, the need for Extended School Year (ESY) services is determined at an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) conference and documented on the IEP. Multiple criteria for eligibility for ESY services, as defined by DOE, may include but are not limited to: consideration of the likelihood of regression/recoupment, critical points of instruction, emerging skills, nature or severity of disability, interfering behaviors, rate of progress, or special circumstances.

IEP conferences to consider extended school services are held prior to May 1, in order to allow sufficient notice to families regarding the decision for extended school year services.