



## Georgia Graduation Rule Revision Frequently Asked Questions

### **Why is the graduation rule being changed now?**

The rule is being revised in conjunction with the implementation of the new Georgia Performance Standards in English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and in other electives. The new curriculum and the new graduation requirements will help students graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in college and the workplace.

### **When will the changes go into effect?**

The new requirements will go into effect for students enrolling in the ninth grade for the first time in the 2008-2009 school year and subsequent years.

### **What are the major changes in the new rule?**

Georgia's "tiered" diploma system has been eliminated. Currently, there are four tiers, each with different requirements: College Preparatory (CP), College Preparatory with Distinction (CP+), Technology/Career (TC) and Technology/Career with Distinction (TC+). The new rule has one common set of requirements for all students with various options for meeting those requirements, including advanced courses such as Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, post-secondary options and career-oriented courses offered under our Career, Technical and Agricultural Education (CTAE) programs. It is important that all students – regardless of their post-secondary plans – have a rigorous core of classes.

### **How will these changes affect students who are currently in high school?**

The new rule will not affect students who enrolled in the ninth grade before 2008. They will remain under the current graduation rule requirements.

### **How are the new graduation requirements different from Georgia's current set of graduation requirements?**

All students will be required to complete a total of 23 units for graduation. All students will take:

- 4 units of English (no change)
- 4 units of Science (an increase of 1 unit)
- 4 units of Mathematics (an increase for students on a career track)
- 3 units of Social Studies (no change)
- At least 3 units of Career/Technical/Agricultural **and/or** Foreign Language **and/or** Fine Arts courses (up from at least 1 unit)
- At least 4 additional electives
- 1 health/physical education course

### **Under the new rule, will local school districts be allowed to make decisions regarding graduation requirements?**

Yes. The State Board of Education establishes minimum requirements for graduation. Local school districts can establish additional graduation requirements beyond those set by the State Board of Education.

**Will the new rule force high schools to change their daily class schedule?**

No. The new rule allows flexibility in developing a schedule that meets the needs of the local district and school.

**Will the new Graduation Rule reduce the number of electives students may take?**

No. Under the new rule, students will be required to take 7 electives. Students are encouraged to choose electives that support their future academic and career goals. A wide range of courses are available, including academic, career tech, fine arts, foreign language, advanced placement, and post-secondary options.

**Will these new requirements cause more students to struggle?**

For students who need more time and attention in order to master course standards and meet graduation requirements, schools will provide support classes.

**Will Fine Arts, Foreign Language and CTAE courses be required in the new rule?**

A total of 3 units are required from CTAE **and/or** Foreign Language **and/or** Fine Arts for all students. Students planning to enter or transfer into a University System of Georgia institution must take two units of the same foreign language.

**Can students take high school courses in middle school for credit?**

Unit credit may be awarded for courses offered in the middle grades that meet 9-12 Georgia Performance Standards requirements. The local Board of Education must approve the awarding of this credit.

**What about students who receive special education services?**

Students with Disabilities will be eligible to earn a regular diploma by meeting the requirements outlined in the rule and in their Individualized Education Program.

**How will these new graduation requirements affect advanced learners?**

Advanced classes will continue to be offered to students, including Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, dual enrollment, and industry certification courses.

**Will students need to take two years of a foreign language?**

Our new graduation requirements encourage all students to take foreign language classes, regardless of post-secondary plans. Students planning to enter or transfer into a University System of Georgia institution must take two units of the same foreign language.

**Why are the high school math courses changing?**

Georgia is implementing a new mathematics curriculum, the Georgia Performance Standards (GPS). The GPS were approved for all core content areas several years ago, along with a phase-in plan for implementation. The new Georgia Performance Standards for mathematics courses integrate algebra, geometry and statistics at all levels. Since the new Standards do not match the content in our current math courses, course titles such as Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, etc. will be replaced by Mathematics I/Accelerated Mathematics I, etc. Beginning in 2008, two math sequences will be available: Mathematics I, II, III, IV and Accelerated Mathematics I, II, III, IV with multiple fourth-year options.