

High School Academic Policy Guide



INTRODUCTION

Dear Colleagues,

The New York City Department of Education's academic policy guides consolidate the many requirements for academic programming, assessments, promotion, grading, and student data into one reference document. The transition to remote and blended learning has been a significant shift for New York City. Students, families, teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, service providers, and many others in students' lives have had to overcome enormous challenges. In spite of this, we have not wavered in our commitment to supporting and educating our students.

During this time, our policies must reflect the wide range of experiences and challenges that we are facing as a community. Our goal in publishing the academic policy guides is to provide you with clear interpretations of academic policies and guidance about how to apply them in different scenarios. The academic policy guides are revised each year based on changes to policies and feedback from schools and field staff. This year the academic policy guides are also designed to help schools adapt—not recreate—their policies to meet students' needs in a blended and remote learning context.

This academic policy guide is just one tool that you may use in providing every student with rigorous academic experiences that considers their individual strengths and needs. Use this guide as a resource as you program and grade students, develop instructional supports and interventions, and set your own school-level policies. As you implement these policies, we encourage you to apply an equity and empathy lens, identifying opportunities to examine how having strong policies, systems, and structures impacts the outcomes of every student.

As you plan for the upcoming school year and beyond, refer to this guide and share it with key members of your school community. This guide, as well as additional resources on policies pertaining to academic requirements and programming, can be found on the Department of Education's [academic policy](#) and [systems](#) resource pages on the [InfoHub](#). Please contact your [Borough/Citywide Office's academic policy and systems lead](#) for additional guidance on any of the topics described in these resources, and refer to the [news section](#) of the [Principal's Hub](#) for updates.

Sincerely,



Linda Chen
Chief Academic Officer
New York City Department of Education

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	3
I. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS.....	6
A. DIPLOMA TYPES—Updated Fall 2020.....	7
B. COURSE CREDITS—Updated Fall 2020.....	11
1. English Language Arts.....	12
2. Social Studies.....	13
3. Math.....	14
4. Science—Updated Fall 2020.....	14
5. Languages other than English (World Languages)—Updated Fall 2020.....	15
6. Physical Education—Updated Fall 2020.....	17
7. Health Education—Updated Fall 2020.....	19
8. Arts Education.....	20
9. Electives.....	20
C. ASSESSMENTS—Updated Fall 2020.....	22
1. Regents Exams—Updated Fall 2020.....	22
2. NYSED-Approved Alternatives and the 4+1 Policy.....	23
3. Appeals to Graduate with Low Scores on Regents Examinations.....	25
4. Safety Net Flexibilities.....	26
5. Regents Exam Waivers—Updated Fall 2020.....	28
6. Schools using Performance-Based Assessment Tasks (PBATs) in Lieu of Regents Exams—Updated Fall 2020.....	30
D. DIPLOMA ENDORSEMENTS.....	30
1. Arts Endorsement—Updated Fall 2020.....	30
2. Seal of Biliteracy.....	31
3. Career and Technology Education (CTE) Endorsement—Updated Fall 2020.....	31
4. Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Endorsement—Updated Fall 2020.....	31
5. Honors Designation.....	32
6. Mastery in Math Designation—Updated Fall 2020.....	32
7. Mastery in Science Designation—Updated Fall 2020.....	33
8. Service Seal.....	33
E. COMMENCEMENT CREDENTIALS.....	33
1. Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential—Updated Fall 2020.....	33
2. Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential.....	35
F. GRADUATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.....	35
1. Promotion and Grade Level.....	35
2. Graduation Cohort Policy.....	36
3. Certifying Students for Graduation—Updated Fall 2020.....	38
4. Early or Late Graduation.....	40
5. Student Participation in Commencement Ceremonies.....	40
G. CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK (CUNY) PROFICIENCY AND ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS.....	41
1. CUNY Four-Year Colleges—Updated Fall 2020.....	41
2. CUNY Community Colleges.....	41
II. COURSE CREDIT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.....	42
A. CREDIT-BEARING COURSES—Updated Fall 2020.....	42
B. NON-CREDIT-BEARING COURSES.....	43

C. ADDITIONAL AND FRACTIONAL CREDIT FOR COURSES	44
1. Additional Credit	44
2. Fractional Credit	45
D. INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSES	45
E. ADDITIONAL WAYS TO EARN CREDIT	46
1. Online and Blended Courses—Updated Fall 2020	46
2. Internships and Service-Learning	48
3. Independent Study	49
4. Credit by Examination—Updated Fall 2020	49
5. Awarding High School Credit for College Courses	50
6. Earning Credit after Previously Failing a Course—Updated Fall 2020	50
F. TRANSFER CREDIT	52
1. Previous School Location	52
2. Grade and Cohort Placement of Transfer Students	54
G. GRADE 8 COURSE ACCELERATION	54
III. POLICIES FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS	55
A. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLs)	55
1. New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL)	56
2. New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT)	56
B. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	56
1. New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)	57
2. Transition Services for Students with Disabilities—Updated Fall 2020	58
C. TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES—Updated Fall 2020	59
D. ACADEMIC INTERVENTION SERVICES (AIS)	60
E. RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)	61
F. HOME AND HOSPITAL INSTRUCTION	61
G. HOME SCHOOLING—Updated Fall 2020	62
H. STUDENTS RETURNING FROM COURT-ORDERED SETTINGS	62
IV. PROGRAMMING AND SYSTEMS POLICIES	63
A. TERM MODELS—Updated Fall 2020	63
B. SCHEDULING IN STARS	64
1. Course Codes—Updated Fall 2020	64
2. Course titles	65
3. Section Properties—Updated Fall 2020	66
4. Push-in/Pull-out Instruction	66
V. GRADING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	66
A. GRADING POLICIES	66
B. COURSE MARKS AND REPORT CARDS	68
1. Course Marks—Updated Fall 2020	69
2. Report Cards	70
3. Mastery-Based Learning	70
C. INCORPORATING REGENTS EXAMS INTO FINAL COURSE GRADES—Updated Fall 2020	71
D. TRANSCRIPT UPDATES	71
E. CALCULATION OF GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA) AND RANK—Updated Fall 2020	72
VI. ATTENDANCE, DISCHARGE, AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES	73

A. ATTENDANCE—Updated Fall 2020.....	73
1. Administration and Systems.....	73
2. Policy and Practice.....	73
3. Early Intervention.....	74
4. Elevated Interventions.....	74
B. DISCHARGING STUDENTS—Updated Fall 2020.....	74
C. STUDENT RECORDS RETENTION AND TRANSFER—Updated Fall 2020.....	75
1. Changes to Student Records.....	76
VII. APPENDICES.....	78
A. CREDENTIAL, DIPLOMA, AND ENDORSEMENT CODES IN ATS.....	78
1. Credential Codes.....	78
2. Diploma Granting Codes.....	78
3. Diploma Endorsement Codes.....	79
B. COURSE AND EXAM MARKS TABLES—Updated Fall 2020.....	80
C. SUMMARY OF REGENTS AND LOCAL DIPLOMA GRADUATION OPTIONS.....	83
D. FORMS.....	84

I. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

[New York State Education Department \(NYSED\) Commissioner’s Regulations Part 100.5](#) establishes the requirements for earning a high school diploma in New York State. To meet diploma requirements, students must earn [specific course credits](#) and pass [specific assessments](#), typically Regents exams or NYSED-approved alternatives. These regulations and additional local policies from New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) are described in this guide.

Impact of COVID-19 on Academic Policies: In March 2020, Governor Cuomo issued [Executive Order 202.4](#) which closed schools for two weeks due to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19, school buildings remained closed and schools transitioned to a remote learning model for the rest of the 2019-20 school year (including summer). During this time both NYSED and NYCDOE implemented policies to address the necessary adjustments to our education system.

Many of these flexibilities extended into the 2020-21 school year as schools utilized both remote and blended learning models. A few examples are:

Regents waivers as a result of cancelled Regents administrations (June 2020, August 2020, January 2021)

Instructional time waivers and flexibilities

An NYCDOE grading policy centered around flexibility and empathy for students

These policy changes are addressed in their corresponding sections of this guide.

High schools also serving elementary and middle school grades should refer to the [Elementary](#) and [Middle School](#) Academic Policy Guides for information applicable to these grade levels.

For academic policy and systems questions, schools can refer to the [academic policy](#) and [systems](#) resource webpages, or contact their [academic policy and systems leads](#).

The [STARS](#) suite of applications is the NYCDOE’s official record of students’ programs, grades, and progress toward completing academic requirements.¹ STARS reflects academic information for all NYCDOE public school students in grades K–12. All high schools must use STARS to enter information about the instruction and supports students are receiving throughout the school day; to reflect student-teacher-subject relationships; and to enter student grades and credits earned. To ensure that STARS data accurately captures students’ academic programs and outcomes, high schools must follow the guidelines described in the [High School Course Code Directory](#) and on the [STARS wiki](#). STARS is managed by the NYCDOE’s Office of Academic Policy and Systems. See the section of this guide on [scheduling in STARS](#) and visit the [STARS wiki](#) for more information.

¹ The STARS Suite includes three platforms across grades K–12: STARS Classroom, STARS Client, and STARS Admin.

A. DIPLOMA TYPES—Updated Fall 2020

[NYSED's Part 100.5](#) defines the minimum program requirements for students to earn a high school diploma. There are three diplomas offered in New York City and State: advanced Regents, Regents, and local diplomas. All of these diplomas are valid within and outside the State. Students can use these wherever a high school diploma is required. To earn a high school diploma, students are required to:

- Earn 44 credits, distributed across specific subjects²
- Pass assessments in the subjects of English language arts (ELA), math, social studies, and science

Impact of COVID-19 on Graduation Requirements: The credit and assessment requirements to earn a New York City high school diploma remain unchanged with the transition to remote and blended learning. Students must still earn 44 credits distributed across specific subjects and pass assessments in the subjects of English language arts (ELA), math, social studies, and science. However, the way that students earn credit and meet the assessment requirements have been modified. See the [Course Credit](#) and [Regents Waiver](#) sections of this guide for specific policy changes.

[Credit](#) and [assessment](#) requirements for each type of diploma are summarized in the tables below. This information is also available in the form of graduation requirements cards, which are distributed by schools to students and families and are published on the [NYCDOE website](#).

In special circumstances, some students may graduate with lower exam scores and earn a local diploma. The [table on the next page](#) outlines specific eligibility requirements and exam flexibilities.

All students should be encouraged to meet the requirements for the most rigorous option possible. To support college and career readiness, schools may communicate more rigorous academic expectations than those defined by New York State graduation requirements; however, schools may not withhold diplomas from students who have completed the minimum New York State and City graduation requirements.

² [Part 100.5](#) requires students to earn at least 22 units of credit to earn a diploma. The NYCDOE calculates credits towards graduation using a semester-based model, in which the State's requirement of 22 units of credit equates to 44 credits. Throughout this guide, the NYCDOE semester-based credit model is used in reference to the graduation requirements. Students who entered grade 9 prior to 2007 may have varying requirements, as outlined in [Part 100.5](#).

Diploma Type	Eligibility	Credits Requirements	Assessment Requirements ³
Advanced Regents	All students	Earn 44 required credits , including at least six credits in a language other than English (LOTE) ⁴	Pass nine specific assessments with scores of 65 or higher ⁵
Regents	All students	Earn 44 required credits	Pass five specific assessments with scores of 65 or higher ⁶
Local	<p>All Safety Net-eligible students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) Students with Section 504 plans that specify Safety Net eligibility Students with disabilities who were declassified while in grades 8–12 whose last IEP specified Safety Net eligibility <p>Students with specific Regents appeals, including students who are not Safety Net-eligible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students with two successful Low Score appeals on Regents exams, including students without disabilities Students with a successful New Arrival ELA appeal 	Earn 44 required credits	<p>Pass five specific assessments with scores of 55 or higher, or utilize any of the Safety Net or Regents appeals flexibilities to graduate with lower scores, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appeals Compensatory Score option Regents Competency Tests (RCTs) Superintendent’s Determination of Graduation for students with current IEPs <p>(Many of these options may be combined with one another. See the Appendix of this guide and the Safety Net Flexibilities section for details.)</p>

Students can also earn endorsements or designations to their diplomas for specializing in particular subjects or earning certain Regents exam scores; these are outlined further in the [Diploma Endorsements](#) section of this guide.

Students who are unable to earn diplomas may earn a non-diploma commencement credential. The requirements are outlined further in the [Commencement Credentials](#) section of this guide.

³ Students must pass at least five assessments, including assessments in English language arts (ELA), math, social studies, and science, to graduate. Students fulfill the requirement in a variety of ways. In some cases, students do not pass all five exams, but they do meet the requirement via [appeals](#) (indicated with ‘WG’ marks), [waived exams](#) (indicated with ‘WA’ marks), and/or [NYSED-approved alternatives](#) (indicated with ‘WX’ marks). All five exams must be clearly documented on the transcript.

⁴ Students who successfully complete a 10-credit sequence in the Arts or CTE are not required to complete six credits of LOTE in order to earn an advanced Regents diploma; they must still earn two credits of LOTE and 44 total course credits to graduate. See [NYSED’s Diploma Types webpage](#) and the [Diploma Endorsement](#) section of this guide for more information.

⁵ This includes an exam in a language other than English (LOTE). Students completing a 10-credit sequence in the Arts or CTE are not required to take the LOTE exam to earn an advanced Regents diploma. In addition, students whose IEPs indicate a disability that affects their ability to learn a language are not required to take the LOTE exam. See [NYSED’s Diploma Types webpage](#) for more information.

⁶ Students who successfully appeal one Regents exam score of 60–64 may still graduate with a Regents diploma; appeals must be reflected on students’ transcripts. See the [Appeals to Graduate](#) section of this guide.

CREDIT REQUIREMENTS	Local & Regents Diplomas	Advanced Regents Diploma
	Minimum Credit Requirements	
English Language Arts (ELA)	8	8
Social Studies⁷ <i>Distributed as follows:</i> Global History U.S. History Participation in Government Economics	4 2 1 1	4 2 1 1
Math Including at least 2 credits of math aligned to standards above Algebra 1, such as Geometry or Algebra II	6	6
Science (including labs) ⁸ <i>Distributed as follows:</i> Life Science Physical Science Life Science or Physical Science	2 2 2	2 2 2
Languages Other Than English (LOTE)⁹	2	6
Visual Art, Music, Dance, and/or Theater	2	2
Physical Education¹⁰ In every year, distributed in specific patterns	4	4
Health	1	1
Electives	7	3
Total	44 credits	44 credits

⁷ Some transfer students who enter in grade 11 and 12 are exempt from the four Global History and Geography distribution requirement, though they must still earn eight credits in social studies and 44 total credits; see the section of this guide on [social studies](#).

⁸ Only courses that fully align to life science learning standards may fulfill the life science requirement. Likewise, only courses that fully align to physical science learning standards may fulfill the physical science requirement. Courses that include a combination of life and physical science learning standards may only count toward the two-credits of “Life Science or Physical Science” requirement.

⁹ Students whose IEPs indicate a disability that affects their ability to learn a language are not required to take LOTE credits. The LOTE credits are replaced with elective courses, such that the students still earn 44 total credits; see the [LOTE section](#) of this guide. In addition, students who successfully complete a 10-credit sequence in the Arts or CTE are not required to complete six credits of LOTE in order to earn an advanced Regents diploma; they must still earn two LOTE credits and 44 total course credits to graduate. See [NYSED’s Diploma Types webpage](#) and the [Diploma Endorsement](#) section of this guide for more information. Also, a student transferring between high schools in grade 11 or 12 may be permitted to combine LOTE credits in two languages and may still earn an advanced Regents diploma. All other students must earn six credits in a single language.

¹⁰ Students must earn at least 44 credits to graduate. However, a student who has completed all of the credit and exam requirements in fewer than eight semesters and who is otherwise eligible to receive a diploma is not required to continue enrollment for the sole purpose of completing PE. Early graduation is the only instance in which a student may graduate with fewer than 4.00 PE credits on their transcript. See

Assessment Requirements ¹¹	Local Diploma (Safety Net) ¹²	Regents Diploma ¹³	Advanced Regents Diploma
Regents subject area ¹⁴	Minimum Requirements¹⁵		
English Language Arts	55+	65+	65+
Social Studies^{16,17}	55+ on one social studies exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. History OR Global History & Geography 	65+ on one social studies exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. History OR Global History & Geography 	65+ on one social studies exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. History OR Global History & Geography
Math	55+ on one math exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algebra I, • Geometry, OR • Algebra II 	65+ on one math exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algebra I, • Geometry, OR • Algebra II 	65+ on three math exams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algebra I, • Geometry, AND • Algebra II
Science¹⁸	55+ on one science exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living Environment, • Earth Science, • Chemistry, OR • Physics 	65+ on one science exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living Environment, • Earth Science, • Chemistry, OR • Physics 	65+ on Living Environment AND one other science exam: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earth Science, • Chemistry, OR • Physics
+1 option	55+ on any additional Regents exam or a passing score on <u>NYSED-approved +1 option</u>	65+ on any additional Regents exam or a passing score on <u>NYSED-approved +1 option</u>	65+ on any additional Regents exam or a passing score on <u>NYSED-approved +1 option</u>

the [Early Graduation](#) section of this guide. In addition, students transferring into New York State schools may waive the PE terms and credits they would have taken prior to entering the New York State. These credits must be reflected on students' transcripts; see the section of this guide on [transfer credits](#).

¹¹ Students must pass at least five assessments, including assessments in English language arts (ELA), math, social studies, and science, in order to graduate. Students fulfill the requirement in a variety of ways. In some cases, students do not pass all five exams, but they do meet the requirement via [appeals](#) (indicated with 'WG' marks), [waived exams including Regents waivers due to COVID-19](#) (indicated with 'WA' marks), and/or [NYSED-approved alternatives](#) (indicated with 'WX' marks). All five exams must be clearly documented on the transcript.

¹² Students who qualify for the Safety Net may graduate with a local diploma with lower scores; see [Safety Net](#) sections of this guide. In addition, students who successfully appeal two Regents exam scores of 60–64 and English language learners who successfully appeal a score of 55–59 on the ELA Regents exam may graduate with a local diploma; appeals must be reflected on students' transcripts. See the [Appeals to Graduate](#) section of this guide.

¹³ Students who successfully appeal one Regents exam score of 60–64 may still graduate with a Regents diploma; appeals must be reflected on students' transcripts. See the [Appeals to Graduate](#) section of this guide.

¹⁴ Other assessments and learning experiences approved by NYSED may fulfill the +1 option or replace a required Regents exam, as described in the [NYSED-approved alternatives](#) and [Performance Based Assessment Tasks](#) sections of this guide. Students with disabilities may also take Regents Competency Tests (RCTs) or qualify for the [Superintendent's Determination of Graduation](#) if they meet the specific requirements, as described in the [Safety Net Flexibilities](#) section of this guide.

¹⁵ Students should be encouraged to work toward higher scores in order to demonstrate college and career readiness; see the [College and Career Readiness](#) section of this guide.

¹⁶ Students who enter a NYSED registered high school for the first time in grades 11 or 12 may be exempt from the Global History Regents exam; see the [Regents Exam Waivers](#) section. Waived exams must be clearly documented on the transcript.

¹⁷ As part of the new K–12 Social Studies Framework (2014), NYSED transitioned to a new Global History Regents exam and will be transitioning to a new U.S. History Regents exam. See the [Transition to the New Social Studies Framework and Regents Exams](#) for more information.

¹⁸ Students who enter a NYSED registered high school for the first time in grade 12 may be exempt from the science Regents exam requirement; see the [Regents Exam Waivers](#) section. Waived exams must be clearly documented on the transcript.

Assessment Requirements ¹¹	Local Diploma (Safety Net) ¹²	Regents Diploma ¹³	Advanced Regents Diploma
Languages Other Than English (LOTE) ¹⁹	None required	None required	65+ on one NYCDOE LOTE exam or NYSED-approved LOTE exam
Total	5 assessments	5 assessments	9 assessments

B. COURSE CREDITS—Updated Fall 2020

In order to graduate, students must earn 44 credits distributed across specific academic subjects and aligned to specific NYSED commencement-level [learning standards](#). All high schools must provide students with the opportunity to take credit-bearing courses in grades 9–12 that satisfy the requirements for a high school diploma.

Students' programs may be composed of both credit-bearing and non-credit-bearing units of study. A unit of study is defined as 180 minutes of instruction per week throughout the semester or school year. This is the equivalent of 108 hours per year, which is 54 hours of instructional time per credit awarded during the school year and 45 hours of instructional time per credit awarded during the summer term. Schools must provide courses that afford students the equivalent of the full instructional time per credit. Students must then demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes outlined in a course syllabus in order to receive credit. These policies are described further in the section of this guide on [credit-bearing courses](#). Schools must provide all students with opportunities to complete the credit requirements and must cover any costs associated with participating in and making up required courses.²⁰

Impact of COVID-19 on the Instructional Time Requirements for a Unit of Study: The [New York State Education Department \(NYSED\)](#) issued guidance providing flexibility for courses that previously required specific units of study, including all credit-bearing courses. A unit of study was previously defined as 180 minutes per week throughout the school year, or the equivalent of 54 hours per credit for high school (45 hours per credit during summer school).

From March 2020 to August 2020 (the end of the 2019-20 school year, including summer school), NYSED waived the instructional time requirement for a student to earn course credit, therefore schools were not required to provide the full 54 hours of instruction per credit. Students were to receive course credit at the end of a course as long as they met the standards and earned a passing grade, per the DOE's [Grading Policy for Remote Learning](#).

During 2020-21, schools must use 180 minutes per week (or 54 hours per credit) as a benchmark for comparison when designing and delivering instruction aligned to the learning standards. Principals must ensure that the instructional experiences as a whole are comparable in rigor, scope, and magnitude to those provided during a traditionally delivered unit of study of 180 minutes per week. Instructional experiences are not defined solely as a student's time in front of a teacher or in front of a screen and may include time engaged in standards-based learning under the guidance and direction of a teacher. Schools are not required to deliver exactly 180 minutes per week (54 hours per credit) for required units of study.

Throughout this guide the instructional time flexibility is referred to as "*the equivalent of 54 hours*" or "*the equivalent of 180 minutes per week*."

¹⁹ Students completing an Arts or CTE endorsement to the advanced Regents diploma and students whose IEPs indicate a disability that affects their ability to learn a language are not required to take the LOTE exam.

²⁰ Students do not have to pay to take any courses that are offered by their school, including online courses, nor do they have to pay to receive diplomas. See also [NYCDOE Chancellor's Regulation A-610](#).

All credit-bearing courses in NYCDOE schools must address NYSED commencement-level (high school) [learning standards](#), meet instructional time requirements, and be taught by a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher with NYSED secondary certification in the course subject area. See the section of this guide on [credit-bearing courses](#) for additional information.

NYSED has commencement-level [learning standards](#) in the following departments: English language arts; social studies; mathematics; science; technology; arts education (including visual arts, music, dance and theater); languages other than English; health, physical education, family and consumer sciences; and career development and occupational studies. Commencement-level learning standards and assessments reflect the knowledge, skills, and understandings all students are expected to know and be able to do upon receiving a high school diploma. Courses that do not align to these high school-level standards, including elective courses, may not bear credit. There are no standards in guidance or advisory; such courses generally should not bear credit.

It is the policy of the NYCDOE to maintain a safe and supportive learning and educational environment that is free of harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying and free of discrimination because of actual or perceived race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, or weight. See the [Guidelines on Gender Inclusion](#) for help implementing gender-inclusive curricula, programs, activities, and practices that are consistent with this policy and with the NYCDOE's commitment to equity and access. Schools must be mindful that inappropriate gender segregation may result in isolating students, hindering diversity, and/or perpetuating gender stereotypes.

Schools with questions or concerns about students' progress toward meeting credit requirements should contact their [academic policy and systems lead](#).

1. English Language Arts

Students must earn a minimum of eight credits in English language arts (ELA) to graduate. NYSED does not define a specific sequence; instead, schools must define a four-year ELA sequence aligned to NYSED's commencement-level [learning standards for ELA](#), spanning grades 9–12 and progressing in rigor. Schools may also offer “selectives” (meaning, courses that students may choose between which address ELA standards) or offer electives in other areas in the English department that support learning in ELA. Many schools offer [Advanced Placement \(AP®\) courses](#) in English language, literature, and composition to help students prepare for college. Students can use credits that do not duplicate courses they have already taken previously to fulfill elective requirements. Students may use specific AP exams to substitute for Regents exams; see the section of this guide on [NYSED-approved alternatives](#).

Schools must indicate that courses are aligned to ELA standards (as evidenced by a syllabus) by coding them with the first two characters of 'EE' in STARS.²¹ Courses coded with any other letter than 'E' in the second character (for example, 'EJ', 'ES', etc.) are English electives and do not fulfill the eight-credit requirement.

English as a New Language (ENL) courses should be coded to reflect the content being taught. This may include English language arts or elective English areas. ENL courses may be coded as 'EE', per the [High School Course Code Directory](#), if they address commencement-level ELA standards in addition to ENL standards, as evidenced by a syllabus. Schools must use the [section property in STARS](#) to identify that the course integrates ENL content. [CR Part 154](#) addresses how schools must identify and serve English Language Learners (ELLs) in detail; see the [ELLs](#) section of this guide and the [Policy and Reference Guide for MLLs/ELLs](#) for more information.²²

²¹ Schools must not edit historical course codes. If a course previously coded as an English elective addressed ELA standards and fulfilled core English requirements for graduation, as evidenced by a course syllabus or other course documentation, the school should retain the documentation in case requested; however, they must not alter the historical course codes.

²² NYSED and NYCDOE refer to English Language Learners (ELLs) as Multilingual Learners/English Language Learners (MLLs/ELLs) except in instances referring to state and federal policy.

2. Social Studies

In social studies, students must earn a minimum of eight credits to graduate with a diploma. NYSED defines specific subjects and [learning standards](#).²³ These credit requirements apply to all students, regardless of the social studies assessment(s) students use to graduate:

- Four Global History credits ([reflected in STARS](#) with codes beginning with 'HG')
- Two U.S. History credits ('HU')
- One Participation in Government credit ('HV' or 'HF')
- One Economics credit ('HE' or 'HF')

All students in New York State must pass a one-credit course (the equivalent of 54 hours of instruction) in Participation in Government and a one-credit course in Economics, in the same way they must pass their other required courses. A year-long advanced two-credit Economics course cannot substitute for both the Economics and Participation in Government requirements unless the syllabus is supplemented to incorporate both the Economics and Participation in Government [learning standards](#). Likewise, a year-long two-credit Advanced Placement Government course cannot substitute for both Economics and Participation in Government requirements unless the syllabus is supplemented to incorporate both the Economics and Participation in Government [learning standards](#). In both of these cases, the course must be coded in STARS as 'HF' and titled to indicate that it is a combined, year-long economics and government course, as described in the [High School Course Code Directory](#). These courses may not fulfill both requirements unless the syllabus is supplemented to incorporate both sets of standards, and students receive the equivalent of enough instructional time in each content area to merit a full credit of each. For more information on how this policy relates to Advanced Placement® (AP) economics and government courses, see the [AP Courses FAQ](#).

Students who enter a New York State registered high school for the first time in grade 11 or 12, or who reenter a New York State registered high school in grade 11 or 12 after having been enrolled in a New York State registered high school for three or fewer semesters,²⁴ may be exempted from the four Global History and Geography distribution requirement. These students have flexibility to use other social studies courses to substitute for some or all of their four Global History credits. However, students must still earn eight total credits of social studies and 44 total credits to graduate with a diploma.

This credit flexibility applies to students who entered a New York State registered high school for the first time in grade 11 during the 2018-19 school year or will enter grades 11 or 12 during the 2019-20 school year and beyond. This policy excludes students who have been home-schooled and students who have been enrolled in a registered or non-registered public or nonpublic New York State high school.

Schools must ensure that students substituting other social studies credits for Global History due to this new policy have the Global History exam code ending in 'W' clearly indicated on their transcripts as waived, using the mark of 'WA,' when they enter in grade 11 or 12. At the point of discharge in [GRDT](#) or [DISC](#), schools must enter credit override code 'D'. See the [Transfer Student Toolkit](#) for more details.

²³ The [New York State K-12 Social Studies Framework](#) is designed to prepare students for college, careers, and civic life with courses that are rigorous and aligned to the New York State Learning Standards for Social Studies. This Framework consists of a single three-part document--the Introduction to the Framework, Grades K-8 and Grades 9-12. The original Framework was published in 2014. Subsequently the K-8 document was revised in 2016.

²⁴ This includes home schooling or enrollment in a registered or non-registered public or non-public New York State high school. For example, students who have been home schooled for two years in New York State, enroll in a school outside of New York State, then enroll in an NYCDOE high school are not eligible for these waivers.

3. Math

Students must earn a minimum of six credits in mathematics, including at least two credits of advanced math (that is, math aligned to standards above Algebra I such as Geometry, Algebra II, Calculus), to graduate. However, to be college- and career-ready, it is strongly recommended that students receive four years and eight credits of high school-level math, including instruction in:

- Algebra I ([reflected in STARS](#) with codes beginning with 'ME')
- Geometry ('MG')
- Algebra II ('MR')

Many schools offer [Advanced Placement \(AP®\) courses](#) in Statistics, Calculus, or other areas to help students prepare for college. Students can use additional math credits that do not duplicate courses they have already taken previously to fulfill elective requirements. Students may use specific AP exams to substitute for Regents exams; see the section of this guide on [NYSED-approved alternatives](#).

NYSED allows math courses designed to culminate in a [Regents exam](#) to extend up to four credits. However, no more than a total of four credits may be awarded for high school-level coursework in any of the following subjects: Algebra I, Geometry, or Algebra II. Students participating in an extended Algebra I course must earn at least two commencement-level math credits beyond Algebra I. These courses help students prepare for post-secondary living.

Courses that do not align to high school-level standards (for example, pre-algebra, math fundamentals) may not bear credit and cannot be used to fulfill the math or elective requirements. Students may not receive credit for retaking a course they have already passed or courses that duplicate content in courses previously passed, even if they are using it to help prepare to take the [Regents exam](#). Regents-preparatory courses may not be credit-bearing. See the [non-credit-bearing courses](#) section of this guide for additional information.

A high school technology education course may be used to fulfill two credits in mathematics or science, but not both. The course should be coded in the math department ('MK'), in alignment with the [High School Course Code Directory](#), to fulfill math distribution requirements.

4. Science—**Updated Fall 2020**

Students must earn a minimum of six credits in science to graduate, including:

- Two life science credits ([reflected in STARS](#) with codes beginning with 'SL', 'SB', or 'SW')
- Two physical science credits ('SE', 'SC', 'SP', 'SD', or 'SR')
- Two additional science credits in life science or physical science

To be college- and career-ready, it is strongly recommended that students receive four years and eight credits of high-school level science, including Living Environment, Chemistry, and Physics. Many schools offer [Advanced Placement \(AP®\) courses](#) in Biology, Physics, and other areas to help students prepare for college. Students can use additional science credits that do not duplicate courses they have already taken previously to fulfill elective requirements. Students may use specific AP exams to substitute for Regents exams; see the section of this guide on [NYSED-approved alternatives](#).

The required two life science credits can be in Living Environment or in school-developed courses derived from the life science standards. Likewise, the required two physical science credits can be in Earth Science, Chemistry, Physics, or school-developed courses derived from any of the physical setting standards. Schools may determine which of these courses culminate in Regents exams.

Some course titles may represent courses designed as either life or physical science courses, depending on the [learning standards](#) they address (for example, Environmental Science). A course may only be used to fulfill the life or physical science requirement if it aligns completely to the respective standards of that requirement. A school must clearly name

and [code the course](#) as either life or physical based on the learning standards the course addresses, and reflect the alignment through the course content documentation.

Completing a year-long, two-credit science course supports students in thoroughly mastering the course content; however, students are not required to complete three, year-long science courses to earn six science credits. For example, a student who completes one credit of Earth Science and one credit of Chemistry meets the minimum physical science credit requirements. Schools should consider students' post-secondary goals in designing science sequences and programming students.

NYSED allows any science course that culminates in a [Regents exam](#) to extend up to four credits. No more than four total credits may be awarded for the following high school-level courses: Living Environment, Earth Science, Chemistry, and Physics.

A high school technology education course may be used to fulfill two credits in mathematics or science, but not both. The course should be coded in the science department ('SK'), in alignment with the [High School Course Code Directory](#), to fulfill science distribution requirements.

While all science courses incorporate lab activities, science courses designed to culminate in a Regents exam must contain a hands-on or virtual component of the 1,200 minutes in accordance with State policy. Students must complete this laboratory across the length of the course, in accordance with the school's practice for scheduling labs in order to prepare for the corresponding Regents examination in science. Students must successfully master the content, aligned to the appropriate learning standards, in order to demonstrate readiness for the hands-on component of the associated Regents exam.

Labs must be recorded on student transcripts, with a clear indication of whether the student successfully completed the laboratory requirement by demonstrating mastery of learning standards (for example, 'P' or 'F' to indicate pass or fail, or the equivalent per the school's grading policy). The lab component of the course may not be credit-bearing; it must be provided in addition to the 54 hours required for each science credit. Labs must be indicated separately in STARS using the appropriate code ('L' in the seventh character) as described in the [High School Course Code Directory](#). Schools can provide the 1,200 minutes of hands-on or virtual lab experiences in a single term or across multiple terms.

If students pass a required science lab but fail the Regents exam, it is recommended, but not required, that they retake the lab in order to retake the Regents exam.

Impact of COVID-19 on Science Labs: From March 2020 to August 2020 (the end of the 2019-20 school year, including summer school), NYSED waived the requirement that students complete 1,200 minutes of hands-on lab experiences to be eligible for the culminating Regents exam.

For the 2020-21 school year, NYSED is no longer waiving the lab requirement for science courses that culminate in a Regents exam. Schools should use the 1,200 minutes of traditionally required lab experiences as a benchmark for ensuring that lab experiences during blended and remote learning are of comparable scope and rigor.

Further, [Part 100.5\(b\)](#) is amended to provide that the 1,200 minutes of lab experience may be met through a combination of hands-on and simulated laboratory experience; virtual lab experiences to meet this requirement were not previously permissible.

5. Languages other than English (World Languages)—Updated Fall 2020

To graduate with a Regents or local diploma, students must earn at least two credits in LOTE. To graduate with an advanced Regents diploma, students must earn at least six credits of LOTE and pass the corresponding LOTE exam. For

the advanced Regents diploma, students must earn LOTE credits in the same language, except in very limited situations involving transfer students.

As in previous years, students may earn the New York State Seal of Biliteracy (NYSSB) as a diploma endorsement upon graduation, which recognizes high school graduates who attained a high level of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages, in addition to English. The NYSSB is available to any graduating senior in any language, and our Multilingual Learners are encouraged to work towards this endorsement over their high school experience.²⁵

The following policies apply:

- Students must earn all six of their LOTE credits in the same language and pass the corresponding LOTE exam to earn an advanced Regents diploma. The only exception is if a student transfers in grades 11 or 12, and the new school does not offer the language that the student previously studied in grades 9 and 10; students may then earn their LOTE credits in two languages.
- The LOTE comprehensive exam is designed to be completed after students complete three units of study or six credits of LOTE coursework, aligned to Checkpoint B of the New York State Learning Standards for LOTE. However, students who are graduating with a local or Regents diploma typically only earn two credits of LOTE. For students planning to use a [State-approved LOTE exam](#) as a +1 option for a local or Regents diploma, schools should determine whether students have acquired the proficiency necessary to be successful on the exam. For some students, more than three units may be necessary, for multilingual speakers fewer or possibly no units may be necessary. However, students must earn at least two credits of LOTE to graduate, except those with an IEP indicating LOTE exemption.
- NYSED does not permit credits to be earned through credit by exam for LOTE. Students may not earn credits in a LOTE by passing the LOTE exam.
- A [student with a disability](#) is exempt from meeting the LOTE requirement only if the IEP indicates that the requirement is not appropriate because the disability adversely affects the student's ability to learn a language.²⁶ The student must still earn 44 course credits required for graduation through elective credits earned in other subject areas. The student may still earn an advanced Regents diploma as well, provided all of the other requirements for the advanced Regents diploma are met.
- Students who successfully complete a 10-credit sequence in the Arts or CTE are not required to complete six credits of LOTE in order to earn an advanced Regents diploma; they also do not need to pass the LOTE exam.²⁷ They must still earn two LOTE credits and 44 total course credits to graduate. See [NYSED's Diploma Types webpage](#) and the [Diploma Endorsement](#) section of this guide for more information.
- Students may be awarded up to 10 credits in LOTE for documented residence and school attendance in an other-than-English-speaking environment, provided that the experience occurred at age 11 or older; see the [Transfer Credit](#) section of this guide for more information.

For more information on Languages other than English and the status of the [LOTE Standards Review Process](#), see the [LOTE FAQ](#).

Impact of COVID-19 on LOTE Exams: In April 2020, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) cancelled the administration of Regents and LOTE exams scheduled for [June 2020](#) and [August 2020](#) in response to the COVID-19

²⁵ To learn more about the program models that can prepare students for the New York State Seal of Biliteracy, please review the [Pathways to Multiliteracy](#). To learn about the process and how to participate this year, please see the "[NYSSB: What and How](#)" webinar as well as guiding documents for NYCDOE public schools on the [Multilingual Learners InfoHub](#) page.

²⁶ This must be indicated in the "Participation with Students without Disabilities" section of the IEP.

²⁷ Students may be required to earn more than 44 total credits in order to complete the full CTE sequence and meet graduation requirements.

pandemic. NYSED provided guidelines for the issuance of Regents waivers (including LOTE) so that students were not adversely affected by the cancellation of these exams.

Students must meet specific eligibility criteria to receive the Regents, LOTE, and NYSED-approved +1 waivers, which can be used toward fulfilling the assessment requirement for diplomas, credentials, and endorsements. See the [FAQs for Remote Learning](#) for the eligibility requirements for Regents and LOTE waivers and the [Regents Exam Waiver Guidance \(COVID-19\)](#) for instructions on applying these waiver to transcripts.

6. Physical Education—Updated Fall 2020

[Part 135.4](#) defines the minimum requirements for schools to provide physical education (PE) in grades 7–12. Students must earn at least four credits in physical education to graduate. The usual requirement is that high school students must participate in an instructional physical education (PE) program using either the traditional model (90 minutes per week using the “3/2 model” or other patterns) or the daily model (minimum of 180 minutes and five days per week, in all but one term).²⁸

Impact of COVID-19 on Physical Education (PE): Schools must provide physical education (PE) to all students in grades K-12 and schools must prioritize physical education instruction equally alongside all other required academic subjects. In response to the NYCDOE’s transition to remote and blended learning models, the following summarizes the policies and flexibilities applicable to the delivery of PE during the 2020-21 school year.

Schools must ensure that physical education courses are of comparable scope and rigor to those traditionally offered but are not required to meet the exact instructional time requirements. While schools are not expected to meet the traditional frequency requirements (times per week) in the 2020-21 school year, they should use the traditional models as a benchmark for comparison in designing schedules. The information below regarding the usual requirements for time and frequency is intended to help schools develop PE programs for blended and remote learning.

Only teacher-led instructional time may count toward PE. In the 2020-21 school year, teacher-led includes independent student work as assigned by the PE teacher as part of blended and remote models.

PE courses must be taught by a certified, licensed PE teacher. In the 2020-21 school year, class size must follow the UFT contract for both in-person and remote instruction and must adhere to all health and safety protocols. In-person PE requires at least 6 feet of space per student and 12 or more feet for vigorous activity.

At the time of this update, PSAL has been postponed and is not an option for students in grades 10-12 to earn PE credit. All students must be programmed for PE.

In the 2020-21 school year, teachers do not need to record and submit NYC FITNESSGRAM student results, and NYC FITNESSGRAM will not be included in the 2020-21 principal’s Compliance Checklist.

For additional information and guidance about providing students with PE in the 2020-21 school year, please refer to the [NYC Return to School Physical Education Guidelines](#), the [Physical Education Expectations for Blended and Remote Learning](#), and the [PE FAQ](#).

²⁸ The traditional PE scheduling model set by Part 135.4 is known as the “3/2 model,” in which students are scheduled for three days per week in one semester and two days per week in the other semester, or for a comparable time when the school is organized in other term models. See the guidance on [PE](#) for more information.

Summary of PE Time and Frequency Requirements (time and frequency requirements do not apply to SY20-21, but should be used as a baseline for planning PE, per guidance above)

High School PE Model	Minimum required PE time	Minimum required PE frequency	Credits ²⁹
Traditional model	90 minutes per week	Every term	0.5 per semester, totaling 4.0 credits
Daily model	180 minutes per week	Daily, for 7 semesters	0.58 per semester, totaling 4.06 credits

Only teacher-led instructional time may count toward PE. In school year 2020-21, teacher-led includes independent student work as assigned by the PE teacher as part of blended and remote models. Schools may not count the time for dressing or traveling to an off-site facility toward the instructional time. In order to graduate and earn a diploma, students must successfully earn four course credits in PE.

PE programs must be designed to meet [NYSED learning standards](#) for physical education and the [NYC Grades 6-12 PE Scope and Sequence](#). PE courses must be taught by a certified, licensed PE teacher. In school year 2020-2021, class size must follow the UFT contract for both in-person and remote instruction and must adhere to all health and safety protocols. In-person PE requires at least 6 feet of space per student and 12 or more feet for vigorous activity. Please see the [NYC Return to School Physical Education Guidelines](#) and the [Physical Education Expectations for Blended and Remote Learning](#) for more information.

At the time of this update, PSAL has been postponed and is not an option for students in grades 10-12 to earn PE credit. All students must be programmed for PE.

As in all other courses, grading for PE must be based primarily on content area knowledge and skills and not on non-mastery measures. Schools may not grade students solely on attendance, participation, or preparedness. See the [Grading Policy Toolkit](#) for more details.

[NYC FITNESSGRAM](#) is the City's annual health-related fitness assessment. In the 2020-21 school year, teachers do not need to record and submit NYC FITNESSGRAM student results, and NYC FITNESSGRAM will not be included in the 2020-21 principal's Compliance Checklist. Schools can continue to use NYC FITNESSGRAM assessments to help students identify the importance of healthy fitness zones, set goals, and create long- and short-term fitness plans. Schools may not use performance on this assessment to determine students' grades. See the [NYC Return to School Physical Education Guidelines](#) for more information.

Students with chronic or temporary medical conditions or disabilities must participate in physical education. Students with temporary medical conditions must provide the school with a medical certificate of limitation that indicates the area of the PE program in which the pupil may participate. Students with chronic medical conditions or disabilities documented by a Section 504 plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP) must participate in PE in the least restrictive environment, as indicated on their 504 Plans or IEPs. Students should be provided adapted physical education instruction as needed, taught in the least restrictive environment.

The following policies also apply to physical education in high school:

- Students may take more than one PE course per term, to use for elective credit or to make up failed/missing PE credit. Students may not accelerate or "bank" PE credits in order to not take PE in later grades.

²⁹ Other credit values apply, based on the term model. See the guidance on [PE](#) for details.

- Students who graduate high school in fewer than four years do not need to complete the full four PE credits in order to graduate.³⁰
- Transfer students are not required to complete PE credits that would have occurred in terms during which they were enrolled in a high school outside of New York State. Instead, schools can waive PE courses equivalent to the number of terms the student was enrolled in a high school outside of New York State. This reduces the number of remaining terms of PE the student must complete to meet graduation requirements. Schools must [update the student's transcript](#) in STARS to reflect all waived terms of PE, as outlined in the [Transfer Student Toolkit](#), and must document these decisions using the [Transfer Credit Equivalency Form](#). The waived terms must be recorded on the student's transcript with 'NW' as the course mark.
- Additionally, a student who has completed four full years of high school and has accumulated at least 4.00 credits in PE (including waived courses due to out-of-state enrollment), but who has not yet met graduation requirements in other areas, no longer needs to continue to take PE in addition to required coursework during additional terms.

For more information on academic policies and STARS programming for physical education courses, schools should review the [PE](#) guidance or contact their [academic policy and systems lead](#); for guidance on the implementation of physical education instructional programs, schools may contact the [Office of School Wellness Programs](#).

7. Health Education—Updated Fall 2020

[Part 135.3](#) defines the minimum requirements for schools to provide health education instruction, including required annual HIV/AIDS lessons for students in grades K-12.

All high school students are required to complete a one-credit (equivalent to 54 hours) comprehensive health education course that includes mandated sexual health education. Like all credit-bearing experiences, the high school health education course must align to NYSED health education commencement-level [learning standards](#) and must be taught by a NYCDOE certified health education teacher. It is strongly recommended that this course take place during grades 9 or 10 to adequately prepare students to make healthy and informed choices throughout high school.

Impact of COVID-19 on Health Education: The [New York State Education Department](#) has issued guidance providing flexibility for courses that previously required specific units of study, including all credit-bearing courses. During the 2020-21 school year, schools must use 54 hours per credit as a benchmark for comparison when designing and delivering instruction aligned to the learning standards. Principals must ensure that health education courses are comparable in rigor, scope, and magnitude to those traditionally offered but are not required to deliver exactly 54 hours per credit.

Schools must provide the required annual HIV/AIDS lessons.

For detailed guidance on providing standards-based health education during blended and remote instruction, review the [NYC Health Education Return to School Guidelines](#).

Comprehensive health education emphasizes skill development around multiple dimensions of health, including social, emotional, mental, and physical health. It also includes these essential content areas: nutrition and physical activity; alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (including heroin and opioids); sexual health; HIV/AIDS; safety and injury prevention; violence prevention; and other required health areas. The NYCDOE offers free health education [training](#), curricula, and instructional resources for educators Citywide. For more information, schools should see [NYSED's Guidance for Achieving](#)

³⁰ A student graduating high school in fewer than four years may graduate if they have met all diploma requirements (including a total of 44 credits) other than those for PE. In this case, all PE credits must have been earned up to the point of early graduation, but the student would not be required to return to school to complete the PE requirement for any remaining semesters not completed due to early graduation. See the guidance on [PE](#) for more information.

[New York State Standards in Health Education](#), the [New York City 9-12 Health Education Scope and Sequence](#), or contact the [Office of School Wellness Programs](#).

The required sexual health education lessons provide students with medically accurate information and skills to avoid risky behaviors. Teachers may include a condom demonstration as part of instruction; families may opt their child out of this lesson if they wish. Parents/guardians may also opt out of lessons having to do with methods of HIV and STI prevention and birth control. The NYCDOE provides schools with a [sexual health education notification letter](#) from the Chancellor to distribute to families prior to sexual health education instruction.

In addition to one credit in comprehensive health education, NYSED mandates annual HIV/AIDS lessons for every student every year. In grades 9–12, the NYCDOE requires six lessons each year using the [NYCDOE HIV/AIDS Curriculum](#), which is available through WeTeachNYC.org. Families may opt their child out of only the specific HIV/AIDS lessons that include methods of HIV and STI prevention and birth control. Lessons that include abstinence but no other methods of prevention do not qualify for this exemption. The NYCDOE designates specific [opt out lessons](#) for each grade level in the HIV/AIDS Curriculum and provides schools with an [HIV/AIDS parent notification letter](#) for distribution to families prior to HIV and AIDS instruction.

Students in their fifth or sixth year of high school who have earned the required one credit of health are not required to continue to receive HIV/AIDS lessons.

For more information on academic policies and STARS programming for health education courses, schools may contact their [academic policy and systems lead](#); for guidance on the implementation of health education instructional programs, schools may contact the [Office of School Wellness Programs](#). See also the section of this guide on [section properties](#) in STARS.

8. Arts Education

Students must earn at least two credits in the arts to graduate. Students may take courses in any of the following subject areas: dance, music, theater, and/or visual arts. Arts courses can be theoretical (for example, art history) and/or applied (for example, ceramics), but they must align to NYSED commencement-level [arts standards](#). Students may fulfill the arts requirement through courses in the same discipline or in different arts disciplines.

A student may obtain arts credits in any discipline by participating in a school's major performing groups, including band, chorus, orchestra, dance, and theater groups. These must be scheduled as arts instruction in STARS using the [High School Course Code Directory](#).

Students may also specialize in a particular discipline and earn an endorsement in the arts; see the [Diploma Endorsements](#) section of this guide for additional information. Students who successfully complete a 10-credit sequence in the Arts or CTE are not required to complete six credits of LOTE in order to earn an advanced Regents diploma; they also do not need to pass the LOTE exam.³¹ These students must still earn two LOTE credits and 44 total course credits to graduate.

9. Electives

Students must earn at least 44 total credits to graduate with a Regents or local diploma, including seven elective credits. Electives are credit-bearing courses not used to fulfill subject-specific credit requirements for graduation (for example, a ninth ELA credit or seventh science credit).

³¹ Students may be required to earn more than 44 total credits in order to complete the full CTE sequence and meet graduation requirements.

Students who earn an advanced Regents diploma need only three elective credits. The remaining four are used to meet the [LOTE](#) requirement, by studying one specific language, earning six total credits, and passing the culminating Checkpoint B language assessment in that same language.³²

Electives offer students a unique opportunity to explore academic disciplines not required for graduation, to specialize in a given subject, or advance to more challenging coursework. For example, students may pursue advanced coursework in statistics, participate in a credit-bearing internship at a local business or organization, or take an independent study course in digital photography or Shakespeare. Schools may also choose to offer any of the following experiences:

- Advanced Placement® courses, as outlined in the [AP Courses and Exams](#) guidance
- Career and Technical education experiences, as outlined in the [CTE courses](#) guidance
- Computer science offerings, as described on the [Computer Science for All](#) website.

Schools should strongly consider students' previous experiences, post-secondary plans, and academic abilities and interests when programming elective coursework. Students who are programmed for math and science beyond the minimum requirements for graduation can use these courses as their elective credits, as long as they do not duplicate content already taken and passed.

Elective courses, like all other credit-bearing courses, must align to NYSED high school [learning standards](#), be taught by a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher, and meet instructional time requirements.³³ NYSED has commencement-level [learning standards](#) in the following departments: English language arts; social studies; mathematics; science; technology; the arts (including visual arts, music, dance, and theater); languages other than English; health; physical education; family and consumer sciences; and career development and occupational studies. NYSED does not have commencement-level learning standards in guidance. Per [UFT contracts](#), guidance counselors may not cover classes or perform other duties normally performed by classroom teachers.

Schools that wish to award elective credit(s) for courses in the [guidance department](#) must ensure that these courses align to commencement-level learning standards and meet all policies outlined in the section of this guide on [credit-bearing courses](#). Generally, these courses should not bear credit; if they are aligned to NYSED's learning standards and taught by a subject-certified teacher, they should be coded to accurately reflect the commencement-level learning standards present in the course content documentation. Additionally, students may not receive elective credit for retaking a previously passed course or by exceeding the four-credit maximum in math or science subjects designed to culminate in a [Regents exam](#).

Schools may use the [Course Review Form](#) as an additional tool when reviewing new and existing courses for alignment with learning standards and academic policies.

³² The following exceptions apply: (a) Students whose IEPs indicate a disability that affects their ability to learn a language are not required to take LOTE credits. The LOTE credits are replaced with elective courses, such that the students still earn 44 total credits; see the [LOTE section](#) of this guide. (b) Students who successfully complete a 10-credit sequence in the Arts or CTE are not required to complete six credits of LOTE in order to earn an advanced Regents diploma; they also do not need to pass the LOTE exam. They must still earn two LOTE credits and 44 total course credits to graduate. See [NYSED's Diploma Types webpage](#) and the [Diploma Endorsement](#) section of this guide for more information. (c) A student transferring between high schools in grade 11 or 12 may be permitted to combine language other than English (LOTE) credits in two languages if the language they started is not available in the school they are transferring to and may still earn an advanced Regents diploma. All other students must earn the full six credits in a single language.

³³ Beginning September 2019, schools must have a syllabus aligned to the requirements in the [Documenting Course Content](#) guidance for every course offered in this school year and beyond.

C. ASSESSMENTS—Updated Fall 2020

In addition to fulfilling course credit requirements, students must pass specific culminating assessments, typically Regents exams, in order to meet graduation requirements. Students must pass New York State [Regents exams](#) or other [NYSED-approved alternatives](#) in English language arts (ELA), social studies, mathematics, and science in order to earn a diploma. See [this table](#) for a brief description of the exam requirements by diploma type.

The minimum passing scores vary according to the diploma type and student eligibility criteria; in some cases, students can [appeal to graduate](#) with lower exam scores or, in limited circumstances, [waive specific assessment requirements](#). Schools must accurately reflect all appeals and waived exams on transcripts prior to graduation. Other assessments not required for graduation are described in this section as well; these include the [NYSITELL](#) and [NYSESLAT](#).

Impact of COVID-19 on Assessments: In April 2020, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) cancelled the administration of Regents exams scheduled for [June 2020](#) and [August 2020](#) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; the [cancellation of the January 2021 Regents administration](#) was announced in November 2020. NYSED provided guidelines for the issuance of Regents and LOTE waivers so that students were not adversely affected by the cancellation of these exams. These waivers represent a passed exam (equivalent to a score of 65).

Students who meet specific eligibility criteria to receive the Regents, LOTE, and NYSED-approved +1 waivers can use them toward the assessment requirement for diplomas, credentials, and endorsements. See the section on [Regents Exam Waivers](#) and the [Regents Exam Waiver Guidance \(COVID-19\)](#) for detailed information on the eligibility requirements for these waivers and how to reflect them on student transcripts.

All attempted Regents exams and all NYSED-approved alternatives must appear on the STARS transcript. It must be evident on each and every graduate's transcript that the student passed five exams, including at least one exam in ELA, math, science, social studies, and the +1 option. However, students fulfill the requirement in a variety of ways. In some cases, students do not pass all five exams, but they do meet the requirement via appeals (indicated with 'WG' marks), waived exams (indicated with 'WA' marks), and/or NYSED-approved alternatives (indicated with 'WX' marks). Schools must clearly document all five exams on the transcript.

1. Regents Exams—Updated Fall 2020

NYSED Regents exams assess a student's mastery of NYSED [commencement-level \(high school\) learning standards](#) in a given subject area. All students who have enrolled in a course of study leading to a Regents exam have the right to take that exam. Students may not be barred from an exam for disciplinary reasons or because their achievement or attendance in the course is considered unsatisfactory.³⁴ Schools should accommodate and administer exams to students not currently enrolled, students over 21 years of age, or walk-in students who wish to sit for a Regents exam. See the [Regents Scanning Handbook](#) for more information on printing answer documents for walk-in students.

Impact of COVID-19 on Regents Exams: The New York State Education Department (NYSED) cancelled the June 2020, August 2020, and January 2021 Regents administrations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, students in grades 7-12 who intended to take Regents exams during these administration periods **and** met NYSED's eligibility criteria received a Regents waiver (the equivalent of a passing exam score of 65) to use toward the assessment requirement for a diploma, endorsement, or credential.

See the [Regents Exam Waiver](#) section of this guide for more information.

³⁴ See page 9 of the [School Administrator's Manual for Secondary Level Examinations](#).

Below is a table of Regents exams, by department, that NYSED currently offers.³⁵

Department	Regents Exams	
English	English language arts (Common Core)— <i>first admin. June 2014</i> ³⁶	
Social Studies	U.S. History and Government U.S. History and Government (new Framework)— <i>first admin. June 2021</i> Global History and Geography Transition exam— <i>first admin. Jan 2016/last admin. January 2020</i> ³⁷ Global History and Geography II Regents exam (new Framework)— <i>first admin. June 2019</i>	
Math ³⁸	Algebra I (Common Core)— <i>first admin. June 2014</i> Geometry (Common Core)— <i>first admin. June 2015</i> Algebra II (Common Core)— <i>first admin. June 2016</i>	
Science ³⁹	Living Environment Earth Science Chemistry Physics	
LOTE exams ⁴⁰	Available at all schools offering these courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • French • German • Hebrew • Italian • Latin • Spanish 	Available at hub sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Albanian • Arabic • Bengali • Chinese, Simplified • Chinese, Traditional • Haitian Creole • Hindi • Japanese • Korean • Polish • Punjabi • Russian • Urdu • Vietnamese

2. NYSED-Approved Alternatives and the 4+1 Policy

The 4+1 option describes the exam requirements for graduation in New York City and State. Historically, students were required to pass Regents exams in ELA, U.S. History, Global History, math, and science to earn a local or Regents diploma. In spring of 2015, NYSED removed the requirement that students had to pass two social studies exams and instead afforded students greater choice in their fifth assessment requirement. The 4+1 option is available for all students eligible

³⁵ Many LOTE exams, unlike Regents exams, are locally administered by the NYCDOE. See the [LOTE FAQ](#) for more information.

³⁶ The last administration of the Comprehensive Regents exam in English was June 2016.

³⁷ The last administration of the old Global History and Geography Regents exam was January 2018.

³⁸ The last administration of math exams is as follows: Integrated Algebra-June 2016 (special administration); Geometry-January 2016; Algebra 2/Trigonometry-January 2017; Mathematics A-January 2009; and Mathematics B-June 2010.

³⁹ All science courses that culminate in a Regents exam must be accompanied by lab experiences of comparable scope and rigor to the 1,200 minutes traditionally required for lab experiences. Schools may satisfy the laboratory requirement for science courses designed to culminate in a Regents exam through any combination of hands-on and virtual laboratory experiences, provided that students complete satisfactory lab reports. As explained in the [Science](#) section of this guide, virtual labs experiences were not permissible by NYSED until the 2020-21 school year to account for remote and blended learning models.

⁴⁰ The following exams are approved +1 options beginning with the June 2018 administration: the NYSED-approved versions of the Spanish, French, Italian, and Chinese (simplified) exams. The following exams are approved +1 options beginning with the June 2019 administration: American Sign Language (ASL), Chinese (traditional) or Korean exams. See the [LOTE FAQ](#) or the [4+1 FAQ](#) for more information.

to receive a high school diploma in June 2015 and thereafter.⁴¹ The 4+1 option does not change the existing course requirements for earning a diploma or existing flexibilities for Regents exams; students must continue to earn 44 credits across specific subject areas.

To earn a local or Regents diploma, students must pass at least a Regents exam or [NYSED-approved alternative](#) in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science, and social studies.

For their fifth assessment—their +1 option—students may use:

- Another Regents exam
- A different [NYSED-approved alternative](#) exam in ELA, math, science, or social studies
- A [Career and Technical Education \(CTE\) assessment](#), following the completion of a NYSED-approved CTE program⁴²
- An approved assessment in [the arts](#)
- An approved [Languages other than English \(LOTE\) exam](#)⁴³
- The experiences that count for the [Career Development and Occupational Studies \(CDOS\) credential](#). These students must complete all the requirements for the CDOS as outlined in the [CDOS FAQ](#).⁴⁴

All attempted Regents exams and all NYSED-approved alternatives must appear on the STARS transcript. For NYSED-approved alternatives, schools must perform a transcript update with a using the mark ‘WX’ (see [the Course and Exam Marks Tables](#) for information about this mark). For students using the [4+1 option](#), schools should document this via the [GRDT](#) screen in ATS by using the [exam override code](#) ‘S’. See the [4+1 FAQ](#) guidance for additional examples and guidance.

In addition, [NYSED-approved alternatives](#) may not be included in the calculation to determine whether the student has achieved an average of 90 or above on the required exams. These students may use up to two NYSED-approved alternatives toward the honors designation; see the section on [diploma endorsements](#).

Impact of COVID-19 on the 4+1 Option: With the cancellation of the June 2020 and August 2020 Regents and LOTE administrations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, eligible students received waivers to use toward the assessment requirement for a diploma.

See the [Regents Exam Waiver](#) and [diploma endorsements](#) sections of this guide for more information.

Schools must provide students of active-duty military personnel additional flexibility for meeting exam graduation requirements. Schools are required to accept all possible exam alternatives, including Regents-like state exit examinations, national norm-referenced achievement tests, and local end-of-course assessments, to help eligible students meet exam graduation requirements. See the [Guidance for Children of Active-Duty Military Personnel](#) for information about these flexibilities.

⁴¹ NYSED refers to this same policy as “multiple pathways” regulations address assessment requirements only. NYSED allows students to meet the assessment requirements through an array of State-approved alternatives to Regents exams. Generally, with the exception of credit by exam, students must complete the course designed to culminate in the assessment they wish to take. For the CDOS experiences, this typically includes 216 hours of instruction, including at least 54 hours of work-based learning.

⁴² Students who successfully complete any State-approved CTE program and pass the culminating three-part technical assessment may use that assessment as their +1 option. Previously, students could only use State-approved exams as +1 options.

⁴³ The following exams are approved +1 options beginning with the June 2018 administration: the NYSED-approved versions of the Spanish, French, Italian, and Chinese (simplified) exams. The following exams are approved +1 options beginning with the June 2019 administration: American Sign Language (ASL), Chinese (traditional) or Korean exams. See the [LOTE FAQ](#) or the [4+1 FAQ](#) for more information.

⁴⁴ Students who use the CDOS as their +1 may not also be awarded the CDOS endorsement. Additionally, students who use the CDOS as part of a Superintendent’s Determination for graduation may not use the CDOS as their +1 or as an endorsement. See the [CDOS FAQ](#) for more.

3. Appeals to Graduate with Low Scores on Regents Examinations

NYSED allows a student who has met specific eligibility requirements to appeal to graduate with a lower score on up to two Regents exams and receive a local diploma. The Regents exam appeal options described below are designed for students who are unable to achieve a passing Regents exam score despite multiple attempts and support to achieve a higher score. There are currently three types of low score Regents appeals that are available to students. For more information, see the [Overview of Appeals to Graduate with Low Scores on Regents Examinations](#).

	Low Score Appeal Appeal to graduate with a score of 60–64 on Regents exams ⁴⁵	New Arrival ELA Appeal Appeal to graduate with a score of 55–59 on the ELA exam for newly arrived ELLs only	Safety Net Appeal Appeal to graduate with a score of 52–54 on Regents exams for Safety Net eligible students
Eligible Students	All students who meet the criteria listed below	Only for ELL students who arrived in the US for the first time in grades 9–12 and who meet the additional criteria listed below	Only for Safety Net-eligible students who meet the additional criteria listed below
Test Score Requirements	60–64 on up to two of any of the required Regents exams	55–59 on an ELA Regents	52–54 on up to two of any of the required Regents exams
Type of Diploma	One successful appeal results in a Regents diploma Two successful appeals result in a local diploma	A New Arrival ELA appeal always results in a local diploma (student may also appeal one other Regents score of 60–64)	A Safety Net appeals always result in a local diploma
Process	Request in ATS using the RQSA-RGT option	Request in ATS using the RQSA-ELL option	Request in ATS using the RQSA-SFN option

To be eligible for these appeals, students must have:

- Taken the exam(s) under appeal at least two times
- Scored within the point range on the exam(s) under appeal
- Earned or be on track to earn a [passing grade](#) in all courses required for graduation in the subject area of the exam under appeal
- Been provided academic intervention services in the subject area of the exam under appeal
- Been recommended by a teacher or department chairperson for the appeal and have the appeal approved by a school committee

To be eligible for the New Arrival ELA appeal, students must have earned a score of 55–59 on the ELA Regents exam, enrolled in any United States school for the first time in grades 9–12, and be a current ELL student or have been an ELL student at time of the ELA Regents administration.

⁴⁵ Adopted as an [amendment to Part 100.5\(d\)\(7\)](#) in March 2016.

To be eligible for the Safety Net appeal, students must have earned a score of 52–54 on the Regents exam and must have an active Individualized Education Program (IEP), a 504 plan specifying Safety Net-eligibility, or be a student with a disability who was declassified in grades 8–12 and whose last IEP specifies Safety Net-eligibility.⁴⁶

Schools must submit all appeals to graduate with a lower score on the Regents exam to the superintendent for approval using the [RQSA](#) functions in ATS. Once an appeal is approved by the superintendent, the school must [update the student's transcript](#) with a new instance of the exam, using the [transfer/appeal code ending in 'W'](#) and 'WG' as the score, in order to represent a successful appeal. The original examination score may not be changed. See the [Overview of Appeals to Graduate with Low Scores on Regents Examinations](#).

4. Safety Net Flexibilities

[Students with disabilities](#), like all students, should be encouraged to pursue the most rigorous diploma option available and to achieve high scores on Regents exams when possible. The “Safety Net” provides additional flexibilities to support students with disabilities in earning a diploma. The following students are Safety Net-eligible:

- Students with an active Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- Students with an active Section 504 Plan specifying Safety Net-eligibility
- Students who were declassified in grades 8–12 and whose last IEP specifies Safety Net-eligibility⁴⁷

As part of the Safety Net, these students have the following options to earn a local diploma if they cannot meet or exceed the requirements for a Regents or advanced Regents diploma:

- Graduate with exam scores of 55 or higher
- Qualify for the [Safety Net appeal](#), provided they meet the other eligibility requirements
- Use the [compensatory score option](#) to graduate, provided they meet the other eligibility requirements
- Use [Regents Competency Tests \(RCTs\)](#) to graduate, provided they meet the other eligibility requirements⁴⁸
- Qualify for a [Superintendent's Determination of Graduation](#), provided they meet the other eligibility requirements. Note that this review is only for students with current, active IEPs.

The following sections of this guide describe these flexibilities in more detail and outline the ways in which they may and may not be combined for individual students. See also the summary of graduation options in the [Appendix](#) of this guide.

a. Safety Net Appeal

Safety Net-eligible students may earn a local diploma by appealing a score of 52–54 on up to two of the required Regents examinations, provided that they pass the remaining Regents exams with a score of 55 or above and meet the additional criteria.⁴⁹ See the [Appeals to Graduate with Low Scores on Regents Examinations](#) section for more information.

⁴⁶ A student whose parent or guardian revoked consent for IEP services is not eligible for the Safety Net.

⁴⁷ A student whose parent or guardian revoked consent for IEP services is not eligible for the Safety Net.

⁴⁸ Students who entered high school prior to September 2011 are eligible to use Regents Competency Tests (RCTs) to graduate, provided they meet the other eligibility requirements. The last administration of RCTs was in August 2018.

⁴⁹ [Amendment to Part 100.5\(d\)\(7\)](#)

b. Compensatory Score Option

The [compensatory score option](#) allows eligible students to earn a local diploma with one or two Regents exam scores of 45-54 by compensating each low score with a score of 65 or higher on another required Regents exam. To be eligible for the compensatory score option, students must:

- Be Safety Net eligible
- Earn a score of 55 or higher on the ELA and a math Regents exam⁵⁰
- Earn or be on track to earning a passing grade in all courses required for graduation in the subject area of the exam being compensated
- Have satisfactory attendance rate, as defined by their school

Schools may use the [compensatory score calculator](#) to determine if a student meets the eligibility requirements and calculate if a student fulfills exam requirements using the compensatory score option. The compensatory score option may also be used in conjunction with the Safety Net appeal. See the guidance on the [Compensatory Score Option](#) and the [Overview of Appeals to Graduate with Low Scores on Regents Examinations](#) for examples.

Impact of COVID-19 on the Compensatory Score Option: A Regents waiver from the cancellation of the June 2020 and August 2020 Regents administrations cannot be used to compensate for scores of 45-54 on other another Regents exam.

c. Regents Competency Tests (RCTs)

RCTs were State assessments available to [Safety Net-eligible](#) students who entered grade 9 prior to September 2011. The last administration of RCTs was August 2018. Eligible students with disabilities may fulfill the exam requirement for the local diploma using RCTs if they are unable to pass the corresponding Regents exam with the needed score.⁵¹ Students may pass all Regents, all RCTs, or a combination of both. If a student is using an RCT score towards the fulfillment of the local diploma requirement, they must have taken each of the five required Regents exams at least once.⁵²

The RCTs may be combined with the [4+1 policy](#) only in very specific cases. Because RCTs may only be used when a student is unable to pass the corresponding Regents exam, a student may not count both an RCT exam pass and a Regents exam pass in the same content area toward graduation requirements. The only exception is in social studies because the U.S. History & Government RCT and Global Studies RCT cover a different set of standards. See the [4+1 Graduation Option](#) guidance for additional information and examples.

The RCT option and the compensatory score option may not be combined to qualify for the local diploma. While taking an RCT exam does not prohibit a student from using the compensatory score option, any student using an RCT to fulfill one of the five Regents exam requirements may not use the compensatory score option.

RCTs were offered in the following subject areas: Math, Science, Global Studies, U.S. History and Government, Reading, and Writing. Students must pass both the Reading and Writing RCTs and take the English Regents exam if using the RCTs to fulfill the English exam requirement.

⁵⁰ Safety Net-eligible students may appeal a score of 52–54 on up to two Regents exams, including the ELA and math Regents.

⁵¹ See [Diploma Types](#). The RCT option may not be combined with the compensatory score option.

⁵² Students may take the Regents and RCTs in any order (meaning a student may take the Regents exam and then the RCT, or vice versa).

d. Superintendent Determination of Graduation

Superintendents may award the local diploma to students with current, active IEPs who do not meet graduation assessment requirements through the existing Safety Net options (such as the compensatory score option or Safety Net appeal). To be eligible for the superintendent's determination of graduation, students must:

- Have written consent from a parent or guardian
- Have a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) and actively be receiving special education services and/or related services
- Be enrolled in their fourth year of high school or beyond
- Have earned all credits required for graduation
- Have met exam requirements for English Language Arts (ELA) and math by:
 - Earning scores of 55 or higher on the ELA and/or one math Regents exam(s), *or*
 - Earning appealable scores of 52–54 on the ELA and/or math Regents exam(s), *or*
 - Starting January 2018, students who are unable to earn scores of 55+ or appealable scores of 52–54 on the ELA and/or math Regents exams can complete the requirements for the [Career Development and Occupational Studies \(CDOS\) commencement credential](#).⁵³
- Have attempted all Regents exams required for graduation (ELA, math, social studies, science and +1 option)
- Have demonstrated mastery of content in the subject areas of the failed the Regents exams, including, but not limited to having final passing grades in the subject areas.

As of January 2019, schools must submit all requests for a superintendent's determination of graduation, including for students who are using the CDOS credential to meet the ELA and/or math Regents exam eligibility requirement, using the [RQSA–SUP](#) function in ATS. Schools simultaneously submit the request in ATS and email supporting documentation to the superintendent for review. For students who are using the CDOS to fulfill ELA and/or math Regents exam eligibility requirements, schools must submit the [CDOS Attestation Form](#) to the superintendent as evidence that the student met the requirements for the CDOS. See the [Superintendent's Determination of Graduation for Students with IEPs](#) for detailed instructions.

5. Regents Exam Waivers—Updated Fall 2020

Students who enter a New York State registered high school for the first time in grade 11 or 12, or who reenter a New York State registered high school in grade 11 or 12 after having been enrolled in a New York State registered high school for three or fewer semesters,⁵⁴ may be exempted from certain Regents exam and distribution requirements:⁵⁵

- Students who meet the criteria above and transfer in grade 11 are exempt from the Regents exam in Global History and Geography. These students may graduate by passing the following exams: one math, one science, ELA, and U.S. History.

⁵³ For students who are using the CDOS to fulfill ELA and/or math Regents exam eligibility requirements, schools must submit the [CDOS Attestation Form](#) to the superintendent as evidence that the student met the requirements for the CDOS.

⁵⁴ This includes home schooling or enrollment in a registered or non-registered public or non-public New York State high school. For example, students who have been home schooled for two years in New York State, enroll in a school outside of New York State, then enroll in an NYCDOE high school are not eligible for these waivers.

⁵⁵ See [Part 100.5\(d\)](#). The 4+1 flexibility cannot be applied for students who are utilizing these waivers. For example, a grade 11 transfer student cannot substitute Global History for U.S. History. Additionally, see the section on [credit requirements for social studies](#) or the [Transfer Student Toolkit](#) for more information on the Global History credit distribution exemption. See the section on [Physical Education](#) for applicable PE credit exemptions for transfer students.

- Students who meet the criteria above and transfer in grade 12 are exempt from the Regents exams in science and in Global History and Geography. These students may graduate with a combination of three exam passes: one math, ELA, and U.S. History.

All five exams must be clearly indicated on the transcript. In both cases, students who receive waivers for Global History and Geography are required to take and pass the U.S. History Regents exam and may not use another +1 option to fulfill the social studies exam requirement.

Schools must [update the transcript](#) in STARS when a student is utilizing this waiver to support the fulfillment of diploma requirements; waived exams must be clearly evident on students' transcripts. The exam(s) must be recorded on the student's transcript with 'WA' as the exam mark (see the [Course and Exam Marks Tables](#) and the [Transcript Update](#) guidance), using the comparable Regents exam code ending in 'W'. The student's NYCDOE transcript and original transcript from their previous school serve as documentation for the transcript update. The waived exams are not included in the calculation to determine whether the student has achieved an average of 90 or above on the required exams, for a diploma with honors.

If a student transfers into the NYCDOE with a preliminary grade 11 or 12 placement, but the school subsequently adjusts the student's grade level based on the transcript evaluation, the new grade level must be used to determine whether the student is eligible for Regents exam waivers.

Impact of COVID-19 on Regents Exam Waivers: In April 2020, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) cancelled the administration of Regents exams scheduled for [June 2020](#) and [August 2020](#) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic; the [cancellation of the January 2021 Regents administration](#) was announced in November 2020. NYSED provided guidelines for the issuance of Regents and LOTE waivers so that students were not adversely affected by the cancellation of these exams. These waivers represent a passed exam (equivalent to a score of 65) for the purposes of fulfilling graduation requirements.

Students in grades 7-12 who meet specific eligibility criteria to receive the Regents, LOTE, and NYSED-approved +1 waivers can use them toward the assessment requirement for diplomas (local, Regents, and advanced Regents), credentials, and endorsements.

See the [FAQ for Remote Learning \(2019-20\)](#) for eligibility criteria for the June 2020 and August 2020 Regents and LOTE waivers.

The [Regents Exam Waiver Guidance \(COVID-19\)](#) instructs schools on how to schedule eligible students for application of the waivers on their transcripts. Regents and/or LOTE waivers must be reflected on students' transcripts in alignment with DOE policies and procedures.

Guidance on the eligibility criteria and waiver application process for the January 2021 Regents waivers is available on the Academic Policy Resources page of the InfoHub.

Finally, schools must provide students of active-duty military personnel additional flexibility for meeting exam graduation requirements. Schools are required to accept all possible exam alternatives, including Regents-like state exit examinations and national norm-referenced achievement tests, to help eligible students meet exam graduation requirements. See the [Guidance for Children of Active-Duty Military Personnel](#) for information about these flexibilities.

6. Schools using Performance-Based Assessment Tasks (PBATs) in Lieu of Regents Exams—Updated Fall 2020

All students must earn required course credits in specific subjects and must pass specific assessments to meet diploma requirements. [Specific schools](#) within the NYCDOE have permission to use performance-based assessment tasks (PBATs) in lieu of certain Regents examinations. Students enrolled in schools that administer PBATs are still required to pass the ELA Regents exam, and, depending on the school, any math Regents exam. Students must also earn credits in the specific subject areas required for graduation regardless of whether or not they are required to pass Regents assessments, NYSED-approved alternatives, or PBATs in that subject area.

Impact of COVID-19 on PBATs: Since PBATs are provided in lieu of the Regents exams, the June 2020, August 2020, and January 2021 Regents waiver applies. Students must meet the same criteria for a PBAT waiver as for a Regents waiver. Students must pass the course sequence associated with the PBAT in order to receive a PBAT waiver. These waivers must also appear on student transcripts in alignment with DOE policies and procedures.

All schools must follow the standardized code deck conventions, rules, and programming practices outlined in the [High School Course Code Directory](#). The PBATs being used to fulfill graduation requirements must be [reflected on the STARS transcript](#).

To support college and career readiness, schools may communicate more rigorous academic expectations than those defined by State and City graduation requirements. However, schools may not withhold diplomas from students who have completed the minimum graduation requirements. See this guidance on policies affecting [Schools Administering PBATs in lieu of Regents Exams](#) for more information.

D. DIPLOMA ENDORSEMENTS

Students may obtain one or more designations or endorsements to certain diploma types as follows:

1. Arts Endorsement⁵⁶—Updated Fall 2020

Impact of COVID-19 on the Chancellor's Diploma Endorsement in the Arts and the Certificate of Advanced Achievement in the Arts: Students who completed 44 credits towards graduation, including the total required credits coded in their respective Art form, were granted an exemption to the standard three-part Arts Commencement Assessment in Dance, Music, Theater or Visual Arts.

Eligible students	Eligible diploma	Requirements
Students enrolled in schools with approved arts sequences	Advanced Regents, Regents, and local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn 10 credits in a single art form (dance, theater, music, or visual arts), which may include those required to meet the 44 credits for graduation Pass the NYCDOE assessment in that art form/discipline⁵⁷ For the advanced Regents diploma, only two LOTE course credits instead of six credits are required, and a LOTE exam is not required⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Students may earn a Certificate of Arts Achievement by completing a 6-credit arts sequence in dance or visual arts and passing the NYCDOE assessment in that art form. The Certificate of Arts Achievement is not a diploma endorsement.

⁵⁷ Contact the [Arts and Special Projects team](#) about ordering arts assessments for eligible students.

⁵⁸ Students completing six credits of [LOTE](#) to fulfill the advanced Regents diploma requirement only need to earn nine arts credits in a single art form to meet the credit requirements for the advanced Regents diploma with an arts endorsement.

2. Seal of Biliteracy

Eligible students	Eligible diploma	Requirements
All students	Advanced Regents and Regents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn three points for demonstrating proficiency in English and earn three points for demonstrating proficiency in a world language from the criteria. See the NYSED Seal of Biliteracy Handbook for details

3. Career and Technology Education (CTE) Endorsement—Updated Fall 2020

Impact of COVID-19 on the CTE Endorsement: In the 2019-20 school year, schools were permitted to grant an exemption of the three-part technical assessment for seniors scheduled to complete their NYSED-approved programs of study.

Eligible students	Eligible diploma	Requirements
Students enrolled in New York State-approved CTE programs	Advanced Regents, Regents, and local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Earn course credits in NYSED-approved Career and Technology Education (CTE) sequence (number of credits varies by sequence but must be a minimum of seven, including one course credit in Career and Financial Management [CFM]) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CFM can be embedded to fulfill a distribution requirement or can be offered as a stand-alone course Students may be required to exceed 44 total credits For the advanced Regents diploma only, if a student fulfills a course sequence that extends to 10 credits or more, only two LOTE course credits are required (instead of six) and the LOTE exam is not required. Pass the CTE technical assessment that corresponds to the New York State-approved sequence in which the student earns credits Complete work-based learning (WBL) requirement

4. Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Endorsement—Updated Fall 2020

Impact of COVID-19 on the CDOS Endorsement: In the 2019-20 school year, any student exiting high school in June or August 2020 who was unable to complete the requirements for the CDOS Commencement Credential or the CDOS +1 pathway as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, and demonstrated proficiency of the CDOS learning standards, must be granted a waiver from the completion of the 216 hours of Career and Technical Education (CTE) instruction and/or the 54 hours of work-based learning requirement.

Review the [CDOS](#) guidance and [Return to School FAQ](#) for more information on 2020-21 school year requirements.

Eligible students	Eligible diploma	Requirements
All students who participate in standard State assessments	Advanced Regents, Regents, and local	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and successfully pass 216 hours (or four, 54-hour units of study) in CTE and/or work-based learning courses; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This must include, at minimum, 54 hours of supervised work-based learning experiences related to career awareness, exploration, or preparation. These experiences may be completed in conjunction with CTE courses or as other work-based learning experiences. The remaining three units (162 hours) may be completed through CTE courses, work-based learning experiences, or other career preparation activities such as internships, service-learning, community service, school-based enterprise, or job shadowing. All 216 hours must be reflected on the transcript. Demonstrate achievement of the commencement-level CDOS learning standards Complete and annually review a career plan; and Complete a work skills employability profile detailing the student's attainment of the CDOS learning standards through work-related and academic experiences within one year prior to the student's exit from high school. This must be maintained in the student's permanent record.

5. Honors Designation

Eligible students	Eligible diploma	Requirements
All students	Advanced Regents and Regents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve 90+ average on all required Regents exams for the diploma the student is earning⁵⁹

6. Mastery in Math Designation—Updated Fall 2020

Impact of COVID-19 on the Mastery in Math Designation: Students who received a math Regents waiver due to cancelled Regents exam administrations may earn the mastery endorsement in math as long as they achieve an 85 or above on at least two Regents exams in math in addition to being granted a Regents waiver for a third Regents exam in math. See the [Regents exam waiver](#) section of this guide for details on Regents waivers.

Eligible students	Eligible diploma	Requirements
All students	Advanced Regents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve a score of 85+ on each of the three required math Regents exams (Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II)

⁵⁹ For students pursuing a diploma with honors and using a NYSED-approved alternative assessment and/or a waiver, as appropriate in accordance with [Part 100.5](#), the alternative exam and/or exam waiver (including Regents waivers due to COVID-19) should not be included in the calculation to determine whether the student has achieved an average of 90 or above on their exams. Students may use up to two NYSED-approved alternative assessments toward an Honors Designation.

7. Mastery in Science Designation—Updated Fall 2020

Impact of COVID-19 on the Mastery in Science Designation: Students who received a math Regents waiver due to cancelled Regents exam administrations may earn the mastery endorsement in science as long as they achieve an 85 or above on at least two Regents exams in science in addition to being granted a Regents waiver for a third Regents exam in science. See the [Regents exam waiver](#) section of this guide for details on Regents waivers.

Eligible students	Eligible diploma	Requirements
All students	Advanced Regents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve a score of 85+ on any three science Regents exams. While two science Regents exams are required for the Advanced Regents diploma, three are required for the Mastery in Science endorsement.

8. Service Seal

Eligible students	Eligible diploma	Requirements
All students	Advanced Regents, Regents, or local; may also be added to commencement credentials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet a minimum of 100 hours of independent service, service-learning, and/or a school-led service program over the students' high school years. See the section of this guide on Service Learning and the Service Seal Worksheet for more information.

In addition, schools may award merit, citizenship, and other school-based endorsements in accordance with their school policies. Schools utilizing these endorsement options should clearly document their policies for awarding such endorsements and communicate the policies to students and families. School-based endorsements entailing additional coursework or exams may be offered to students; however, schools may not withhold diplomas from students who have completed the minimum New York State and City graduation requirements.

E. COMMENCEMENT CREDENTIALS

In lieu of a high school diploma, students who meet specific criteria may be eligible to earn the Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) commencement credential or the Skills and Achievement commencement credential. These exiting credentials are not equivalent to a high school diploma and do not have credit or exam requirements. They do not guarantee qualification in situations where a high school diploma is required. Students who earn these credentials must receive written assurance of their eligibility to return to high school through the year in which they turn 21.

1. Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential—Updated Fall 2020

The Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) commencement credential is available to all students in New York State, including students with disabilities who participate in standard assessments and meet the requirements. It is designed to recognize students' mastery of the career-readiness skills defined in the [Career Development and Occupational Studies \(CDOS\) learning standards](#).

The CDOS commencement credential is not equivalent to a high school diploma. All students, including students with disabilities, must receive the opportunities and support needed to earn a high school diploma. Unlike a diploma, the CDOS credential does not require students to earn credits or pass exams. As a standalone credential earned in place of a high school diploma, the CDOS does not guarantee employment where a diploma is required and does not qualify

students to enter the military or enter many post-secondary institutions. For these reasons, schools should offer students CDOS-aligned work-based learning and CTE experiences alongside the academic coursework required for a diploma.

Impact of COVID-19 on the CDOS Credential: In the 2019-20 school year, any student exiting high school in June or August 2020 who was unable to complete the requirements for the CDOS Commencement Credential or the CDOS +1 pathway as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, and demonstrated proficiency of the CDOS learning standards, must be granted a waiver from the completion of the 216 hours of Career and Technical Education (CTE) instruction and /or the 54 hours of work-based learning requirement.

Review the [Return to School FAQ](#) for more information on 2020-21 school year requirements.

Commencement Credential	Student Eligibility	Requirements
<p>Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential</p> <p>The CDOS may be awarded as an endorsement to an advanced Regents, Regents, or local diploma; as a +1 option in lieu of a fifth Regents exam; as the student's sole exiting credential from high school; or to meet the ELA and/or math Regents exam requirements for the superintendent's determination of graduation.</p>	<p>Students who participate in standard assessments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete and successfully pass 216 hours (or four, 54-hour units of study) in CTE and/or work-based learning courses⁶⁰; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This must include, at minimum, 54 hours of supervised work-based learning experiences related to career awareness, exploration, or preparation. These experiences may be completed in conjunction with CTE courses or as other work-based learning experiences. The remaining three units (162 hours) may be completed through CTE courses, work-based learning experiences, or other career preparation activities such as internships, service-learning, community service, school-based enterprise, or job shadowing. All 216 hours must be reflected on the transcript. Demonstrate achievement of the commencement-level CDOS learning standards Complete and annually review a career plan; and Complete a work skills employability profile detailing the student's attainment of the CDOS learning standards through work-related and academic experiences within one year prior to the student's exit from high school. This must be maintained in the student's permanent record. Written notice of the student's right to return to pursue a high school diploma until the year in which they turn 21.

⁶⁰ Any student exiting high school in the 2020-21 school year who is unable to complete the requirements for the CDOS Commencement Credential or the CDOS +1 pathway as a result of the COVID-19 crisis, and has demonstrated proficiency of the CDOS learning standards, must be granted a waiver of the 54 hours of documented school supervised work-based learning requirement.

Students who earn the CDOS credential without earning a high school diploma must receive written assurance of their right to return to high school and work towards earning a diploma. Students remain eligible through the end of the full school year in which they turn 21, or until they have earned a diploma, whichever comes first.

2. Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential

The Skills and Achievement credential can only be awarded to students with IEPs who participate in [the New York State Alternate Assessment \(NYSAA\)](#) in place of standardized assessments; it is the sole exiting credential available to NYSA-eligible students.⁶¹ Students who earn this credential must receive written assurance of their eligibility to stay in high school through the school year in which they turn 21. The Skills and Achievement commencement credential should be awarded in alignment with the transition planning process for students with IEPs. For more information, see this guidance on the [Skills and Achievement commencement credential](#) and consult the section of this guide on [NYSAA](#).

Commencement Credential	Student Eligibility	Requirements
Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential	<p>Students with severe cognitive disabilities who participate in NYSAA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon reaching the end of the school year in which the student turns 21; or • Upon application of the student or their parent or guardian at the completion of at least 12 years of schooling, excluding kindergarten 	<p>The credential must be issued together with a summary of the student's academic achievement and functional performance and must include documentation of the student's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achievement against the Career Development and Occupational Students (CDOS) learning standards; • Level of academic achievement and independence as measured by NYSAA; • Skills, strengths, interests; and • As appropriate, other achievements and accomplishments. • Schools should use the exit summary and directions provided by NYSED.

F. GRADUATION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Below are policies and procedures relevant to high school graduation requirements; refer to the [academic policy page](#) for the most up-to-date guidance and resources on specific policies.

1. Promotion and Grade Level

[Chancellor's Regulation A-501](#) specifies promotion standards for all NYCDOE students. Promotion decisions for students in grades 9–12 are based on credit accumulation and passing of Regents exams.

Through the promotion in doubt (PID) process, schools formally notify families through promotion in doubt letters that their child is at risk of not meeting promotion standards and being retained in the same grade for the upcoming school year. This mid-year notification, which occurs in January and February, enables schools and families to plan for the needed supports and interventions to help students achieve promotion standards by June.

The table below outlines the minimum promotion criteria for high school promotion. Principals must make promotion decisions for all students in mid-June. Schools must communicate promotion decisions to students and families before

⁶¹ These credentials supersede the IEP diploma; the last IEP diplomas were issued in June 2013.

the end of the school year. High school students who do not meet promotion requirements in June have the right to attend summer school to make up course credits and attempt Regents exams.

Grade Level	Coursework/Exams	Minimum Credits
9	Successful completion of standards in academic subject areas	8 credits
10	Successful completion of standards in academic subject areas	20 credits (including 4 in ELA and/or ENL and 4 in social studies)
11	Successful completion of standards in academic subject areas	30 credits
12	Successful completion of standards in academic subject areas	44 credits in required subject areas

Schools should accurately reflect students' progress toward graduation by adjusting their grade levels and identifying students' promotion standing in January as part of the promotion in doubt identification process and in June as part of the June promotion process, in accordance with the [NYCDOE promotion policy](#). Students' grade levels must align to the promotion criteria above and should not be adjusted mid-year unless assigned in error, or the student meets promotion criteria.

As part of the promotion process, schools are responsible for adjusting students' grade levels in ATS within the current school year using the [Interclass-Intergrade Transfer \(SIGT\)](#) function and as part of their end of year work using either the [Future Grade Promotion Placement \(GPPL\)](#) or [High School Reorganization \(CFHS\)](#) functions. Unlike schools serving grades 3–8, high schools cannot promote students at the end of August. Instead, schools should make adjustments to a student's grade level as necessary after receiving summer course work.

Grade level placements must be indicated in ATS for operational and accountability purposes. However, depending on the culture and instructional model of a school, schools may choose how to communicate grade placements to students and families in other ways, outside of the student's ATS grade level. For example, transfer schools may follow an "ungraded" approach, where students track progress based on credits earned and exams passed, but do not associate with students to particular grade levels. Even if a school does not choose to communicate grade levels with students and families, it should still update students and families with information regarding the student's progress to graduation at least on a yearly basis.

For information on how grade level placement affects a student's cohort assignment, review the [Graduation Cohort Policy](#) section of this guide and the [Graduation Accountability FAQ](#).

2. Graduation Cohort Policy

Students' graduation accountability for New York State and [New York City reporting](#) is determined by three factors:

- Cohort year
- Accountability status ("report status")
- Accountable DBN ("grad cohort DBN")

These variables are displayed in the ATS [HEOY](#) function and are determined as described below. The [Graduation Accountability FAQ](#) describes each of these factors and how they are reported in greater detail.

a. Cohort year

A student's cohort year corresponds to the year in which a student enters grade 9 for the first time, anywhere in the country or world. A student's cohort year is not based on credit accumulation or progress toward graduation.

Because cohort year reflects the year in which a student first entered ninth grade, it may determine which graduation requirements apply to the student. For this reason, schools must ensure that the student's cohort year accurately reflects the year in which the student first entered ninth grade.

ATS infers the proper cohort year assignment based on a student's grade level at the end of their first school year in a NYCDOE school in grade levels 9, 10, 11, or 12. Students with disabilities who participate in alternate assessments (such as NYSAA) are assigned cohort years differently.⁶²

Schools have the ability to adjust the cohort year within the first year, if it is inaccurate, by changing the student's grade level in accordance with the promotion policy, as outlined in the section of this guide on [promotion and grade level](#). These corrections must be made so that cohort year and grade level are accurate within the first year of enrollment in a NYCDOE high school.

After a student's first year of enrollment in NYCDOE, schools may make a one-time request to change a student's cohort year using the [UGNO](#) function in ATS. In order for the request to be reviewed, [UGNO](#) entries must include a reason for the request in the comment field. Cohort change requests must fall into one of the two categories listed below:

1. **The student's cohort year does not accurately reflect their true first year of ninth grade entry due to error.** For example, the student was assigned to an incorrect grade level during their first year of enrollment in the NYCDOE, and, as a result, the cohort year does not accurately reflect the student's real first year of ninth grade entry anywhere in the world. In this case, the school must submit an [UGNO](#) request, indicate the reason in the comment field, and retain supporting documentation to demonstrate the student's true first year of ninth grade.
2. **The student is an English Language Learner (ELL) who fulfills all of the specific criteria below.** In this case, the school may make a one-time request to move the student to the cohort corresponding to the year prior to their ninth grade entry year, provided that all of the following are true:
 - o The student has never had such a request granted before
 - o The student was newly arrived to the United States in their first year of high school and placed directly into ninth grade
 - o The student is in exactly their second year of enrollment in high school
 - o The student is an English Language Learner and has a low level of literacy in their native language
 - o The school has determined, before the end of the second year of enrollment, that the proper grade level of the student is still ninth grade

Schools may not adjust students' cohort year because of factors not described above, including, for example, a student is struggling to meet graduation requirements, has tested at a lower proficiency level or below grade level in one or more subjects, or because they disagree with a previous NYCDOE school's assessment of a transfer students' records.

Schools cannot request cohort year adjustments for students in cohort years whose four-year graduation rate has already been reported to NYSED as part of the graduation rate and/or are included on the NYCDOE School Quality Report (SQR).

⁶² As an exception, students with disabilities who are eligible for the New York State Alternate Assessment ([NYSAA](#)) at non-District 75 high schools or in District 75 inclusion programs are assigned cohorts on their ninth grade entry year or their seventeenth birthday year, whichever comes first. All other NYSAA-eligible students in District 75 programs are assigned cohorts based on their seventeenth birthday year. See the [Graduation Accountability](#) guidance for more information on cohort assignments for NYSAA-eligible students, the [Alternate Assessment](#) guidance, and the section of this guide on [students with disabilities who participate in alternate assessments](#).

A student in a closed cohort may be moved to an open cohort if and only if the student has never been previously counted as part of City, State, or Federal graduation reporting.

b. Accountability Status (“Report Status”)

A student’s report status—“accountable” or “non-accountable”—indicates whether the student is included in graduation rate calculations. Accountable students include those who are active in the NYCDOE, have dropped out, or have graduated. Non-accountable students are those who were discharged with a cohort-removing code and students who were never enrolled in a diploma-granting high school. For additional guidance on cohort removing discharges, see the [Graduation Accountability](#) guidance and [Transfer, Discharge, and Graduation Code Guidelines](#).⁶³

Report status locks in ATS on June 30 of a student’s fourth year of high school. Schools must submit cohort change requests for closing cohorts (meaning those that are coming to the end of the fourth year of high school), by June 1 of that school year to allow for sufficient time for review.

c. Accountable DBN (“Grad Cohort DBN”)

The “accountable DBN” or “grad cohort DBN” is the last diploma-granting school where the student was enrolled for one day or more within the first four years of a student’s high school enrollment. This school is accountable for the student’s graduation for NYSED and School Quality Report accountability purposes.

If a student transfers between NYCDOE schools, the student’s grad cohort DBN changes if both of the following are true:

- The new school is a regular diploma-granting high school, and
- The effective date of the transfer occurs before June 30 of the fourth year of high school. Like report status, grad cohort DBN locks on June 30

Once June 30 of the fourth year of high school passes, the grad cohort DBN does not change in ATS and will not change for the NYCDOE School Quality Reports. However, transfers between accountable schools occurring before June 30 of a student’s fifth year will result in changes to the grad cohort DBN for NYSED five-year graduation rate. For the purposes of calculating the six-year graduation rate, accountability status and accountable DBN are determined outside of ATS. For additional information on how the six-year graduation rate is calculated, including how accountability is determined for students who enroll in transfer schools and YABC programs, see the [Graduation Accountability](#) guidance.

3. Certifying Students for Graduation—Updated Fall 2020

Schools must have clearly defined procedures for regularly tracking student progress towards meeting diploma requirements. These procedures should begin in grade 9 to ensure that students have opportunities to take the courses and exams needed to earn the most rigorous diploma possible and achieve [college-and career-readiness](#).

Certifying high school seniors for graduation is one of the most important procedures performed by high schools. In certifying a student for graduation, the principal is attesting that the student has completed all New York State and City requirements for graduation and should receive the designated high school diploma from that school. Every high school must have clearly defined procedures for certifying students for graduation. Schools should consult the [Senior Certification Guide](#) or contact their [academic policy and system lead](#) for support in developing or refining school-based certification processes. Principals and their designated staff must still review all graduating students’ transcripts for completion of all specific requirements, and the principal remains responsible for certifying students as graduates.

⁶³ The cohort-removing discharge codes are 8, 10, 11, 15, 20, and 25. Students discharged with codes 8, 10, or 11 with documentation or reason code of ‘X’ remain accountable. See the [Transfer, Discharge, and Graduation Code Guidelines](#) for information on updating these codes.

Impact of COVID-19 on Certifying Students for Graduation and Distributing Diplomas:

Due to school buildings being closed from March 2020 and into the summer as well as the Regents cancellations, the senior certification process for June and August 2020 were modified. The [Senior Certification Guide](#) was updated to include more groups for sorting potential graduates, e.g., “students dependent on exam waivers” and “students who need to be programmed for summer courses because they received ‘NX’.” The guide also included best practices for school staff to review transcripts electronically as this is a practice that usually occurs in person.

Additionally, the NYCDOE had to delay the process of distributing diplomas to graduating students in the class of 2020. The [Diploma Distribution Process for September 2020](#) provided schools with the steps and tools to manage diploma distribution in accordance with the health and safety protocols to keep staff and students safe during this process. Students were provided specific times to pick up their diploma, and in cases where students no longer resided in New York City, the students could fill out a form to have their diploma mailed to them.

The [Transfer, Discharge, and Graduation Code Guidelines](#) outline the appropriate discharge code for each diploma type. Each diploma type has a ‘reason code’ where schools can indicate diploma designations and endorsements as applicable. A summary of graduation codes is included in the [Appendix](#).

a. Graduating Students in GRDT

ATS uses [discharge codes](#) and data from STARS and ATS to flag students who may not meet standard credit or exam requirements for graduation. After a review of student transcripts to confirm all graduation requirements have been met, where appropriate, schools may override these flags in ATS to indicate how the student met graduation requirements. Schools may use a credit or exam [override code](#), as appropriate, once approved by the principal. Override codes must be submitted to and approved by the principal using the [Override Code Review Form](#) before they are entered into ATS. Schools should retain this form for their records.

b. Students Returning from Non-Diploma Granting Programs

NYCDOE high schools are responsible for awarding diplomas to students, including previously enrolled students who complete diploma requirements at other non-diploma granting programs. These programs include Young Adult Borough Centers (YABC), District 79 involuntary programs, and District 75 non-diploma granting programs, such as home or hospital instruction. In these instances, the student’s high school should collaborate with guidance counselors and other staff from the non-diploma granting institution to ensure a smooth transition and graduation certification process for each student. Specific roles and responsibilities for graduating the student are outlined below:

- The non-diploma granting institution at which the student is enrolled in is responsible for:
 1. “Pre-certifying” the student, meaning reviewing the student’s transcript to ensure that the student has met all credit and exam requirements for the relevant diploma and that these are reflected in STARS.
 2. Submitting any low score appeals and updating the student’s transcript if an appeal is approved.
 3. Returning the student to their previous high school with the “January/June/August Graduate” indicator using the [HSRE](#) screen in ATS⁶⁴
- The student’s previous NYCDOE high school is responsible for:
 - Certifying the student for graduation.
 - Entering the student as a graduate in ATS using the appropriate [diploma code](#).
 - Awarding the student a high school diploma from the school.

⁶⁴ In the case of home and hospital instruction, the home or hospital program must end shared instruction in ATS using the [SIGS](#) screen.

The responsibilities of the previous high school that are outlined above apply regardless of the length of time the student has been enrolled at the non-diploma granting institution. In most cases, the previous high school is accountable for the graduate for City, State, and Federal accountability purposes.⁶⁵

In cases where a student has no prior enrollment in a NYCDOE high school or a student previously attended a NYCDOE high school that has since closed, the non-diploma granting institution should follow the steps outlined above.⁶⁶ The [HSRE](#) screen in ATS automatically transfers the student to a central location (02M972). Once a school has pre-certified a graduate and transferred the student to '02M972' in ATS, the school must notify their [academic policy and system lead](#) to coordinate the certification process with Central.

4. Early or Late Graduation

Any student who has not yet received a high school diploma is entitled to a [free public education](#) (FAPE) through the end of the school year in which they turn 21.⁶⁷

A student who meets graduation requirements in fewer than four years may choose to receive a diploma and leave school early, provided all graduation requirements are completed. Students eligible for early graduation do not need to remain in school for the sole purpose of completing remaining PE requirements; see the [PE](#) guidance for additional information. Schools cannot require students who have met graduation requirements in fewer than four years to remain enrolled. The principal must discuss with the parent and student post-secondary plans. A student who meets graduation requirements after four years in high school may be awarded a diploma upon completing graduation requirements. If a student in the fifth or sixth year of high school completes the requirements mid-year, the school can discharge the student as a graduate using the [DISC](#) function in ATS. The school does not need to wait until the normal graduation periods in January, June, or August. Schools cannot require students who have met graduation requirements in more than four years to remain enrolled through the end of the year.

5. Student Participation in Commencement Ceremonies

Per NYCDOE policy, high school students must meet graduation requirements to participate in their school's graduation ceremony. Students who have not yet met graduation requirements at the time of the ceremony may not participate in the ceremony.⁶⁸ Schools must clearly communicate expectations for participating in commencement ceremonies to students and families.

Students are not graduates until they have met all New York State high school credit and exam requirements. Schools must not update students' academic records in ATS to reflect their graduation status or issue students their diploma until after verifying the students have met all credit and exam requirements.

Schools may prohibit a student from attending commencement-related activities or graduation ceremonies when the student poses a real threat of violence or disruption to the event. Schools may also bar students with particularly

⁶⁵ The previous high school is accountable for the graduate if they were the last diploma-granting school before June 30 of the student's fourth year of high school.

⁶⁶ See this guidance on [Supporting Students Who Have Met Graduation Requirements at YABCs When Their Home Schools Have Closed](#).

⁶⁷ Per [New York State Education Law, Section 3202](#). This does not include summer school. Schools may choose to allow students who have already turned 21 continue to attend summer school.

⁶⁸ In June 2019, the NYCDOE made an exception to this policy because the June Regents exams were administered later than closer to the last day of school and some students would not have received their June Regents exam scores before graduation ceremonies. For that year's ceremonies, schools were required to provide students in grade 12 who met the credit requirements for graduation and only needed June Regents exams to meet the assessment requirements for graduation, the opportunity to walk in their graduation ceremonies. Also, students who were awaiting superintendent approval of pending appeals or determinations to graduate at the time of their graduation ceremonies also had the opportunity to participate.

egregious conduct from participation, as long as students are previously advised in writing. Students on suspension at the time of the commencement ceremonies also may be prohibited from attending these events, but the exclusion must be proportionate to the infraction committed.

Students who earn [commencement credentials](#) in lieu of a diploma are equally entitled to participate in graduation ceremonies; schools may not exclude these students from walking in their ceremonies.

G. CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK (CUNY) PROFICIENCY AND ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

1. CUNY Four-Year Colleges—Updated Fall 2020

Candidates for freshman admission to a bachelor's degree program must show proficiency in reading, writing, and math to be admitted. Traditionally, proficiency was demonstrated through scores on Regents exams, the SAT, or ACT. Due to the disruption of testing availability due to COVID-19, CUNY will not require SAT or ACT scores for admissions to four-year colleges in spring 2021, fall 2021, or spring 2022. Instead, candidates can demonstrate proficiency through Regents exam scores or a combination of Regents exam scores and high school grades. To improve post-secondary readiness and prospects for college admission, students should complete coursework and earn Regents exam scores above the minimum required for graduation. The following course sequences can support students in successfully transitioning to college and the workplace:

- Math: 8 Regents-level credits, including a sequence that consists of at least the following: Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II.
- Science: 8 Regents-level credits, including a sequence that consists of at least three of the following: Living Environment, Chemistry, Physics, and an AP science course.
- Advanced Courses: [Advanced Placement \(AP\)](#)® courses, International Baccalaureate (IB) courses, and courses for college credit such as College Now or CUNY Early College.

See the [CUNY website](#) details on the scores required to demonstrate proficiency through various exams.

Please note that simply meeting proficiency requirements in reading, writing, and math is not a guarantee of admission to a CUNY bachelor's program. Each CUNY college has its own admissions requirements. For a sense of the average academic profile of the students admitted to each CUNY campus, consult the [CUNY Freshman Profile](#). For general information on how to apply to CUNY, please consult the [CUNY Application website](#).

2. CUNY Community Colleges

Candidates for freshman admission to an associate program do not have to demonstrate the skills proficiencies as outlined on the [CUNY website](#). However, entering students who are not proficient based on these criteria may be required to complete developmental interventions before enrolling in or while enrolled in credit-bearing college courses. In the past, students who did not meet proficiency benchmark scores were required to take the CUNY assessment tests to determine if they required remedial coursework to build their skills in any areas. Starting with the spring 2020 admissions term, CUNY no longer administers additional tests to determine whether students are proficient. Instead, CUNY will use students' high school grades, Regents exam scores, and SAT scores if submitted on their freshman application to determine whether they are proficient or assigned to complete developmental education. See the [CUNY Testing website](#) for up-to-date information and frequently asked questions about proficiency and developmental education.

Students with lower exam scores typically cannot begin a full program of college-level work in an associate program until they have completed developmental courses or interventions and demonstrated proficiency in reading, writing, and math. Developmental courses or interventions do not bear credit towards a degree and tuition may be charged for them.

Students are strongly advised to demonstrate proficiency before admission to CUNY to avoid developmental education. Given the gap between the requirements for a high school diploma and the requirements for college-and-career-readiness, schools are urged to encourage students to attempt courses and exams beyond the minimum requirements for graduation.

II. COURSE CREDIT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. CREDIT-BEARING COURSES—Updated Fall 2020

All credit-bearing courses must meet the following requirements:

- Address NYSED commencement-level [learning standards](#);
- Offer students sufficient instruction per credit earned; and
- Be taught by a NYCDOE teacher with a NYSED secondary certification in the course subject area.

The following definitions and policies apply:

- A unit of study is the equivalent of at least 180 minutes of instruction per week throughout the school year, or the equivalent of 54 hours per semester of instructional time.⁶⁹
- A unit of credit is awarded after students demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes in the course, as defined in the [course syllabus, equivalent to 180 minutes of instruction per week throughout the school year or 54 hours per semester](#).
- Learning experiences that take place outside the traditional classroom and school day may count towards the equivalent of the instructional time required to bear credit (180 minutes per week, or 54 hours per credit), provided they are instructed or supervised by a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher and the content is aligned to NYSED’s commencement-level [learning standards](#). This includes:
 - Courses using online vendors (see the section of this guide on [online learning](#))
 - Supervised, instructional experiences overseen by teachers from the school that occur off-site (for example, courses taken at a college, internships).⁷⁰ See this section of this guide on [internships and service learning](#).
- The principal must evaluate all courses and experiences (including those that occur virtually and/or non-virtually inside and/or outside the classroom and school day) and attest that the course meets the requirements stated above to bear credit. Schools may use the [Course Review Form](#), an optional tool, to evaluate new and existing course offerings.

Students who meet the learning outcomes of the course by meeting the expectations outlined in the syllabus must receive credit for the course. When students miss class time, teachers should give students reasonable chances to make up missed work before final grades are entered in STARS. They may not be denied credit based on lack of “seat time” alone. Grading policies must clearly detail exactly how non-mastery measures of performance contribute to the overall grade and might therefore impact whether students earn credit. Schools must communicate these academic expectations to students and families at the beginning of the school year. Schools should consult the [Grading Policy Toolkit](#) for additional guidance around using non-mastery measures, such as attendance and participation.

⁶⁹ Or 45 hours of instruction during the summer school term.

⁷⁰ The only high school students who are not required to be programmed for a full, 27.5-hour week are fifth- and sixth-year seniors.

Impact of COVID-19 on the Instructional Time Requirements for a Unit of Study: The [New York State Education Department \(NYSED\)](#) issued guidance providing flexibility for courses that previously required specific units of study, including all credit-bearing courses. A unit of study was previously defined as 180 minutes per week throughout the school year, or the equivalent of 54 hours per credit for high school (45 hours per credit during summer school).

From March 2020 to August 2020 (the end of the 2019-20 school year, including summer school), NYSED waived the instructional time requirement for a student to earn course credit, therefore schools were not required to provide the full 54 hours of instruction per credit. Students were to receive course credit at the end of a course as long as they met the standards and earned a passing grade, per the DOE's [Grading Policy for Remote Learning](#).

During 2020-21, schools must use 180 minutes per week (or 54 hours per credit) as a benchmark for comparison when designing and delivering instruction aligned to the learning standards. Principals must ensure that the instructional experiences as a whole are comparable in rigor, scope, and magnitude to those provided during a traditionally delivered unit of study of 180 minutes per week. Instructional experiences are not defined solely as a student's time in front of a teacher or in front of a screen and may include time engaged in standards-based learning under the guidance and direction of a teacher. Schools are not required to deliver exactly 180 minutes per week (54 hours per credit) for required units of study.

Throughout this guide the instructional time flexibility is referred to as *"the equivalent of 54 hours"* or *"the equivalent of 180 minutes per week."*

B. NON-CREDIT-BEARING COURSES

Per NYSED policy, students may not receive credit for the following:

- **Courses that repeat standards or lead to more than four credits in a Regents subject area:** Schools may not allow students to earn credit for the same course content multiple times or for a course that exceeds the four-credit limit in a Regents subject area. Students may not receive credit for re-taking a course they have already passed, even if they are using it to help prepare to take the [Regents exam](#). Regents-preparatory courses may not be credit-bearing. See the section of this guide on [earning credit after previously failing a course](#) for guidance on ways to support students who need additional time to master course content.
- **Courses that do not align to high school learning standards:** Schools may not award credit for courses that do not align to NYSED commencement-level [learning standards](#).⁷¹ This includes courses that meet middle school standards, guidance courses that do not align to NYSED commencement-level learning standards, and SAT and ACT prep courses. Guidance or advisory courses generally should not bear credit. NYSED does not have commencement-level learning standards in guidance. If credit-bearing, these courses should be coded more accurately to align with the NYSED commencement-level learning standards being taught. The teacher of record's certification must correspond with the standards and content of the course. See the section of this guide on [electives](#).
- **Academic Intervention Services (AIS), Special Education Teacher Support Services (SETSS) (previously called "Resource Room"), or Related Services:** These services may be provided as stand-alone periods or integrated into general classroom instruction, depending on the needs of the student and as specified in the student's IEP, as appropriate. While the services may not be credit-bearing and should not be graded, they may be integrated

⁷¹ NYSED has commencement-level [learning standards](#) in the following departments: English language arts; social studies; mathematics, science, and technology; the arts (including visual arts, music, dance and theater); Languages Other Than English; health, physical education, family and consumer sciences; and career development and occupational studies.

into other credit-bearing courses as appropriate. See the [STARS wiki](#) for guidance on programming special education services.

- **Science laboratory:** Schools may include a lab within a science course as long as the course meets seat time requirements for both the course and the lab (at least 180 minutes per week or the equivalent for the science course and the equivalent of 1,200 minutes for the lab).⁷² Credit may not be awarded for the lab itself and the 1,200 minutes of lab work must be in addition to, not included in, the 180 minutes per week or equivalent of the science course. Regardless of inclusion within credit-bearing science courses, lab courses must be coded separately, denoted by an 'L' in the seventh character, as outlined in the [High School Course Code Directory](#).

C. ADDITIONAL AND FRACTIONAL CREDIT FOR COURSES

Schools should award credit in whole-credit (1.0) or half-credit (0.5) increments whenever possible.⁷³ Circumstances for awarding either additional or fractional credit are limited, and the amount of credit awarded for any course must be consistent with the amount of content delivered. See guidance on [credit-bearing courses](#) for more information.

1. Additional Credit

Schools may award additional credit in the following circumstances:

- Accelerating or extending a course up to the total number of credits in the sequence, when supported by both additional learning standards and instructional time
 - For example, a semester course that meets for 90 minutes per day, four days per week (360 minutes per week) and covers Global History 1 of 4 and Global History 2 of 4 learning standards may be worth two credits.
- [Interdisciplinary courses](#) that cover both additional learning standards and instructional time
 - For example, an interdisciplinary course that covers Global History one learning standards as well as arts education standards and meets for 108 hours over the course of a semester may be worth two credits.

School may not award additional credit for increasing the rigor of a course (for example, honors or AP courses). However, schools can choose to weight more rigorous courses more heavily in a student's GPA; see the [Calculation of GPA](#) section of this guide. Additionally, schools may not award credit by exceeding the total number of credits in a Regents course sequence as outlined in NYSED regulations.

⁷² See the [Science](#) section of this guide for the science lab policy changes and flexibilities in response to COVID-19.

⁷³ Schools using trimester or cycle term models may need to lengthen their periods or reduce the number of courses offered in a term in order to ensure students are progressing meaningfully toward meeting the diploma course credit requirements. For more information, see the [High School Programming](#) guidance.

2. Fractional Credit

Credit requirements for graduation are almost entirely in full credit units; it rarely benefits students to accumulate partial or fractional credits. Schools should consider students' progress toward meeting graduation requirements when programming credits in fractional increments. However, due to differences in term models and programming, there are limited situations where fractional credit values are appropriate. Schools may award fractional credit in the following circumstances:

- Utilizing required PE credit values, according to the policies in the [PE](#) guidance
- Dividing a course sequence into a trimester- or cycle-based program, in meaningful units where one credit continues to correspond to the equivalent of 54 hours of instructional time. See the [High School Programming Guide](#) for guidance on trimester and cycle programming.
- Establishing a course that meets for significantly fewer than 180 minutes per week, but is still aligned to commencement-level [learning standards](#) and is taught by a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher
 - For example, a health course that provides 90 minutes of instruction per week over two semesters may be worth 0.5 credits per semester.

Outside of these scenarios, schools should avoid awarding fractional credit when possible, as it rarely benefits students and can create further problems when a student transfers to a new school.

D. INTERDISCIPLINARY COURSES

An interdisciplinary course combines [learning standards](#) from two different subject areas in a single course. A NYCDOE teacher certified in at least one of the subject areas must teach interdisciplinary courses. Additionally, total credit awarded may not exceed the equivalent of one credit per 54 hours of instruction. Schools may choose to award credit for an interdisciplinary course in the following ways:

- **Awarding fractional credit in two subject areas:** The total credit awarded must reflect the equivalent of one credit per 54 hours of instruction. Schools may divide this credit across both subject areas. Upon successful completion of an interdisciplinary course that meets for 180 minutes per week throughout one semester or the equivalent, for a total of 54 hours, students may receive 0.5 credits in one subject area and 0.5 credits in the other. Schools should avoid awarding credit in less than half-credit (0.5) increments whenever possible.
- **Awarding full credit for one subject area and fulfilling a distribution requirement for the other subject area(s):** The total credit awarded must reflect the equivalent of one credit per 54 hours of instruction. Schools may award this full credit in one subject area and fulfill a distribution requirement in another subject area. Fulfilling a distribution requirement does not count toward a student's total credits earned, only the subject-specific requirement. Students must still earn 44 total credits to meet diploma requirements.
 - **Example:** A school offers an interdisciplinary course that covers both English and Economics learning standards. The course covers 180 minutes per week worth of content throughout the semester and is taught by a NYCDOE teacher certified in English. At the end of the semester, students who master the course content earn one credit of English and meet the one-credit distribution requirement for Economics (as indicated on the transcript with the mark 'ND'). While students have fulfilled the Economics distribution requirement, students still must earn 44 total credits to meet diploma requirements.
 - **Example:** A school offers an interdisciplinary course that covers the learning standards for math and physical science and is taught by a certified science teacher. At the end of the semester, students who demonstrate mastery of the course and earn a passing grade earn one credit in math and meet the distribution requirement for science. Student will need to earn one more physical science credit and a total five science credits to meet the science distribution requirement for a diploma.

- o **Non-example:** A school offers an interdisciplinary course that covers Geometry and Architecture (a visual art). The course meets for the equivalent of 180 minutes per week throughout the semester and is taught by a math-certified teacher. At the end of the semester, students who master the course earn one credit of Geometry and one credit of Visual Arts. This is a **non-example** because the total credit awarded must reflect the equivalent of one credit per 54 hours of instruction. The school can either award one credit for one subject area and students fulfill a distribution requirement for the other or award 0.5 credits for each subject area (as described in option 2).

Schools must enter actual marks in accordance with their grading policy in one of the two areas and a mark of 'ND' in the other subject area. This indicates that the student met the distribution requirement in both areas, but only earned one credit for the course. See this guidance on [Interdisciplinary Courses](#) for more information.

- **Awarding additional credit for extended time and learning standards:** An interdisciplinary course that meets for additional time and addresses sufficient learning standards in two disciplines may award credit in both subject areas in increments of 0.5. For example, a semester-long interdisciplinary art history course that includes history content through the lens of art and meets daily for the equivalent of 55 minutes (275 minutes per week) may award one credit in social studies and 0.5 credits in art, as long as the credits reflect the instructional time and learning standards addressed in the course. See discussion of fractional credits in the [Additional/Fractional Credit](#) section above.

Students in the same interdisciplinary course may earn credit or fulfill distribution requirements in different subject areas. For example, a student participating in an interdisciplinary course that covers English and Global learning standards may earn one credit in English and fulfill the distribution requirement for Global. Another student in that same course may earn one credit for Global and fulfill a distribution requirement for English.

See the [STARS wiki](#) for information on how to set up and award grades in interdisciplinary courses.

E. ADDITIONAL WAYS TO EARN CREDIT

Schools may design experiences that incorporate alternative mechanisms for delivering course content and providing instruction aligned to NYSED commencement-level [learning standards](#). Offering such courses requires careful planning and adherence to specific policies in addition to the requirements described in the [credit-bearing courses](#) section of this guide.

1. Online and Blended Courses—Updated Fall 2020

High schools may choose to offer online courses with content provided by online vendors and may incorporate these online courses into their academic programs. Some schools may choose to use online vendors to deliver instruction virtually. In these cases, the course content is pre-packaged and provided by an external vendor. Students may log on to a vendor-provided website, which contain videos and interactive tools, to receive lessons and instruction in a specific subject.

Online and blended courses with content provided by online vendors are regular courses and must meet the same academic policies required of traditional classroom courses including all remote and blending learning guidelines.

Online or blended courses that bear credit must meet the following requirements:

- Align to NYSED commencement-level [learning standards](#) for the subject area, as outlined in a course syllabus;
- Be instructed or overseen by a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher, who monitors the course, provides the student with substantive and regular feedback, awards the final grade, and is the teacher of record in STARS; and⁷⁴
- Meet [instructional time requirements](#) by providing the opportunity for the equivalent of 180 minutes of instruction per week, or 54 hours per credit awarded.⁷⁵

Impact of COVID-19 on Online and Blended Courses: In March 2020, the NYCDOE transitioned to a fully remote learning model as school buildings were closed to decrease the spread of COVID-19. Like previous credit-bearing online/blended courses, remote learning was required to include regular and substantive interaction between students and subject-certified teachers, and the courses were required to be aligned to commencement-level learning standards.

Upon cancellation of the June and August 2020 Regents exam administrations, students in traditional credit-bearing online/blended courses in the 2019-20 school year were not required to pass the Regents exam in the subject area in order to receive course credit in these courses. Instead, the student received course credit upon demonstrating mastery of the learning outcomes for the subject.

In September 2020, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) revised the definition of “unit of study” in [Commissioner’s Regulations Part 100.1 \(a\)](#) to include instructional experiences delivered through digital technology, including online and blended courses. Instructional experiences are not defined solely as a student’s time spent in front of a teacher or in front of a screen, but time engaged in standards-based learning under the guidance and direction of a subject-certified teacher. As a result, students in credit-bearing online/blended courses no longer need to pass the associated Regents exam to earn course credit. Instead, students in credit-bearing online and blended courses must receive credit at the end of a course as long as they have met the standards assessed and earned a passing grade, per the school’s grading policy.

All courses, including courses with content provided by online vendors, must be [scheduled in STARS](#). Schools must code courses with content provided by online vendors like traditional classroom courses, using the standardized [High School Course Code Directory](#), and identify online and blended coursework using the [section properties](#); see the [scheduling in STARS](#) section of this guide for additional information. Schools may not permit students to do a ‘trial run’ of an online or blended course without it being scheduled in STARS. Schools cannot retroactively add an online or blended course to a student’s transcript or change the grade of an online or blended course, unless the rationale meets the explicit criteria outlined in the [Transcript Update Form](#).

Students may occasionally choose to pursue online courses independently of their school, and without school involvement or approval. Such courses can be evaluated as transfer credits; the decision to award credit for these experiences is at the discretion of the principal in accordance with the policies outlined in the section of this guide on [transfer credit](#). See also the [Transfer Student Toolkit](#).

⁷⁴ See the [Courses with Content Provided by Online Vendors](#) guidance for additional information about the role of the teacher.

⁷⁵ Or 45 hours of instruction during the summer school term.

2. Internships and Service-Learning

Schools can choose to award credits for internships and service-learning experiences that meet specific criteria. Internships and service-learning courses that bear credit must align with the following policies:

- The experience must align to NYSED commencement-level [learning standards](#) for the subject area, as outlined in the [course syllabus](#).⁷⁶
- The experience must include a classroom/seminar/workshop component, in addition to learning time spent in an educational internship, as part of the minimum instructional time (equivalent of 180 minutes per week throughout the school year or the equivalent).
 - Schools may determine the structure and content of the classroom/seminar/workshop component, including the instructional time provided. While there is no required minimum time for the classroom/seminar/workshop component, the component should provide sufficient time for meaningful teacher-student interaction.
- A NYCDOE subject-certified teacher must oversee the experience, in collaboration with a supervisor at the internship site.
 - The subject-certified teacher overseeing the internship course is responsible for overseeing the syllabus, monitoring and assessing student progress, instructing the classroom/seminar/workshop component, and awarding the course grade. Teachers do not need to accompany students to off-site course components, but they should work closely with individuals at the site to monitor student performance and the alignment of off-site activities to the expectations defined in the syllabus.
- The classroom/seminar/workshop component and educational internship/service experiences must be scheduled in STARS.

Internships that are part of [New York State-approved CTE sequences](#) or [work-based learning programs](#) have specific requirements. For guidance on implementing internships and service-learning courses, see the [Off-Site Courses](#) guidance. Also see the [CTE](#) guidance.

Schools should maintain systems and structures (such as an accreditation committee) for regularly reviewing course offerings, including existing courses and new course proposals, course sequences, and course credit values. Schools may use the [Course Review Form](#) to review existing and new courses.

All service-learning experiences may count toward the diploma [Seal of Recognition for Service](#). The requirements for service learning to bear credit are more stringent than those for the service seal. Therefore, although all hours of credit-bearing service learning may count toward the seal, not all hours counted toward the seal may necessarily bear credit. For example, a student participating in a weekly Meals on Wheels volunteer food delivery service may accrue 54 hours of service time over a semester, but that volunteer experience does not equate to a course, which requires alignment with NYSED commencement-level learning standards and a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher who instructs the course. Additionally, these volunteer experiences may not be scheduled in STARS, while a course must be scheduled in STARS.

Service hours in pursuit of the Seal of Recognition for Service should be added to the transcript via a transcript update. However, these experiences should not be credit-bearing. Schools must maintain [a log of service hours](#) to add non-credit-

⁷⁶ Syllabi for internships and service-learning must clearly delineate what is taught in the classroom component, when and where the classroom component takes place, expectations for students when they are off-site, and how the teacher will assess student learning and expectations for students in both the classroom and off-site components of the course.

bearing service hours to the transcript with a transcript update.⁷⁷ Service learning, which fulfills all the criteria necessary for a course, may be credit-bearing. However, as these service-learning experiences have a classroom component scheduled in STARS, they should not be added via transcript update.

For more information about the service seal, see the [Seal of Recognition for Service](#) guide.

3. Independent Study

Students may use independent study to complete up to six elective credits toward diploma requirements. Independent study may not fulfill subject-specific credit requirements, such as ELA, science, or physical education. A school-based panel consisting of, at minimum, the principal, a teacher in the independent study subject area, and a school counselor or other administrator, must approve any student's participation in independent study. The panel must attest to the student's ability to successfully complete independent study and progress toward graduation. The school should document the independent study approval process for each student and retain this documentation for their records.

In order to bear elective credit toward graduation requirements, all independent study courses must, at minimum, address NYSED commencement-level [learning standards](#) as outlined in a syllabus, provide the opportunity for the equivalent of 54 hours of instructional time per credit, and have supervision from a NYCDOE subject-certified teacher who determines student mastery of the learning outcomes for the course.

Schools must schedule independent study courses in STARS, denoted by 'S' in the seventh character, as outlined in the [High School Course Code Directory](#).

4. Credit by Examination—Updated Fall 2020

Credit by exam is an intentional provision for students who have advanced proficiency in a specific Regents subject area despite never having studied the content formally in school. In rare situations, schools may award credit by examination to students who have scored 85 or above on a Regents exam without attempting the corresponding units of study, provided they meet all of the following criteria:

- The student did not previously take a course within the subject area of the Regents exam.
- The high school superintendent or superintendent's designee (which may include the high school principal) determines that the student will benefit academically by exercising the credit by exam option based on the student's past academic performance.
- The superintendent or superintendent's designee (which may include the high school principal) must provide permission for a student to sit for a Regents exam for the purpose of using the credit by exam provision.
- The student successfully completes an oral examination or special project demonstrating proficiency of the subject matter developed in the course, but not measured by the relevant exams, as determined and documented by the principal.
- Students attempting to earn credit by examination in science still must meet the equivalent of the 1,200-minute laboratory requirement with satisfactory documented laboratory reports.

Students may earn up to two credits per Regents exam subject, and up to 13 total credits, through credit by examination. Note that:

- Credit by exam can only be awarded in subject areas that culminate in a Regents exam. It cannot be awarded in Government, Economics, Physical education, Health, LOTE, or other subject areas without Regents exams.

⁷⁷ As STARS requires a minimum entry of 10 service hours, schools should generally wait to add hours until the time of graduation. See the [Seal of Recognition for Service Wiki](#) for detailed instructions on how to document service hours in STARS.

- The NYC LOTE comprehensive exam or OHM BOCES LOTE exams may not be used to award credit by exam.
- Students who complete only the first half of Global History (content prior to 1750) and pass the Global History II Regents exam with a score of 85 or higher may take advantage of the credit by exam provision, since the Global History II Regents exam covers content only from the second half of the sequence (1750 to modern times).
- Students may not use an ELA Regents exam taken in grade 11 to give credit for grade 12 English courses, which would otherwise be completed after the ELA Regents exam.

Impact of COVID-19 on Credit by Examination: Students cannot earn credit by examination using the Regents or LOTE exam waivers due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Waived Regents and LOTE exams count as a 65 for the purposes of fulfilling graduation requirements.

Schools must enter credit by examination into STARS via transcript update, as detailed in the [STARS wiki](#) and in the [Transcript Update](#) guidance.

5. Awarding High School Credit for College Courses

Schools may offer advanced courses that bear credit toward a high school diploma and also bear higher education credit through arrangements with higher education institutions (for example, Early College programs). This is detailed further in the guidance on [College Courses](#). A high school may not impose any charge or fee on students for any required instruction or program leading to a high school diploma, including for such college courses.

The credit values for college courses often do not correspond to the credit values used by the NYCDOE. For example, some colleges award three college credits for a semester course, whereas a NYCDOE high school typically awards one credit for a semester course. Schools should carefully determine the equivalent high school credit value based on the scope and rigor of the college course content.

Like all courses, college courses must be [scheduled in STARS](#), as outlined in the [High School Course Code Directory](#). A high school principal may also choose to award high school transfer credit for college courses students have completed independently, in accordance with the policies outlined in the [Transfer Credit](#) section.

For additional information, see the [College Courses](#) and [Off-site Courses](#) guidance.

6. Earning Credit after Previously Failing a Course—Updated Fall 2020

Teachers must enter final grades into STARS no later than four weeks (or 20 days) after the end of the term. Within this window, some teachers and schools choose to give students a few extra days right after the end of the course before grades are entered and finalized to turn in work. The school's [grading policy](#) must clearly outline this option for students. Once final grades are entered, even within this 20-day window, they cannot be changed without completing a [Transcript Update Form](#).

Impact of COVID-19 on Earning Credit after Previously Failing a Course: The New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) issued a revised grading policy for remote learning designed to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of students, families, and educators as the NYCDOE transitioned to a remote learning model. This grading policy prohibited schools from awarding students in grades 9-12 final failing marks from March 2020. Instead, these students received final marks of 'NX' (redefined as a Course in Progress) and were given the opportunity to meet the learning outcomes of the course to earn course credit by January 31, 2021. See the [Grading Policy Guidance for Remote Learning](#) for information about the NYCDOE's expectations for grading for the 2019-20 school year through August 2020.

The [2020-21 Grading Policy](#) continues to prohibit schools from awarding failing marks to high school students; they must instead receive an 'NX' (Course in Progress) and meet the learning outcomes by specific deadlines in order to earn course credit. Information about how students may receive course credit after receiving an NX are explained later in this section.

After final course grades are officially on student transcripts, students have the following options for making up failed course credits. Students can:

- **Retake the course:** Students who have missed significant amounts of class time or have not yet mastered a large portion of the subject matter can benefit from retaking the entire course again. These students can make up the course in another term during the school year or in summer school. Schools may also offer the course again as an online or blended course.
- **Take credit recovery:** Students who previously failed a course and meet specific eligibility criteria can make up credit through credit recovery. Credit recovery is a targeted experience, specifically for students who attended most of a failed course and mastered the majority of the content. In this option, the student does not retake the full course, but works with a teacher to receive instruction only in the portion of original course content in need of mastery. After receiving instruction in and demonstrating mastery of the remaining content of the originally failed course, the student may earn credit. However, there are specific NYCDOE and NYSED policies regarding the use of [credit recovery](#). Schools must use the STARS [eligibility check function](#) and the [Credit Recovery Approval Form](#) when scheduling individual students for credit recovery. See the [Credit Recovery](#) guidance for additional information and a detailed description of all applicable policies.

Impact of COVID-19 on Options for Making Up Failed Course Credits: In alignment with the NYCDOE grading policies during remote and blended learning, high school students should receive final marks of 'NX' (Course in Progress) in place of failing marks and be given an opportunity to meet the learning outcomes in the following term, including summer school.

Since students must complete credit recovery within two terms immediately following the original failed course, the window of time for students to use credit recovery for failed courses from the 2019-20 school year has closed.

Schools should not schedule students for credit recovery in the 2020-21 school year and credit recovery is not available for students who received final marks of 'NX'. Instead, these students should be programmed for a course in the following term to make up that credit and the original 'NX' should be reconciled when the student completes the course.

Earning credit after receiving a grade of 'NX' (course in progress) or 'NL' in accordance with the [policies for using those marks](#): Students must successfully complete remaining course requirements by the end of the next term to receive a final grade and credit, if applicable. If the following term is a summer, and the school is not open or the student is not available for summer school, the student will have until the end of the subsequent term to complete the outstanding course work.

High school students from the 2019-20 school year who were awarded final grades of 'NX' in June and/or August 2020 have until January 31, 2021 to complete outstanding coursework to receive course credit.

High school students who earn final grades of 'NX' between September 2020 and February 1, 2021 have until June 2021 to meet the learning outcomes for the course to receive course credit.

High school students who earn final grades of 'NX' between February 2, 2021 have until January 2022 to meet the learning outcomes for the course to receive course credit.

See for additional information on the timelines and processes to reconcile a final grade of 'NX' on student transcripts. These marks may then be updated using a transcript update. See the [2020-21 Grading Policy](#) for specific guidance to

reconcile grades of 'NX' on the transcript as well as the [Transcript Update](#) guidance and the [Transcript Update Form](#) for additional details.

Schools may not change a student's final, failing grade in a previously failed course, even if the student is making up credit by repeating the full course or taking [credit recovery](#). Students must be scheduled for the make-up credit or credit recovery course using the [High School Course Code Directory](#) and the student must receive a new grade (and credit, as appropriate) in the semester the course or credit recovery was completed. Failing grades may never be removed from a transcript except in cases of entry error.

F. TRANSFER CREDIT

Per NYSED policy, the principal, in consultation with relevant faculty, holds responsibility for evaluating transcripts and awarding transfer credits for students enrolling in a NYCDOE high school.

Schools must maintain procedures for the timely request and evaluation of transcripts from previous institutions to ensure that students are programmed for needed courses and exams using the required [Transfer Credit Equivalency Form](#) and [Transcript Update Form](#). See the [Transfer Student Toolkit](#) guidance for additional information and a transfer student entry checklist.

1. Previous School Location

a. NYCDOE public schools and programs

For students who transfer between NYCDOE schools or programs (for example, from a high school to a YABC), academic records should transfer automatically. However, a prior school's academic sequence and corresponding STARS [course codes](#) may not align with those used by the receiving school, making it difficult to program the new student.^{78,79} In such instances, the receiving school should use transcript information, including course history, titles, and codes, to program students for the course(s) that best cover the remaining [learning standards](#) in a sequence, even if the sequence does not perfectly align with the previous school's coding scheme. The receiving school should maintain documentation that justifies the student's program placement, such as diagnostic assessment results, course syllabi for the student's prior courses, or communications with former school officials regarding course content. Receiving schools also may wish to request additional information on the content of courses. Schools receiving students back from other high schools or programs (from a YABC to the home school) should accept a variety of course coding schemes as long as the program can document that the courses taken cover the required [learning standards](#) and number of credits to complete the sequence. Historical course codes must never be modified.

b. External, non-NYCDOE schools and programs

- **For students transferring from a registered public or nonpublic high school in New York City or New York State:**
 - The principal must grant transfer credit for all credits awarded by any New York State registered public or nonpublic high school provided they conform to New York State policies.
- **For students transferring from non-registered New York State schools, schools outside New York State, schools outside the United States, and home schools:**
 - The decision to award transfer credit must be based on whether the transcript and other records indicate that the work is consistent with NYSED's commencement-level [learning standards](#) and is of comparable

⁷⁸ For example, two schools might cover the same Algebra I [learning standards](#) over a different number of terms; therefore, students' transcripts may reflect different STARS [course codes](#) for the same content.

⁷⁹ Students from schools who have passed PBATs in place of Regents exams in math, science, or social studies may use these PBATs to fulfill Regents exam requirements upon transfer to a non-PBAT administering school. See this guidance on [schools administering PBATs](#).

scope and rigor to that which would have been done in the school awarding the credit. This decision is to be made by the principal, after consultation with relevant faculty. Based on the student's transcript or other records, the principal awards the appropriate transfer credits towards a high school diploma.

- o Schools are responsible for ensuring that transcripts in a language other than English are translated effectively so that transfer credit can be awarded appropriately.⁸⁰
- o Schools may award up to 10 credits of [language other than English \(LOTE\)](#) for students with documented residence and school attendance in an “other-than-English-speaking environment,” provided that the experience occurred at age 11 or older. Two credits are awarded per year. In determining the number of credits to be awarded, the school should consider both the student’s prior academic record and future academic experience. Schools must maintain documentation that demonstrates the student’s residence and school attendance in an “other-than-English-speaking environment.”
- o Transfer students are not required to complete PE credits that would have occurred in terms during which they were enrolled in a high school outside of New York State. Instead, schools can waive PE courses equivalent to the number of terms the student was enrolled in a high school outside of New York State, which reduces the amount of PE credits the student must complete to meet graduation requirements. See the [PE](#) and [Transfer Credit](#) guidance documents for additional information.
- o Students entering a New York State high school for the first time in grade 11 or 12 are exempt from certain Regents examination requirements; see the section of this guide on [Regents exam waivers](#). Effective 2018-19, students entering a New York State high school in grade 11 were also exempt from the four Global History and Geography distribution requirement, though they must still fulfill the eight Social Studies credit requirement to graduate. Students who entered in grade 12 must still had to fulfill the four Global History and Geography credit requirement. As of 2020-21, these flexibilities apply to students who enter a New York State high school for the first time in grade 11 or 12.
- **For students who completed coursework at other educational or cultural institutions (such as study abroad programs, college courses taken independently of the NYCDOE, etc.):**
 - o Principals may award transfer credit for work completed through study abroad courses or other educational or cultural institutions. A principal must decide whether to award transfer credit for work done at educational or cultural institutions other than New York State registered high schools based on whether the transcript and other records indicate that the work is consistent with NYSED’s commencement-level [learning standards](#) and is of comparable scope and rigor to that which would have been done in the school awarding the credit.

All transfer credits must be reflected in [STARS](#), using the standardized [transfer course codes](#). Transfer credits may be designated within the term and year in which the student completed each course or within the term and year immediately prior to the student’s enrollment in the NYCDOE school. Transfer credits are reflected on transcripts with a ‘W’ in the third character and a grade of ‘CR.’ Waived PE credits are reflected on transcripts with a ‘W’ in the third character and a grade of ‘NW.’ See the [Transcript Update](#) guidance, [Transcript Update Form](#), [STARS wiki](#), and [list of transfer course and exam codes](#) for additional information on this process and the required documentation.

For more information, see the guidance on awarding [Transfer Credits](#).

⁸⁰ Schools may contact the student’s home country embassy or consulate for assistance or may use a translator service. It is not appropriate for the student or student’s family members to complete the translation, or for the cost of translation to be passed along to the student. The translation may be documented on the [Transfer Credit Equivalency Form](#).

2. Grade and Cohort Placement of Transfer Students

When students transfer to a NYCDOE high school from a non-NYCDOE school, they are assigned an initial grade level by the Office of Student Enrollment. For most students, this grade level is based on the first year the student entered grade 9 at any school in the world; for students with incomplete or no educational records, the Office of Student Enrollment will place the student in grade 9.⁸¹ Based on the grade level entered into the system, students are assigned a provisional cohort. This matches the [cohort definition](#) established by the Federal and State governments. It is important to note that neither credit accumulation nor ability to stay on track toward graduation requirements determine a student's cohort year; rather, it reflects the student's first year of ninth grade at any school in the world. For more details on the definition of cohort, see the section of this guide on [cohort policy](#).

Upon receiving a transfer student, high schools must carefully evaluate transcripts and other academic records and award high school transfer course and exam credits, according to the guidelines in the section on [Transfer Credit](#). This evaluation should be conducted in a timely manner to ensure that the student is programmed for needed courses.

Upon evaluating the transcript and awarding transfer credit, a school may only change a student's grade level if documentation indicates assigned year of grade nine entry and corresponding cohort year assignment is inaccurate. A student's cohort year assignment must adhere to the policies described in the [cohort section](#) of this guide. If a school adjusts a student's grade level based on their evaluation of the student's records, they must use the updated grade level to determine whether the student is eligible for Regents exam waivers.

G. GRADE 8 COURSE ACCELERATION

Per [Part 100.4\(d\)](#), students in grade 8 have the opportunity to earn high school credits in departments including mathematics, science, languages other than English (LOTE), social studies, ELA, arts education, music, and career technical education (CTE). Students in grades 6 and 7 are not eligible to earn high school credit through accelerated courses, except in LOTE; see the [LOTE](#) guidance document for details.

There is no limit to the number of accelerated course credits a student may earn in grade 8, provided all accelerated courses meet instructional time requirements to bear credit.⁸² Schools must also provide hands-on or virtual laboratory time for science courses to prepare students for science Regents exams. These labs must be scheduled in STARS as outlined on the [STARS wiki](#).

There are two ways for grade 8 students to earn credits for high school-level courses:

- **Option 1:** In traditional grade 8 acceleration, students take an accelerated course in middle school aligned to high school-level learning standards, culminating in a Regents exam. In order to earn high school credit for the course, grade 8 students must pass the accelerated course and earn a specific minimum score on the culminating assessment in June or August, immediately following the course.

The minimum score that a student needs to earn to receive high school credit after passing the accelerated course depends on the type of exam and if the student has an IEP. Starting school year 2018-19:

- Grade 8 students without IEPs must score 65 or higher on the culminating Regents exam in June or August immediately following the course.

⁸¹ For Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education, or whose educational records otherwise indicate grade completion much lower than the child's age suggests, the Family Welcome Center may consult the Superintendent to determine an appropriate grade level and educational setting for the child.

⁸² Middle school students may not accelerate PE credits for high school. Schools may refer to the [PE](#) guidance document for more information.

- o Grade 8 students with IEPs must score a 55 or higher on the culminating Regents exam in June or August immediately following the course.⁸³
- o For accelerated courses culminating in the SLP or LOTE exam, all grade 8 students (with and without IEPs) must pass the accelerated course and score 65 or higher on the culminating SLP or LOTE exam. Students who successfully complete the SLP as their culminating exam will earn two high school credits but cannot use this exam toward exam requirements for graduation.
- **Option 2:** In cases where a grade 8 accelerated course does not exist, individual students may attend a course at a high school with high school students and earn credit on the same basis as the high school students in that course. These students will have high school course codes and credits on their high school transcripts. Evidence of the course will not appear on the student's middle school transcript.⁸⁴

See the [Middle School Academic Policy Guide](#) for more information on how accelerated credit is awarded to middle school students.

High schools may not refuse to accept accelerated course credits or schedule students to repeat credits that have been appropriately awarded in alignment with NYCDOE and NYSED policies.

High school principals receiving incoming freshman who have earned high school credits through accelerated courses should provide opportunities for such students to continue advancing their study in the disciplines in which they have accelerated.

Example: If a high school receives a student who has earned accelerated course credit in math, for example Algebra I, and they determine that the student is ready to continue to the next course, the school should program the student for Geometry.

Example: If a high school receives a student who has earned accelerated course credit in math or science, for example Algebra I or Living Environment, but needs additional support to meet [college and career readiness standards](#), the high school may consider programming the student to continue that course of study for a total of up to four credits in the subject (including the accelerated course credit). In this case, the school should use diagnostic assessments and other data to determine the students' learning needs and program the student for a course designed to meet these needs.

Example: For students who have earned credit in Algebra I but need additional support, the high school may consider programming the student for an extended Geometry sequence for up to four credits in the subject which reinforces Algebra skills through the lens of Geometry in the first semester.

III. POLICIES FOR SPECIAL POPULATIONS

A. ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELLs)

Schools identify students as ELLs based on the results of the [Home Language Identification Survey \(HLIS\)](#) and, if appropriate, students' English proficiency level on the [New York State Identification Test for ELLs \(NYSITELL\)](#).⁸⁵ Note that

⁸³ This change applies only to current and future grade 8 students who are enrolled in an accelerated course. High schools may not retroactively award high school credit to students with IEPs who previously passed a grade 8 accelerated course but earned 55-64 on the culminating Regents exam prior to school year 2018-19.

⁸⁴ Grade 8 students who participate in an accelerated course, comprised of grade 8 students, at a high school must meet the requirements listed in Option 1. For support in scheduling these students in STARS, reach out to your [academic policy & systems lead](#).

⁸⁵ NYSED and NYCDOE refer to English Language Learners (ELLs) as Multilingual Learners/English Language Learners (MLLs/ELLs) except in instances referring to state and federal policy.

students who arrived in the country for the first time during high school are eligible to [appeal to graduate](#) with a score of 55–59 on the ELA Regents exam.

1. New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL)

The NYSITELL is used to initially identify English Language Learners. A new entrant whose [Home Language Identification Survey](#) indicates languages other than English spoken in the home takes the NYSITELL to determine if they are eligible for bilingual and English as a New Language (ENL) services. Based on NYSITELL results, the student receives a proficiency level, and this determines the services received. [Commissioner's Regulation \(CR\) Part 154](#) addresses how schools must identify and serve ELLs. See [NYSED's website](#) and the [Policy and Reference Guide for MLLs/ELLs](#) for more information.

Once a student has been identified as an ELL, parent selection of an ELL program drives program placement. Parents of ELLs view an orientation video in their preferred languages, which describes the NYCDOE's three program options: Dual Language (DL), Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE), and English as a New Language (ENL) only, described further in the [Policy and Reference Guide for MLLs/ELLs](#). All parents are entitled to choose among these three options, regardless of whether their child's current school has their program of choice immediately available. The [NYCDOE's website](#) provides a variety of resources for ELL students and families.

Schools may not refuse admission to zoned students or students assigned by the NYCDOE's Office of Student Enrollment based on their ELL status or program needs.

Schools are required to form bilingual programs in grades 9–12 when there are 20 or more ELLs with the same language in one grade, for whom parents/guardians chose a bilingual program placement. This threshold is the minimum requirement under State regulations ([CR Part 154](#)), as amended by the ASPIRA Consent Decree, but by no means limits schools that choose to open programs with fewer students. For example, when parents request bilingual programs in a small school, the school can pool resources and staffing with other schools (e.g., campus schools and neighboring schools) in order to provide wider access to programs.

2. New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test (NYSESLAT)

Schools must annually administer the NYSESLAT to all ELLs to determine how well they are learning English as part of the required annual assessment and tracking of ELLs' English proficiency. The NYSESLAT assesses students' speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills using grade bands. Students' NYSESLAT results determine their proficiency levels and their continued eligibility for ELL services (whether the students exit from ELL status). See [NYSED's website](#) and the [Policy and Reference Guide for MLLs/ELLs](#) for more information.

B. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Policies and procedures for students with disabilities are described in the NYCDOE's [Standard Operating Procedures Manual](#) (SOPM). Students with IEPs should, regardless of their disability:

- Have access to a rigorous academic curriculum that sets high academic standards, enabling them to fully realize their potential and graduate prepared for independent living, college, and careers.
- To the greatest extent appropriate, be taught and participate in activities with other students with and without disabilities.
- Receive special education services that are targeted to their needs and provide the appropriate level of support throughout the school day.
- To the greatest extent possible, be able to attend their zoned schools or the school of their choice, while still receiving the special education services and supports required.

It is the responsibility of each school to ensure that students with disabilities and their families feel welcome. The [School Implementation Team \(SIT\)](#) facilitates the strategic planning to ensure that every school appropriately and adequately serves all students. The SIT works with other school teams but does not usurp the function of the [IEP team or any other team](#).

Students with disabilities who do not require special education services but need health services and/or education accommodations in order to attend school or participate in regular school activities, may be eligible for a Section 504 Plan. To determine student eligibility for a Section 504 Plan, a student's parent or guardian and physician must complete and submit [these forms](#) to the school. The school's Section 504 team reviews the student's records and the physician's statement to determine accommodations the student is eligible to receive. There are two types of accommodations:

- Health accommodations, which include administration of medication (for example, asthma and diabetes medication) and medically prescribed non-medication treatment (such as G-Tube feeding).
- Educational accommodations, which include testing accommodations (for example, extended time and testing location), classroom accommodations (such as assistive technology), the [Safety Net](#), and other academic supports and services.

If approved by the Section 504 Team, these accommodations must be provided to the student. For questions related to Section 504 Plans, see the [Office of School Health's guidance](#) and [Chancellor's Regulation A-710](#).

Schools should review each new student's IEP or Section 504 Plan upon entry. If a child's IEP or Section 504 Plan recommends programs or services that the school has not previously provided, the school should first make it clear to the parents and student that they are committed to providing the programs and services that are recommended on the IEP or Section 504 Plan, beginning on the student's first day at that school. For questions related to programming for students with disabilities, schools may contact their [Administrator of Special Education \(ASE\)](#). For other policies related to students with disabilities, see the sections on [testing accommodations](#), [NYSAA](#), [commencement credentials](#), and [scheduling in STARS](#).

A student's status as a student with a disability, and any information related to the disability, is private information. Schools should ensure that the transcript does not reveal a student as having a disability. For example, schools should not list courses titled as "SETSS" on a transcript.

1. New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA)

In accordance with Federal and State regulations, students in high school in New York participate in Regents exams. NYSA is an alternate assessment to measure progress and performance in ELA, math, and science for students with severe cognitive disabilities who are unable to participate in standard assessments, even with testing accommodations.

Annually, IEP teams determine the eligibility of students with disabilities who have IEPs to participate in standard or alternate assessments. The IEP team determines this eligibility on a case-by-case basis.⁸⁶ Students who are eligible for alternate assessments "have limited cognitive abilities combined with behavioral and/or physical limitations and who require highly specialized education and/or social, psychological, and medical services in order to maximize their full potential for useful and meaningful participation in society and for self-fulfillment."⁸⁷ Eligibility for participation in alternate assessments is not determined by disability classification.

IEP teams must carefully consider this decision, as participating in alternate assessments rather than standard State assessments has long-term implications for students and their families. In high school, students who participate in

⁸⁶ See NYSED's [Eligibility and Participation Criteria - NYSA](#)

⁸⁷ See [section 100.1 \(2\)\(iv\)](#)

alternate assessments in lieu of Regents exams are not eligible to earn high school diplomas; they instead earn the [Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential](#). IEP teams must explain the eligibility for a credential instead of a diploma to the family of a student recommended to participate in NYSAA when the student begins high school.

Students who participate in NYSAA are expected to achieve alternate learning standards. These alternate standards are reduced in scope and complexity. They are intended to enable students to access NYSED learning standards but focus more closely on supporting students for post-secondary life (e.g., life and vocational skills). Students will see “NA/0.00” or “NA/1.00” credits on their transcripts as these experiences are not credit-bearing. Schools must explain this to the family of a student recommended to participate in NYSAA when the student begins high school.

Schools administer the NYSAA to students according to their chronological age and against grade-level standards set by NYSED.⁸⁸ The ELA, math, and science NYSAA exams are computer-delivered adaptive assessments. These measures of achievement:

- Provide eligible students with an alternative way to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.
- Measure students’ progress towards achieving academic goals.
- Support teachers and specialists in adapting instructional strategies and supports.
- Are used by schools as part of their usual classroom assessment practices.

The IEP team documents a student’s participation in alternate assessments in the IEP. The student’s IEP must clearly state why the student cannot participate in the general assessment program and the rationale for participating in alternate assessments. IEP teams must inform families at every IEP meeting, using the parent notification of participation in NYSAA letter, that their child will participate in alternate assessments and is therefore not eligible for a high school diploma.

See the [Alternate Assessment \(NYSAA\)](#) guidance for more information on NYSAA policies and procedures.

2. Transition Services for Students with Disabilities—Updated Fall 2020

The NYCDOE’s goal is to prepare all students for [postsecondary college and career readiness](#), and for students to exit high school with the highest diploma option possible. High expectations, rigorous instruction, access to effective teaching practices, and quality IEPs with deliberately planned transition services help to ensure that each student with a disability is prepared for post-secondary college, career, and/or independent living. NYSED specifies the requirements for determining and documenting postsecondary [transition plans for students with disabilities](#), beginning no later than the first IEP to be in effect the year the student turns 15, and updated annually as needed. Transition services are formalized plans documented in each student’s IEP for continuing education, vocational training, employment, adult services, independent living and/or community participation, and are aligned to postsecondary goals reflective of student needs, abilities, and interests. Specific requirements include:

- A statement of the student’s needs, taking into account the student’s strengths, preferences and interests, as they relate to transition from school to post-school activities
- Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals relating to education, training, employment and, where appropriate, independent living skills
- A statement of the transition service needs of the student that focuses on the student’s courses of study, including the diploma objective toward which the student is working
- Transition activities that facilitate movement from school to post-school activities, including instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives.

⁸⁸ Students eligible for NYSAA must be assessed on the grade-appropriate content that is consistent with the student’s chronological age. See the [birthdate ranges for students participating in NYSAA](#) to determine chronological ages and corresponding grade levels.

- A statement of the responsibilities of the school district and, when applicable, participating agencies for the provision of such services and activities that promote movement from school to post-school life.

Before they exit, schools must also provide students with disabilities an [exit summary](#). The exit summary serves as a statement of their academic achievement and functional performance, including recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting postsecondary goals once they leave high school. Schools must provide this summary regardless of whether a student's eligibility for special education services terminates due to graduation from secondary school with a diploma or due to exceeding the age eligibility for a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Students may exit school with an advanced Regents, Regents, or local diploma, the [Career Development and Occupational Studies \(CDOS\) Commencement Credential](#), or the [Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential](#).

Students who have turned 21 but who require additional instruction or services to graduate with a diploma or be linked with adult services will be invited to continue their education or receive services during the 2020-21 school year according to the [NYSED policy](#). Principals should review the needs of students who are 21 and over to determine if extension of services will be offered.

C. TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES—Updated Fall 2020

Testing accommodations remove barriers to the test-taking process so that students with disabilities and English Language Learners are able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Testing accommodations do not change the content or skills that tests measure.

Testing accommodations are neither intended nor permitted to:

- Change the skills or content being measured or invalidate the results.
- Provide an unfair advantage.
- Substitute for knowledge or abilities that the student has not attained.

The following students may be eligible for testing accommodations:

- Students with disabilities, who have IEPs or Section 504 Plans, including:
 - Students who have been declassified and have accommodations specified on their "Declassification from Special Education Services" document continue to receive those accommodations until receiving a diploma or aging out at the end of the school year in which the student turns 21 years old.⁸⁹
 - Students who demonstrate disabilities 30 days or fewer before the administration of a State or district-wide assessment may receive certain testing accommodations if authorized by the principal. For example, a student who breaks their arm the day before an exam may be approved for a scribe. Such decisions are made by the principal and must be carefully documented with the [Borough Assessment Implementation Director \(BAID\)](#) and the [NYSED Office of State Assessment](#).
- [ELLs](#) and former ELLs

⁸⁹ Accommodations for students who have been declassified are considered at the time of declassification and entered on the declassification plan. Unlike declassification services, testing accommodations can be provided for more than one year or until the testing accommodations are revised or eliminated. Schools should revisit declassified students' testing accommodations to ensure that the accommodations listed on the declassification plan still meet the student's changing needs, especially considering the different types of assessments conducted as students progress through the grades. If a change in student need or type of assessment has occurred, a 504 team should convene to create a 504 with the appropriate accommodations for the student.

- o Former ELLs who were identified as English language proficient based on their scores on one of the two most recent administrations of the [NYSESLAT](#) are eligible to receive these testing accommodations for only two additional years after testing out of ELL status.⁹⁰

Decisions to provide accommodations, as well as the specific accommodations themselves, are made on an individual basis and are reflective of student needs. Examples of testing accommodations include:

- Flexible test schedules or timing, including extended time and breaks.
- Flexible test settings and locations, including smaller group size
- Method of presentation, including test format (such as large print, Braille, audio or digital versions of the test)
- Method of response, including transcription or scribe

At the beginning of the school year, schools should determine which testing accommodations benefit individual ELLs and former ELLs so that students become familiar with their specific testing accommodations. For students with disabilities, the IEP or Section 504 team annually should determine the testing accommodations required for each student at each IEP or 504 meeting.

D. ACADEMIC INTERVENTION SERVICES (AIS)

[Part 100.2\(ee\)](#) of NYSED general school requirements sets the purposes and requirements of Academic Intervention Services (AIS) for New York State public schools. AIS is defined in Part 101.1(g) as “additional instruction which supplements the instruction provided in the general curriculum and assists students in meeting the State learning standards ... and/or student support services which may include guidance, counseling, attendance, and study skills which are needed to support improved academic performance.”

At the high school level, NYSED mandates AIS for all [student with disabilities](#) and students without disabilities who are not meeting or are in danger of not meeting NYS standards for Regents exams required for graduation, as well as [English Language Learners](#) who are not meeting or in danger of not meeting annual [Part 154](#) performance standards. Students must receive AIS from qualified staff in the area of concern. Appropriate pedagogues include:

- Teachers licensed in the subject area where the student is not meeting performance standards
- Special education teachers
- Certified reading teachers

NYSED also mandates student support services when attendance, social/emotional or study skill problems affect a student’s ability to meet performance standards. A range of staff can provide mandated student support services, including licensed guidance counselors, at-risk counselors (i.e., SAPIS), members of the school attendance team, and non-academic staff who contribute to students’ academic success.

For AIS services in a student’s identified area of need, the school must provide instruction supplementary to what is occurring in the classroom. Scheduling options may include extra periods during the school day, before- and after-school programs, weekend tutorials programs, and summer school.

Along with choosing the specific content of additional instruction, schools may choose to differentiate the intensity of AIS by changing the length and/or frequency of sessions, as well as the group size. Regular progress monitoring must be a part of the AIS program and intervention providers must keep records of interventions used and student academic growth.

⁹⁰ Per the [testing manuals](#), ELL accommodations may not be provided to former ELLs who were identified as English language proficient prior to the 2009 NYSESLAT administration.

Schools must provide written notification to the parents or guardians when their child has been identified as needing AIS. The written notification should be in English and, when appropriate, translated into a non-English language preferred by the family. The notification must inform the family about the services the student will receive, the reason why their child needs these services and the consequences if the student does not meet expected performance levels. The school must also notify parents or guardians when it terminates AIS for a student. Schools do not need parent permission to start or to end AIS.

While the student is receiving AIS, the school must maintain ongoing communication to parents or guardians regarding their child's AIS program, including:

- Quarterly reports on the student's academic progress in response to the intervention services
- At least once per semester an opportunity to consult with the student's regular classroom teacher(s) and the school staff providing AIS for their child
- Information on ways to work with their child to improve achievement, monitor their progress, and work with educators.

E. RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION (RTI)

Response to Intervention (RtI) is a multi-tiered instruction and intervention model that promotes early identification of students in need of additional academic support and, for students not making expected progress, provision of increasing levels of intensity of intervention. Often referred to as a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), this protocol involves provision of increased levels of intensity in interventions where students require it. RtI is a form of MTSS, although RtI is typically associated with early-grades prevention models. For students identified for RtI services by a school-wide universal screening assessment, evidence-based instruction and intervention driven by diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring are provided in increasing levels of intensity where this is needed.

While both AIS and RtI have academic recovery as their goals, the RtI structure seeks to increase the accuracy of referrals to special education services by helping to determine whether learning delays are a result of inadequate instruction or learning disability. It also seeks to ensure that all students have access to high quality, effective, evidence-based instruction and differentiated supports.

New York State requires that all schools provide RtI for students in grade in K – 4; New York City extends the mandate to the fifth grade. Although RtI is not a formal requirement in the high school grades, schools may choose to embed RtI/MTSS structures into their AIS programs in order to ensure that academic intervention leads to academic recovery and that students are properly identified for special education referral accurately and where warranted.

F. HOME AND HOSPITAL INSTRUCTION

Home and hospital instruction programs provide educational services to students who cannot be accommodated in a regular school facility because of a medical or physical condition and/or a severe emotional, psychological, or behavioral disability that prohibits the student from attending school. Home and hospital instruction programs are interim, non-diploma granting programs operated by District 75 that provide academic services and tutoring to limit the educational effects of a long-term absence.

Students who apply and are approved for home instruction must be affiliated with a NYCDOE school. The affiliate school is the public, parochial, or private school to which the student will return after home or hospital instruction has ended. Students receive home or hospital instruction via "shared instruction," in which the home or hospital program collaborates with the affiliate school to oversee the students' instructional program. This ensures continuity of instruction and helps the student maintain a strong connection to the NYCDOE school to which they will return after home or hospital instruction has ended.

All students on home or hospital instruction must receive instruction that corresponds to courses required for graduation, as appropriate. Students should receive instruction in courses that mirror their academic program. Students in grades 7-12 who receive home or hospital instruction must receive a minimum of ten hours of instruction per week, to the extent possible given the student's condition. As a result, high school students can generally earn no more than three credits per semester while on home instruction.

Within this collaborative relationship, the affiliate school remains primarily responsible for the student's academic programming, while the home or hospital instruction program is primarily responsible for providing instruction. Specific roles and responsibilities are outlined for schools in the [Home and Hospital Instruction](#) guidance document. These responsibilities may change based on the student's expected duration in home or hospital instruction and should be coordinated between the affiliate school and the home or hospital instruction program, specific to each student.

The affiliate school and home and hospital program should keep an open line of communication. This is particularly important as students will return to NYCDOE schools after home or hospital instruction has ended, in order to ensure that the student receives final grades and credits, if appropriate.

For information on student eligibility for home instruction, the process for referring a student to home or hospital instruction, and approval for a student to begin home instruction, see [Chancellor's Regulation A-170](#) and the [Home Instruction Schools webpage](#). For information on NYCDOE home and hospital instruction policies and implementation, schools can refer to the [Home and Hospital Instruction](#) guidance document.

G. HOME SCHOOLING—Updated Fall 2020

Families who opt for home schooling should understand that home schooling is governed by a separate set of NYSED policies. Students who are instructed at home may not participate in the instructional programs of the NYCDOE; students either receive home school instruction or receive instruction from a NYCDOE school.

The NYCDOE does not award high school diplomas to (or maintain academic transcripts for) students who are instructed at home, nor is the NYCDOE required to provide a letter of substantial equivalence of instruction being provided at home. If a high school student transfers to a NYCDOE high school, the high school will evaluate the student's work and determine the number of transfer credits to award, if appropriate. For more information, see the [Home Schooling](#) webpage, the [NYSED FAQ](#) on home schooling, and the section on [Transfer Credit](#).

H. STUDENTS RETURNING FROM COURT-ORDERED SETTINGS

Students who are or have been involved with the juvenile court systems are entitled to specific rights related to their educations:

- The right to enroll in school in a timely manner
- The right to continue to receive appropriate special education services, where an IEP is in place
- The right to receive assistance from the NYCDOE in obtaining records and updating the student's DOE transcript to reflect credits earned while in a non-NYCDOE court-ordered setting. For assistance evaluating non-DOE transcripts, schools should contact their [academic policy and systems leads](#).

In this case, students in court-ordered settings refers to:

- Students who attend Passages Academy:⁹¹
 - When students under age 16 are detained in New York City following an arrest, they are under the supervision of the Administration for Children's Services, Division of Youth and Family Justice (DYFJ) while

⁹¹ Passages Academy is a program of [D79](#). Passages Academy has the DBN 79X695.

in detention. These students attend a NYCDOE school at one of the sites of Passages Academy, a program operated by District 79. ATS will indicate that the student has been transferred to Passages Academy (which is coded in ATS as DBN 79X695).

- Under the Close to Home Initiative, some students may also remain under the supervision of DYFJ after they are adjudicated in Family Court. These students are considered to be in “placement.” Most of these students remain in New York City and attend Passages Academy.
- Students in an Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) or Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) placement:
 - Some students are placed by the Family Court or Supreme Court in the custody of OCFS, ACS, or OCFS/ACS-contracted facilities (for example, Children’s Village, Greenburgh-Graham, etc.) and receive educational programming from a non-DOE entity.
 - These students are discharged from Passages (79X695) with a discharge code ‘10.’ Upon the end of their court-ordered involvement, students are to appear at their Family Welcome Center to re-enroll in a DOE school.

See the [Transfer Student Toolkit](#) for information about how to support a student’s transition back to their NYCDOE home school.

IV. PROGRAMMING AND SYSTEMS POLICIES

The STARS suite of applications is the NYCDOE’s official record of students’ programs, grades, and progress toward completing academic requirements. [STARS Classroom](#), [STARS Admin](#), and STARS Client comprise the STARS suite of course scheduling and grade management applications used by the NYCDOE. STARS Classroom is a web-based application compatible with most internet browsers that automates the collection of course marks for teachers. Teachers can use this system to view [class rosters](#), access student data, and enter course marks which will appear on STARS-generated student [report cards](#). For more information, see the [STARS wiki](#).

High schools have a responsibility to program students towards the most rigorous coursework and diploma possible. All NYCDOE high schools must accurately reflect students’ academic schedules, coursework, grades, and credits in STARS. Maintaining accurate student and teacher schedules in STARS ensures schools, students, and families understand how a student is progressing towards graduation. It also reduces data requests from central offices to schools.

A. TERM MODELS—Updated Fall 2020

Term is the length of a course with one syllabus and a final grade and credit(s) earned. Schools must designate a school-wide term model in STARS before the start of the school year. A school’s designated term model defines the maximum length of any course experience that it may offer. Schools may adjust the number of weeks of instruction per term in STARS as long as they have designated enough instructional days to meet State [instructional day](#) and [aidable day requirements](#), as well as individual course instructional time requirements. Individual courses may be shorter than the school’s designated term model. However, schools cannot offer courses that span across multiple terms; courses must begin and end within one term.

Regardless of the term model, all schools must ensure that courses in the 2020-21 school year meet for the equivalent of 54 hours per credit during the school year (or 45 hours during the summer term). Schools may choose from one of four term models:

- **Annual:** about 36 weeks of instruction, in which students remain in a course the entire year and receive final course marks in June
- **Semester:** about 18 weeks of instruction, in which the year is divided into two terms

- **Trimester:** about 12 weeks of instruction, in which the year is divided into three terms
- **Cycle:** about 9 weeks of instruction, in which the year is divided into four terms

Term model heavily influences course sequences, student programming and progress to graduation, and the frequency of awarding credits. See the [guidance on term models](#) for a summary of the benefits and drawbacks of each term model. Schools should not modify the term model frequently and must never adjust the term model during the school year.

B. SCHEDULING IN STARS

A school's academic program is operationalized through its [master schedule](#) in STARS. The master schedule contains key information about current course offerings, including the teacher of record and locations and meeting days. Each course has the following attributes that can be used in creating both student and teacher schedules:

- Course code
- Section number
- Period
- Cycle (meaning the number of days per week the course meets)
- Capacity (the maximum number of students that can be scheduled in one section)
- Room number
- Teacher name

Once the master schedule is set up, schools can begin to program their students. Schools typically program students using either an individual or block scheduling model, or some combination of the two methods, which are described in brief here:

- **Individual scheduling:** Students are scheduled based on individual needs and requirements. As a result, each student's schedule is unique. Courses may be scheduled as a daily uniform program or on a rotation cycle.
- **Block scheduling:** Students are grouped according to their needs, or by special program or grade level. Each group follows the same schedule. In some cases, block scheduling may allow for longer periods and normally requires courses to meet on a rotation.

In addition to individual and block scheduling, schools may choose to adopt different instructional approaches in accordance with contractual requirements.

1. Course Codes—Updated Fall 2020

Schools indicate the courses they currently offer by designating active course codes. STARS course codes capture information about the subject area, course content and its alignment to NYSED [learning standards](#), the position of a course within a sequence, the instructional level, and delivery model. They are used for student schedules, report cards, transcripts, and NYCDOE data and accountability purposes.

Schools must follow the coding practices detailed in the [High School Course Code Directory](#) to ensure that course sequences can be interpreted by other NYCDOE schools and NYCDOE tools. The use of the standardized codes outlined in the [High School Course Code Directory](#) allows users within and outside the school community to understand what the course codes signify. Many NYCDOE reports, tools, and data feeds use the rules established in the [High School Course Code Directory](#) to inform their business rules.⁹²

⁹² For schools serving students in grades 6–12, middle school courses must be scheduled using the [Middle School Course Code Directory](#).

Prior to building the term's master schedule, schools should review their course offerings and [active codes](#) for the given year and term and ensure the courses will again be available. At this time, schools should also adjust course codes for the current school year and beyond, as needed. As a reminder, **both G- and Z-coded courses should not be credit-bearing**. If in their review of active codes schools identify credited G- and Z-codes, they should be removed from code decks. Schools must not modify historical course codes, as this can result in the loss of important academic data. As described in the [Transcript Update](#) guidance, schools must not complete transcript updates in order to “clean up” or delete and modify historical course codes to better align with the above policies and practices.

Course codes and other attributes, like title and credits, are set at the course level. The information designated by the code applies to all students in the course and sections receiving that content. Schools may not customize codes for individual sections or students who are sitting in the same class. For support with course coding, schools may contact their [academic policy and systems leads](#).

2. Course titles

Schools also select the title of their courses. These titles appear on students’ transcripts and records, and they are visible to those within and outside of the NYCDOE.

The New York City Department of Education is committed to maintaining a safe and supportive school environment for all students free from harassment, intimidation, and/or bullying and free from discrimination on account of actual or perceived race, color, creed, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship/immigration status, religion, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, disability, or weight.

To support this district-wide commitment, schools should be mindful of what a course title reveals about participating students. Specifically:

- Course titles may never indicate that a course is designed specifically for students with disabilities (for example, courses may not be titled “English Special Ed”).
- Course titles should not identify the gender of students participating in those courses (for example, Girls Health or Boys Choir).

See the [Guidelines on Gender Inclusion](#) for help implementing gender-inclusive curricula, programs, activities, and practices that are consistent with this policy and with the NYCDOE’s commitment to equity and access. Schools must be mindful that inappropriate gender segregation may result in isolating students, hindering diversity, and/or perpetuating gender stereotypes.

The additional following guidance applies:

- The titles of courses should be easy for an external reader to interpret. Information about the themes and topics covered in required courses can hinder postsecondary institutions’ ability to understand a student’s academic history. This information can be communicated with students and families through course catalogs or other materials.
- Courses for which a standard code is not available are generally coded using ‘Q’ in the second character. The titles of these courses should be descriptive so that the reader of the transcript can interpret them. For example, the course “MQS11: Math Topics” does not provide any information about the content of the course and whether it is high-school level, while “MQS11: Pre-Algebra” clearly describes the course content.
- Advanced Placement courses must use specific, required course titles; see the [AP Courses](#) guidance for additional information.

3. Section Properties—Updated Fall 2020

Schools capture additional information about the delivery method and content of the course using [section properties](#). These fields further identify the unique properties of a course/subject, including:

- If the course integrates English as a New Language (ENL) within a subject
- The target language of instruction and percent of time in target language
- The special education model
- If the course integrates computer science subjects and is part of the Computer Science for All initiative
- For health education, the number of HIV/AIDS lessons given to the students, during the year and term
- If the course uses iLearn, this section property must be checked for the course to properly connect to iLearn.

In order to ensure students are receiving the instruction to which they are entitled and to support accurate reporting for compliance, schools must carefully complete the section properties in each year and term and ensure they accurately reflect students' experiences. For additional support, refer to the following STARS Wiki pages: [English Language Learners](#), [Special Education Programming](#), and [Section Properties](#).

4. Push-in/Pull-out Instruction

Push-in and pull-out instruction occur when a teacher other than the primary teacher(s) delivers targeted instruction to a subgroup of students on a regular basis. Push-in and pull-out instruction can be used to meet a variety of instructional needs including, but not limited to, intervention, enrichment, and services for English language learners and students with disabilities.

Push-in and pull-out instruction must always be programmed in STARS to reflect the content and subjects being delivered to students. It must be scheduled to reflect the frequency with which the push-in or pull-out instruction occurs. Push-in/pull-out instruction records identify the teacher, the minutes and meet times, the subject of the instruction (using course codes), and any other important properties.

- In **push-in instruction**, an additional teacher instructs a student or subgroup of students within the primary class. The STARS push-in record should match the subject being delivered in the primary class.
- In **pull-out instruction**, a student or subgroup of students leaves the primary class to receive instruction outside the classroom from a second teacher.

Integrated co-teaching (ICT) is not considered push-in or pull-out instruction. Instead, this is indicated as a section property. Schools should use official class programming or individual student programming when ICT is provided.

For additional details and instructions for programming push-in and pull-out instruction, see the [STARS wiki page](#); for additional information on special education programming, see the [STARS wiki Special Education Programming Guidance](#).

V. GRADING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. GRADING POLICIES

All elementary, middle, and high schools must have written, public-facing grading policies. The goal of a documented grading policy is to provide students, families, and school staff a shared understanding of what is required to earn a specific grade. Students should understand and be able to articulate how their grades are calculated. Schools may establish grading policies at the school, department, grade, or course level, provided the school applies their grading policies equitably to all students.

Schools must share a physical or electronic copy of their grading policy with students and families at the beginning of the school year. The NYCDOE [Student Bill of Rights](#) and the [Parent Bill of Rights](#) include the rights to know and be provided with written documentation of grading policies and to receive grades based on those policies. Schools must translate their grading policies, as needed.

All grading policies must explain, at a minimum, how courses are graded, the scale of marks awarded, and the timeline of when students receive grades. In addition, schools should have clearly defined procedures to ensure that students' final course grades are entered in STARS in a timely manner, no more than four weeks (or 20 days) after the end of the term.

Schools have discretion in deciding which specific measures are factored into students' grades. Schools must make determinations of passing or failing based primarily on how well students demonstrate understanding of the subject matter, concepts, content, and skills addressed in a course or subject. Even in courses like physical education (PE), science labs, or electives, students must be graded based on how well they have learned the concepts and subjects being taught.

Students who meet the learning outcomes of the course by meeting the expectations outlined in the syllabus must receive credit for the course. When students miss class time, teachers should give students reasonable chances to make up missed work before final grades are entered in STARS.

Students may not pass or fail primarily based on non-mastery measures such as attendance, participation, preparedness, professionalism, respect, and adherence to the school code of conduct. They may not be denied credit based on lack of "seat time" alone. Grading policies must clearly detail exactly how non-mastery measures of performance contribute to the overall grade and might therefore impact whether students earn credit. Schools must communicate these academic expectations to students and families at the beginning of the school year.⁹³

All students, including students with disabilities and ELLs, should be working toward grade-level standards and must receive grades based on mastery of NYSED commencement-level [learning standards](#).⁹⁴

- **ELLs:** grading policies should consider students' English as a New Language (ENL) proficiency level and should include opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery of NYSED commencement-level learning standards in their native language.
- **Students with disabilities:** All students, including students with disabilities, should be working toward grade-level standards and should receive grades based on how well they comprehend the content and skills addressed in a course or subject. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) describes specially designed instruction and accommodations for an individual student that creates access to grade-level standards and enables progress toward annual goals. Students' receipt of accommodations may not impact the grade that can be earned. Students with disabilities have the same opportunity to earn grades as all other students.

Schools issue report cards to provide feedback on students' progress in the general education curriculum and distribute progress reports to reflect the likelihood a student will meet or has already met their annual goals. While progress reports are usually distributed at the same time as report cards, they may not replace report cards for students with disabilities.

⁹³ Sometimes, students miss the majority of the course and it is not reasonable for them to complete course requirements through make-up work, before teachers award final grades. In these cases, it may be appropriate to award special marks such as an 'NX' (Course in Progress) or 'NL' (New/Recent Admit or Other), consistent with the NYCDOE policies for these marks. Students who are considered long-term absentees (LTA) and students receiving hospital or home instruction should never be assigned an 'NS' mark. See the [Grading Policy Toolkit](#) for more information.

⁹⁴ See the United States Department of Education's [Dear Colleague Letter](#).

- **Students with disabilities who participate in alternate assessments:** Due to the severity of the students' disabilities, schools modify the general education curriculum to provide students access and allow for participation and progress. Modification changes the expectation of what skills students need to demonstrate they have mastered. To accommodate different expectations, a school's grading policy should address how they grade students with disabilities who participate in alternate assessment. For information on how to develop and implement strong grading policies, schools can refer to the [Grading Policy Toolkit](#).

B. COURSE MARKS AND REPORT CARDS

Schools determine the number of marking periods to include within a year, semester, trimester, or cycle, depending on the model they use in STARS; see the section of this guide on [term models](#) and the [overview of term models](#) guidance for more information. Schools must give at least two grades (marks) in each course per term and enter them in STARS, to ensure that students have the opportunity to receive at least one interim and one final mark in every course. The last marking period in the term is where final course grades for that term are recorded.⁹⁵ Schools determine these calculations according to their grading policies. Schools should clearly define procedures for calculating and entering final grades in STARS in a timely manner, no later than four weeks (or 20 days) after the end of the term.⁹⁶

Important Terms to Know

Grades are a reflection of students' understanding and command of content, their progression through a course or subject, and their mastery of skills *at a given point in time*.

Grading policies outline when and how students receive feedback on their mastery of content and skills. Schools can address these elements in one or more document(s). Schools are not required to use a specific format when drafting their grading policies. The purpose of a grading policy is to allow students, families, and teachers to have a mutual understanding of what specific grades mean. Schools may establish grading policies at the school, department, grade, or course level, provided the school applies their grading policies equitably to all students.

Term is the length of a course with one syllabus and a final grade and credit(s) earned. Schools must designate a school-wide term model in STARS before the start of the school year. A school's designated term model defines the maximum length of any course experience that it may offer. Individual courses may be shorter than the school's designated term model. Schools cannot offer courses that span across multiple terms; courses must begin and end within one term. The term model a school uses heavily influences course sequences, student programming, and students' progress to graduation.

Marking periods are intervals during a course when the teacher of record awards interim marks, which provide status updates to students, families, and other stakeholders.

Report card grades are indications of students' progress toward mastery of the course's learning standards. These are grades that do not appear on the transcript. Report card grades may be standalone or cumulative. They are also often called marking period grades.

Final grades (marks) are given at the end of the term, representing the work students completed over their courses and the level of mastery at the end of the course, as of that point in time. This grade may also confer credit(s) when a course is credit-bearing. The teacher of record determines the final mark in accordance with the school's grading policies and the City and State's academic policies.

⁹⁵ For additional information on generating final grades in STARS, see the STARS wiki page on [Grades and Exams](#).

⁹⁶ See the [STARS wiki](#) for more information on how to define terms and enter marking period grades.

1. Course Marks—Updated Fall 2020

All schools are required to enter both interim and final report card grades (course marks) into STARS for grade levels K–12, regardless of the type of report card they choose to use. Schools should enter grades in accordance with their school-level grading policies and in accordance with the [2020-2021 Grading Policy](#). Schools are not required to enter indicator marks or narratives if the school is not already using the STARS report card. The marks entered in STARS must accurately match the marks awarded and communicated to students and families.

Schools must award grades using one of the available NYCDOE grading scales, to ensure that measures of student progress are transparent and translatable across schools. Schools may choose to award grades using one or multiple grading scales, provided the use of each scale is clearly explained in the school's grading policies. The principal, in consultation with the School Leadership Team (SLT), may determine whether grading scales are set at the school, department, grade, or course level.

Each course mark has a citywide pass/fail equivalent, and most have a numeric equivalent used in the calculation of GPA. See the [Course and Exam Marks Tables](#) for the full list of grading scales and marks available for high schools.

Impact of COVID-19 on Course Marks: In April 2020, the New York City Department of Education (NYCDOE) issued a revised grading policy for remote learning designed to meet the academic, social, and emotional needs of students, families, and educators as the NYCDOE transitioned to a remote learning model. The policy included grading flexibilities and considerations that each school should take when providing feedback on student work and gauging their progress during the pandemic. Further, the grading policy specified the course marks that students could/could not receive during the City's transition to remote learning. For example, students in grades 9-12 in the 2019-20 school year were not to receive failing marks from March 2020 to August 2020, the end of the academic school year. Instead, high school students who did not meet the learning outcomes by the end of the term received final marks of 'NX' (redefined as a Course in Progress) and were given the opportunity to meet the learning outcomes of the course to earn course credit by January 31, 2021. See the [Grading Policy Guidance for Remote Learning](#) for information about the NYCDOE's expectations for grading for the 2019-20 school year.

The [2020-21 Grading Policy](#) continues to emphasize these grading flexibilities and again specifies the marking period and final grades that students may/may not receive during this academic year. The 2020-21 school year policies for the following marks are explained below.

The following policies apply to specific course marks:

- **Course in Progress:** Schools may award a grade of Incomplete ('NX') if a student has a documented, extreme extenuating circumstance that prevents them from completing the course in its established timeframe (for example, surgery or a death in the family). 'NX' does not have a pass/fail or a numeric equivalent. A student who receives an incomplete must successfully complete remaining course requirements by the end of the term following the termination of the course in order to receive a final grade and credit, as applicable.

Impact of COVID-19 on Course in Progress ('NX'): Schools must award a grade of Course in Progress ('NX') to middle and high school students in place of failing marks or when there is insufficient evidence to award a grade. A student who receives a Course in Progress must successfully complete remaining course requirements by the dates expressed in the [2020-21 Grading Policy](#) to receive a re-calculated final grade. As a result, the initial 'NX' will be changed to either a passing final grade or an 'NC' (No Credit).

- **New or Recently Admitted Students:** Students who enroll in a course after it has started may have missed assignments or assessments needed to generate a complete course grade for a given marking period. These students may be given a grade of 'NL' in STARS to indicate this circumstance. 'NL' does not have a pass/fail or

numeric equivalent. Students who receive a grade of 'NL' must successfully complete remaining course requirements by the end of the term following the termination of the course in order to receive a final grade and credit, as applicable.

Impact of COVID-19 on New/Recently Admitted Students ('NL'): Schools must award a grade of New/Recently Admitted Student or Other ('NL') to students in place of failing marks or when there is insufficient evidence to award a grade. 'NL' does not have a pass/fail or numeric equivalent. Students who receive a grade of 'NL' must successfully complete remaining course requirements by the end of the semester following the termination of the course in order to receive a final grade.

- **No Show ('NS'):** A grade of 'NS' is given to a student who fails to attend a course and does not participate in any of the work from which a grade can be derived. 'NS' has a pass/fail equivalent of fail and a default numeric equivalent of 45. This mark should be used in egregious situations, when students have been given reasonable chances to make up missed work and their absences are so chronic that only a failing mark is appropriate.
 - Neither long-term absentees (LTA) nor students receiving hospital or home instruction should be assigned an 'NS' mark. See [Home and Hospital Instruction](#) guidance for information on how schools should collaborate with students receiving home or hospital instruction. Schools who have students who are LTAs and have missed more than 20 consecutive school days, must follow the [guidance on using ZLTA codes](#) so that students are not awarded marks.

Impact of COVID-19 on No Show ('NS'): Schools must not award marks of NS because it has a failing numeric equivalent and students must not receive failing marks.

2. Report Cards

[Report cards](#) can be generated in STARS for each marking period and must be distributed to students and families at least twice per term— one report indicating the student's progress and one report indicating the student's final grades for the term. Schools may use the standard NYCDOE report card and/or school-developed materials to provide students and families with more information about their progress and performance. Schools can refer the [Student Report Cards](#) webpage for sample STARS report cards, including translations.

All schools are required to enter both interim and final report card grades into STARS for grade levels K–12, regardless of the type of report card they choose to use. Schools should enter grades in accordance with their school-level grading policies. The marks entered in STARS must accurately match the marks awarded and communicated to students and families.

3. Mastery-Based Learning

Mastery-based learning is an approach based on the principle that students advance to the next course immediately upon demonstrating mastery of course outcomes. Student progress and performance are measured based on specific pre-determined competencies and skills, and data are used to provide timely, differentiated support based on students' individual learning needs. Implementing mastery-based learning requires long-term planning and strong support from the school community, including teachers, administrators, students, and families. For additional guidance on programming students in schools that employ mastery-based learning models, see this guidance on [Mastery-Based Learning](#). Schools should contact their [academic policy and systems leads](#) for direct support with academic policy and programming.

C. INCORPORATING REGENTS EXAMS INTO FINAL COURSE GRADES—Updated Fall 2020

For students who complete a course of study culminating in a Regents exam, a student's performance on the Regents exam may not be the only reason a student passes or fails a course, per the [NYSED School Administrator's Manual](#). As a part of a school's grading policy, Regents scores may be included in the calculation of a final course grade only if the score is:

- Weighted no more than 33 percent of the culminating course for the respective Regents exam
- Calculated into the course grade as a component of the weighted average⁹⁷

Schools may not add points to the total grade because the student passed the Regents exam. If a school is including the Regents exam in the calculation of the final course grades, schools should wait until the exams are scored before awarding a final grade in STARS. Schools may not use transcript updates to recalculate a student's grade based on subsequently passing the Regents exam. For examples of acceptable ways to incorporate the Regents exam into a grading policy and calculate the weighted average, see the [Grading Policy Toolkit](#).

Impact of COVID-19 on Incorporating Regents Exams into Final Course Grades: Due to cancelled Regents exam administrations, schools should review and update their grading policy (if necessary) to remove the Regents exam as a factor in students' final course grades.

D. TRANSCRIPT UPDATES

Schools must have procedures to keep [student transcripts](#) up to date to ensure that students are progressing toward promotion and diploma requirements. Schools may complete a transcript update only in specific circumstances. Schools must complete all transcript updates in accordance with the policies listed below by completing the [Transcript Update Form](#) and providing any necessary supporting documentation.

High schools may update a student's final grade for the following reasons:

- Add a new course
 - Transfer credit, in accordance with the policies outlined in the section on [transfer credit](#)
 - LOTE credit, for documented residence and school attendance in an "other-than-English-speaking" environment, in accordance with the policies outlined in the section on [LOTE](#)
 - Credit by examination, in accordance with the policies outlined in the section on [credit by examination](#)
 - Physical education credit for participation in PSAL, in accordance with the policies outlined on [PE](#)
 - Service hours, documenting students' progress toward the [service seal](#)⁹⁸
- Change an existing grade⁹⁹
 - Grade calculation/entry error, in accordance with the course's grading policy
 - Updating a grade of Course in Progress ('NX') or New/Recent Admit or Other ('NL') to a final grade, per the policies outlined in [Course Marks and Report Cards](#)

⁹⁷ Schools using grading systems not based on weighted averages should ensure that the Regents exam mathematically accounts for no more than 33% of the final grade. For example, in a grading system where the final grade is based on a total of 300 points, no more than 100 points should be derived from the Regents exam outcome.

⁹⁸ Service hours transcript updates should not be credit-bearing; they should only be adding the total number of hours a student has worked. See the [transcript update](#) guidance document or the section on [Internships and Service Learning](#) for more information.

⁹⁹ As of September 2018, annualization is no longer an accepted reason for a transcript update and is no longer available on the transcript update form or in STARS.

- Principal override, in accordance with CSA and UFT contracts. A teacher must be notified in writing of any principal override of final course grades
- Add or change an examination outcome
 - Regents exam waiver ('WA'), in accordance with the policies on [Regents Exam Waivers](#)
 - Regents exam score, a student completed at a non-NYCDOE school in New York State
 - NYSED-approved alternative ('WX'), as outlined in the section on [NYSED-approved alternatives](#)
 - Performance-based assessment task for [schools with State approval](#) to administer PBATs
 - Successful appeal to graduate with a low score on a Regents exam as outlined in the [Appeals](#) section of this guide ('WG')
- Remove an exam or course
 - Removing an exam due to duplication or error
 - Removing a course due to duplication or error

Schools must have a signed and completed [Transcript Update Form](#) with documentation that supports the change being made before completing the transcript update. Schools cannot perform transcript updates for reasons not specified on the form. They cannot use transcript updates to add courses that were never scheduled and cannot use the transcript update process to modify historical course codes or credit values for individual students. For support with coding concerns, schools may contact their [academic policy and systems leads](#).

E. CALCULATION OF GRADE POINT AVERAGE (GPA) AND RANK—**Updated Fall 2020**

Schools may determine which courses taken at their school to include in the calculation of student GPA. In addition, schools may use [STARS to assign additional weight](#) to honors, [Advanced Placement \(AP\)](#)[®], International Baccalaureate, and [college courses](#), as explained in the [school's grading policy](#).

Schools may determine whether to establish school-based policies for class rankings and determinations of a valedictorian and salutatorian. Schools should share clear, documented policies with students and families that take into consideration which students are eligible to be ranked, which courses count in the ranking, how courses are weighted, and how the final rank will be calculated. In STARS, when calculating the rank, schools can determine which students are included in the denominator by creating a custom group and excluding or including students based on their ranking policy. Schools should complete their ranking prior to certifying students for graduation and discharging them in ATS.

Impact of COVID-19 on Ranking Students: The COVID-19 pandemic and transition to remote learning presented significant challenges for student, families, and educators. Therefore, the City's [Grading Policy in Response to COVID-19](#) implored schools to consider factors such as equity, motivation, and academic integrity when considering whether to specify an individual student's rank. Schools were encouraged to move away from using grades as a means of comparative student recognition and instead celebrate all students for navigating the significant challenges during the COVID-19 crisis.

This value is reiterated once again in the [2020-21 Grading Policy](#). Including class rank on transcripts is optional. In cases where class rank is necessary (e.g., to determine a student's scholarship eligibility), schools should consider designating students as being in the top 10% or top 25% for GPA outside of STARS without assigning each student an individual number/rank in STARS.

VI. ATTENDANCE, DISCHARGE, AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

A. ATTENDANCE—Updated Fall 2020

Attendance is reporting how many students are in school each day, and the practices to increase the number of students in school each day. Per [Chancellor's Regulation A-210](#), principals are responsible for the school attendance program. See the [Attendance Pages](#) on the InfoHub for more information.

1. Administration and Systems

Schools must have systems to take and track attendance and to manage their registers. Good data is the start for improved school-wide attendance. Strong attendance procedures can indicate overall school organization. Schools are expected to:

- Submit complete attendance per Chancellor's Regulation A-210, section III.
- Have routines to check for data accuracy, and post and confirm daily attendance each day.
- Ensure that accurate attendance is reflected in ATS once daily attendance is saved in STARS Classroom.
- Follow rules for calendar changes, early dismissals, and releases.
- Account for all students, including the 000 class, immunization exclusions, shared instruction students, and student performers.
- Follow discharge guidelines and complete pending discharges.
- Conduct a thorough clearance of register each September.
- Complete [ALOA/ANDI](#) audit each year; compile documents for audit, as required.

2. Policy and Practice

Every school must define its own specific policies on [attendance and lateness](#). Schools must publish these policies for staff, students and families, including: the definitions of lateness; the process for leaving school early; the reasons and documentation required for excused lateness or absences; and how the school is notified of absences or reasons for absences. School attendance policies must be clear on what parents must do to notify the school before and/or after all absences, including extended absences for vacations or family emergencies.

Please note:

- Schools cannot mark a student who has attended at least one instructional period as absent.
- Schools cannot exclude a student due to late arrival.
- Family trips that result in missed instructional time, including extended vacations, count as absences on the student's record in ATS. Schools cannot discharge students on extended family travel.

Every school must update the OSYD Consolidated Plan annually to define basic administrative procedures. Within the plan, schools must designate an attendance coordinator (administrator or pedagogue) who works with the principal to monitor all procedures for attendance reporting.

Refer to [Chancellor's Regulation A-210](#), the public webpage of [required attendance policies](#), and the [Attendance](#) page for full details.

3. Early Intervention

At the start of the year, schools must begin intervention for students identified as chronically absent in the previous year, or target groups likely to be chronically absent, like students in temporary housing (STH). These students are flagged for support and matched to interventions to prevent further patterns of absence.

Other intervention efforts to follow include:

- Acknowledge all absences with daily phone call and two-way outreach routines.
- Know chronic absentees and act on 5/10 Day Report each Wednesday.
- Group students by cause of absence or type of intervention.
- Plan for common reasons for absences: school refusal, struggling in class, asthma, travel, or pre-k.
- Employ intervention plans, success mentors, and incentives for targeted improvements.
- Have in place procedures to address and prevent STH absences.
- Set ILOG expectations for how the school coordinates outreach.
- Know ways community partners help promote attendance, and update list of local services.

4. Elevated Interventions

A school should keep a log of outreach for each student and there should be one school staff member who “knows the student’s story.” The school must ensure this person:

- Is prepared to address common reasons for extended absences (for example, pregnant/parenting, hospitalizations, or court-involved youth).
- Plans for revised academic programs, remediation, or transitions for affected students.
- Provides alternatives for high school non-completers; conducts Planning Interviews as needed.
- Connects students and families to social workers, ACS Preventive Services, Family Assessment Program (FAP), and mental health programs.
- Follows policy for educational neglect.
- Conducts investigations for unexplained, repeated absences, and 407 referrals.
- Documents non-attending reason and continue outreach.
- Consults with shared attendance teacher.

For more information, schools may consult the [Attendance](#) page or email attendance@schools.nyc.gov.

B. DISCHARGING STUDENTS—Updated Fall 2020

The NYCDOE’s [Transfer, Discharge, and Graduation Guidelines](#) describe the procedures required to discharge students. The guidelines are updated each year to reflect current standards and to increase alignment with the NYSED reporting requirements. School staff members must be properly trained to administer the transfer, discharge, and graduation processes for students, including collection and retention of the appropriate documents to support the type of discharge.

Schools must create a system for collecting, recording, and storing documents related to discharges. Teachers must be encouraged to provide any information that they have received from the child or family about moves, new phone numbers, or addresses. In addition, a process must be established for collecting information about new residence addresses and evidence of a student’s enrollment in a new school. A [standard discharge form](#) with quick references to documentation needed for each discharge is available on the [discharges InfoHub webpage](#) and in the [Transfer, Discharge, and Graduation Code Guidelines](#).

C. STUDENT RECORDS RETENTION AND TRANSFER—Updated Fall 2020

Maintaining up-to-date, accurate student records is an important part of ensuring that students are programmed for the correct courses and exams and receiving the services they need. High schools are responsible for obtaining and maintaining relevant records electronically and in students' cumulative files. See the guidance provided in the [Student Records](#) document and [Chancellor's Regulation A-820](#). To ensure that school records requests are directed appropriately, school principals should identify staff members responsible for managing student records requests. This individual may be identified in the [USIN](#) ATS screen.

NYCDOE's data systems automatically transfer the following information to high schools:

- [ATS](#): biographical information, attendance data, health/immunization records, promotion data, disciplinary history, exam scores, and transportation eligibility
- [STARS](#): students' previous grades
- [SEIS](#) (Special Education Student Information System): IEP¹⁰⁰

Students' cumulative files should be transferred to high schools as follows:

- **For students transitioning from NYCDOE middle schools to NYCDOE high schools:** middle schools are responsible for transferring students' cumulative files to students' receiving high schools each spring once high school placement decisions have been finalized. Middle schools use the [PLNT](#) (general education) and [PSPE](#) (special education) reports in ATS to access students' high school DBNs, and distribute students' cumulative files accordingly. The PLNT and PSPE reports should be included with the records as a cover sheet. High schools can use the [RQSA](#) screen in ATS to request missing records as needed.
- **For students enrolling from non-NYCDOE schools:** high schools are responsible for confirming students' prior schools and contacting the schools to request copies of students' cumulative files in a timely manner in order to provide students with appropriate academic programs. See [Transfer Credit](#) for more information on supporting transfer students.
- **For NYCDOE students transferring to non-NYCDOE schools:** only copies of the contents of the cumulative folder should be sent to the admitting school. The original folder should be kept at the school indefinitely.

The [Student Records](#) guidance details what kinds of student records schools are responsible for providing to parents and students. Former students who wish to obtain copies of their academic records should submit a [written request](#) to the school they last attended, accompanied by valid proof of ID. If the student's school is no longer open, the student should request records from the designated [transcript maintenance school](#). Students are advised to contact their high school superintendent's office for assistance locating their transcript maintenance school or obtaining their records. See the [Student Records page](#) for additional information.

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)), confidential student information is not available to everyone. This law protects the privacy of student information. See the [Student Records](#) guidance for more information.

Reasonable methods must be used to identify and authenticate the identity of parents, students, school officials, and any other parties to whom personally identifiable information from education records is disclosed. When a request comes from a former student who resides out of the New York area, schools must still attempt to confirm the identity of the requestor.

¹⁰⁰ It is not necessary to transfer a paper copy of the IEP.

Impact of COVID-19 on Sharing Student Records: With school buildings closed to reduce the spread of COVID-19, schools are encouraged to share student records electronically as needed. The NYCDOE developed [Guidance for Sharing Student Records with Families During Remote Learning](#) for schools to continue sharing educational records in a secure and confidential manner. This resource provides details on responding to student data requests from families, former students, third parties, etc.

A Federal immigration initiative known as [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals](#) allows undocumented young people who were brought to the United States as children and who meet certain criteria to be considered for work authorization and relief from deportation. Candidates must provide documentation that they meet [eligibility criteria](#); school records are a possible form of documentation, among other documents the City may be able to provide. Former students seeking records to document eligibility for consideration of deferred action should follow the procedures for transcript and records requests outlined above.

1. Changes to Student Records

There are different types of documentation that support changes to students' electronic records or cumulative folders. The type of documentation varies based on the request. Before updating a student's electronic records, schools must receive the appropriate documentation from the student or student's family.

- **Request to correct a student's date of birth:**
 - Any document accepted as a proof of age for enrollment (for example, birth certificate or passport)
- **Request to correct or change a student's name:**
 - A court order or birth certificate reflecting the student's legal name **OR**
 - A signed [Name and Gender Change Request Form](#)
- **Request to change a student's gender:**
 - A birth certificate or government ID reflecting the student's legal gender **OR**
 - A signed [Name and Gender Change Request Form](#)

Students are able to change their gender marker and name on their education records without legal documentation by submitting a signed [Name and Gender Change Request Form](#) to their school. The form is available to all students (for example, transgender and gender expansive students, those who go by a shortened version of their name, or those who have changed their name for social reasons).

Beginning in the 2019-20 school year, students could change their name in ATS without legal documentation. The student's name can be changed in our records if the parent, or the student if they are 18 years of age or older, submits a signed [Name and Gender Change Request Form](#) to the school. When the student's chosen first name ('CFN') and/or chosen last name ('CLN') is entered in ATS, the chosen name(s) will display on most student-, family-, and community-facing materials produced by the DOE in addition to most DOE school-facing applications. If a chosen name is not entered for a student, their "legal" name will continue to display. See the [Preferred Student Name \(Chosen Name\) wiki page](#) for more information.

For students currently enrolled in a New York City school, the school should update the student's name, gender, and/or date of birth. Schools should update the student's gender in the "Sex" field. Currently, schools may only enter binary gender terms ("M" for male and "F" for female) in ATS. For students who are discharged from the NYCDOE, the student's last school should forward the request and documentation to their Borough/Citywide Office.

Schools should retain copies of this documentation in the student's cumulative folder. The former name and/or gender will be maintained in archived data. Records will accurately reflect circumstances in effect at the time each record was made to enable records to be cross-referenced and will maintain confidentiality.

For more information, see the NYCDOE's [Guidelines to Support Transgender and Gender Expansive Students](#).

a. Records Other Than Permanent Records

No documentation is required to update a name or gender marker in records that are not part of a student's permanent file, such as guidance logs, graduation programs, sporting rosters, and yearbooks. Schools must use the student's chosen name and gender in all other records that are not permanent records. For students participating in Public School Athletic League activities, they can update their roster by speaking to their athletic director who will email lgbtq@schools.nyc.gov for support in making this change.

b. School ID Cards

A student's school ID card is not a permanent record and a school must issue the ID in the name that reflects the student's chosen name. Student IDs must not have gender markers on them. See this [STARS wiki page](#) for step-by-step assistance on updating a student ID without a change in ATS.

VII. APPENDICES

A. CREDENTIAL, DIPLOMA, AND ENDORSEMENT CODES IN ATS

The following is excerpted from the [Transfer, Discharge, and Graduation Guidelines](#).

1. Credential Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION
30	Received High School Equivalency Diploma (GED)
64	Received Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential <i>For students who participate in standard assessments only</i>
65	Received Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential <i>For students with IEPs who participate in New York State Alternate Assessment (NYSAA) only</i>

2. Diploma Granting Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION
26	Received Local Diploma
27	Received High School Regents Diploma
28	Received High School Regents Diploma with Honors
47	Received High School Advanced Regents Diploma
62	Received High School Advanced Regents Diploma with Honors

3. Diploma Endorsement Codes

Upon entering a graduation code in the GRDT (or DISC) screen in ATS, schools may indicate a “diploma type” for students who have earned endorsements.

CODE	ENDORSEMENT	ELIGIBLE DIPLOMA CODES
01	Arts	26, 27, 28, 47, 62
02	CTE	
03	CTE and arts	
05	Math	47 and 62 only
06	Science	
07	Math and science	
08	Arts and science	
09	Arts and math	
10	Arts, science, and math	
11	CTE and science	
12	CTE and math	
13	CTE, science, and math	
14	CTE, arts, and science	
15	CTE, arts, and math	
16	CTE, arts, math and science	
20	CDOS credential as an endorsement to a diploma	26, 27, 28, 47, 62
21	Service Seal	26, 27, 28, 47, 62, 30, 64, 65
22	NYS Seal of Biliteracy	27, 28, 47, 62

B. COURSE AND EXAM MARKS TABLES—Updated Fall 2020

The table below outlines all available grade scales, and their associated marks, [in STARS](#), along with their pass/fail equivalents and numeric equivalents. For the 2020-21 school year, reference the [2020-2021 Grading Policy](#) for the available marks and applicable policies.

Course Mark	Description	Numeric Equivalent	Pass/Fail Equivalent
IB2–IB7	International Baccalaureate scale	N/A	P
IB1	International Baccalaureate scale	N/A	F
4 (+/-)	Performance level: excels in standards (1–4 scale)	N/A	P
3 (+/-)	Performance level: proficient (1–4 scale)	N/A	P
2 (+/-)	Performance level: below standards (1–4 scale)	N/A	F
1 (+/-)	Performance level: well below standards (1–4 scale)	N/A	F
100–65	Numeric course grades (10–100 scale) ¹⁰¹	65–100	P
64–10	Numeric course grades (10–100 scale) ¹⁰²	10–64	F
A+	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	98	P
A	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	95	P
A-	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	93	P
B+	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	88	P
B	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	85	P
B-	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	83	P
C+	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	78	P
C	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	75	P
C-	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	73	P
D+	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	68	P
D	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	65	P
D-	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)	60	F
F	Alpha course grades (A–F scale)/Fail (Pass or fail scale)	55	F
P	Pass (Pass or fail scale)	N/A	P
E+	Excellent+ (E–U scale)	98	P
E	Excellent (E–U scale)	95	P
E-	Excellent- (E–U scale)	93	P
G+	Good+ (E–U scale)	88	P
G	Good (E–U scale)	85	P
G-	Good- (E–U scale)	83	P
S+	Satisfactory (E–U scale)	78	P
S	Satisfactory (E–U scale)	75	P
S-	Satisfactory- (E–U scale)	73	P
N+	Needs Improvement+ (E–U scale)	68	P
N	Needs Improvement (E–U scale)	65	P
N-	Needs Improvement- (E–U scale)	60	F
U	Unsatisfactory (E–U scale)	55	F
ME	Exceeds standards (Mastery scale)	95	P
MA	Above standards (Mastery scale)	85	P

¹⁰¹ In order to avoid conflicting pass/fail equivalencies for marks of 1–4, schools using the numeric scale should round marks of less than 10 to either an ‘NC’ or a 10, or utilize the ‘NS’ mark where appropriate. Schools may also choose to set a minimum failing mark of 45 in their grading policies in accordance with the policies described in the [Grading Policy Toolkit](#).

Course Mark	Description	Numeric Equivalent	Pass/Fail Equivalent
MT	Meets standards (Mastery scale)	75	P
MP	Approaching standards (Mastery scale)	65	P
MB	Below standards (Mastery scale)	55	F
CR	Credit	N/A	P
NC	No Credit	N/A	F
NS	No credit – No show (additional policies apply)	45	F
ND	No credit – Fulfilled distribution requirement	N/A	NULL
NU	No credit – Audit	N/A	NULL
NX	No credit – Course in Progress ¹⁰² (additional policies apply)	N/A	NULL
NL	No credit – New/Recent Admit or Other ¹⁰³ (additional policies apply)	N/A	NULL
NW	Course waived (use for PE only)	N/A	P

Exam Mark ¹⁰⁴	Applicable Exams	Description	Default Numeric Equivalent	Pass/Fail Equivalent
100–65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regents LOTE Regents-like exam LOTE SLP 	The numeric exam score the student received on the exam	100–65	P
64–0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regents LOTE Regents-like exam LOTE SLP 	The numeric exam score the student received on the exam	64–0	F
ABS ¹⁰⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regents LOTE Regents-like exam LOTE SLP 	Absent: Student was scheduled to take the exam but did not show up on test day	N/A	F
INV ¹⁰⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regents LOTE Regents-like exam LOTE SLP 	Invalid: Student cheated on the exam; or student became ill during the exam and was therefore unable to complete it	N/A	F
MIS ¹⁰⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regents LOTE Regents-like exam LOTE SLP 	Misadministration: School/teacher misadministered the exam	N/A	N/A
WA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regents 	<p>Waived exam: Student received a NYS Regents, LOTE, or NYSED-approved alternative exam waiver.</p> <p>Student entered a NYCDOE school in grade 11 or 12, as applicable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade 11 or 12: waive Global History & Geography 	N/A	P

¹⁰² Since the transition to remote learning, the description of 'NX' changed from 'Incomplete' to 'Course in Progress'.

¹⁰³ With the release of the 2020-21 Grading Policy, the description of 'NL' changed from 'New/Recent Admit' to 'New/Recent Admit or Other'.

¹⁰⁴ Schools have the option of displaying only the highest Regents exam score on the transcripts of students who have taken Regents exams multiple times.

¹⁰⁵ Marks of ABS, INV, and MIS will not appear on transcripts. All Regents exam marks are maintained in the students' STARS permanent records.

Exam Mark ¹⁰⁴	Applicable Exams	Description	Default Numeric Equivalent	Pass/Fail Equivalent
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grade 12: waive Global History & Geography and/or Science 		
WX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NYSED-approved Regents Alternative 	Student passed NYSED-approved Regents Alternative	N/A	P
WG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regents 	Appealed exam	N/A	P
P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PBAT RCT 	For PBAT or RCT exams ¹⁰⁶ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PBATs are used by Consortium Schools only; mark corresponds to Consortium Rubric grades of Outstanding, Good, and Competent 	N/A	P
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PBAT RCT 	For PBAT or RCT exams ¹⁰⁵ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PBATs are used by Consortium Schools only; mark corresponds to Consortium Rubric grade of Needs Revision) 	N/A	F

¹⁰⁶ RCTs are available only to students with disabilities who entered grade 9 prior to September 2011; see the section of this guide on [RCTs](#).

C. SUMMARY OF REGENTS AND LOCAL DIPLOMA GRADUATION OPTIONS

The following opportunities should be considered during review of students' exam scores; these are available to students who currently have IEPs and have met all the course credit requirements for a diploma:

Scores of 65+ on five required assessments (all students)

- Has the student scored 65 or higher on five assessments in ELA, math, social studies, and science? No appeals or additional reviews from the superintendent are required. The student may earn a Regents diploma.

Scores of 65+ plus up to two appealable scores of 60–64 (all students)

- Has the student scored 65 or higher on three of the Regents exams and earned scores of 60–64 on up to two others? The school may submit the appeals to the superintendent. If approved and reflected on the student's transcript, the student may earn a Regents diploma (one appeal) or local diploma (two appeals).

Scores of 55+ on five required assessments (Safety Net eligible students)

- Has the student scored 55 or higher on five assessments in ELA, math, social studies, or science? No appeals or additional reviews from the superintendent are required. The student may earn a local diploma.

Scores of 55+ and up to two appealable scores of 52–54 (Safety Net eligible students)

- Has the student scored 55 or higher on three of the Regents exams and earned scores of 52–54 on up to two others? The school may submit the appeals to the superintendent. If approved and reflected on the student's transcript, the student may earn a local diploma.

Compensatory score option (Safety Net eligible students)

- Does the student meet the requirements for the compensatory score option? Students who have up to two scores of 45–54 (excluding Math and ELA) can pair these low scores with scores of 65 or above and use that match to graduate. No appeals or additional reviews from the superintendent are required (although students may also appeal some scores in combination). These students may earn a local diploma.

RCTs (Safety Net eligible students who meet cohort requirement)

- Was the student eligible to take the RCTs because they entered high school prior to 2011? If the student has attempted each regents at least once and has passed the required RCTs, no appeals or additional reviews from the superintendent are required (although students may also appeal some scores in combination). These students may earn a local diploma.

Final superintendent review (only students with current IEPs)

- Has the student earned 55 or higher on assessments in ELA and math, but still has not met examination requirements for graduation through any of the above options?
- Has the student successfully appealed a 52–54 on an ELA or math exam, but still has not met examination requirements for graduation through any of the above options?
- Has the student earned the CDOS commencement credential, but still has not met examination requirements for graduation through any of the above options?
- Upon review and approval by the superintendent using the process described in this guidance, the student may be eligible to earn a local diploma.

D. FORMS

The following is a list of forms for school use, in fillable format. The second column indicates that the form is required for all high schools to use, and that schools may not use their own, school-created versions of the form. All of the forms below are available on the [academic policy page](#) to print and reference as needed. For assistance using these forms, schools may contact their [academic policy and systems leads](#).

Form	Required	Principal Must Review and Sign	Optional	Description
Appeals to Graduate with Low Scores on Regents Exams	✓			A school designee must complete this form and submit the required supporting documentation in order to request a low score appeal on a Regents exam. This accompanies an appeal submitted via RQSA.
CDOS Attestation Form	✓	✓		Principals must complete and submit this form as part of the request for a superintendent determination of graduation for students who have demonstrated mastery of the CDOS commencement-level learning standards and are using the requirements of the CDOS commencement credential to meet the ELA and/or math Regents exam eligibility requirements. As a best practice, complete this form when students are earning the CDOS in any capacity.
Credit Recovery Approval Form	✓	✓		The school-based panel must complete this form for every student who is approved to participate in credit recovery. This documents that the student is eligible and the policies for credit recovery are being met.
Course Review Form		✓	✓	Complete this form to determine if a proposed or currently offered course suits a school's programming needs and meets the requirements to bear credit. As a best practice, keep this form with a copy of the course syllabus.
Diploma Requirements Worksheet			✓	Complete this form to assess a student's progress towards fulfilling credit and exam graduation requirements.
Offsite Coursework Agreement Form	✓			A school designee and a student must complete this form for each instance of off-site coursework. Parent signature required.
Override Code Review Form	✓	✓		A school designee must complete this form so that the principal may approve credit and exam override codes entered into GRDT when students are certified for graduation.

Form	Required	Principal Must Review and Sign	Optional	Description
Superintendent Determination of Graduation	✓			A school designee must complete this form and submit the required supporting documentation in order to request a superintendent determination of graduation. This accompanies an appeal submitted via RQSA.
Transfer Credit Equivalency Form	✓			A school designee must complete this form and submit the required supporting documentation in order to document transfer credits awarded from a non-DOE school.
Transfer Student Entry Checklist			✓	Complete this form to assist students transferring into a DOE school from a non-DOE school.
Transcript Update Form	✓	✓		A school designee must complete this form and submit any required supporting documentation before updating student transcripts with additions or corrections. The form must be retained with supporting documentation.