

Turnkey Guidance for New York State Graduation Requirements

This guidance intends to provide educators with presentation materials to support students' and families' understanding of the current New York State Graduation Requirements and to provide access to additional resources for students and families.

The “Did You Know” sections provide additional information for school counselors and administrators. Educators may determine whether or not to include the information in your presentations to students and families.

This guidance is provided by the New York State Education Department as a tool for schools and districts to support students' and families' knowledge of our current diploma requirements. This guidance can and should be adjusted to meet the needs of individual learning communities throughout the State.

Presentation Goals:

- Summarize the current New York State Graduation Requirements
- Provide access to additional resources so students and families can advocate for appropriate pathways to exit high school

Presentation Objectives:

- Explain New York State diploma credit requirements
- Describe New York State diploma assessment requirements
- Discuss each of the multiple (+1) pathways
- Identify each diploma type
- Compare seals and endorsements
- Recognize credentials that are not diplomas

Materials Needed:

- [New York State Graduation Requirements: A Presentation for New York's Students and Families](#)
 - Consider adding a slide with any additional local diploma requirements (if applicable)
- Copy of (or digital access to) [New York State Graduation Requirements: Understanding Current New York State Diploma Requirements](#) flyer
- Copy of (or digital access to) [New York State Graduation Requirements: Additional Options](#) flyer
- Copy of (or digital access to) school or district's diploma requirements
- Copy of (or digital access to) [NYS Diploma Requirements Tracking Tool](#), if desired

Instructions:

1. Prior to the meeting, prepare shared materials (plan to duplicate or share digital versions and consider sharing prior to the presentation for participants' review).
2. If additional slides are desired (i.e., district or school-specific graduation requirements), create and insert additional slides into the presentation.
3. Plan for small group discussion (if the presentation is virtual, plan breakout discussion rooms of 2-3 participants).
4. Present PowerPoint Presentation by following the prompts in each stop.
5. Present the information on each slide, with additional information as provided in the this guidance.

Estimated Duration:

- 30 minutes, if the presentation includes only the slides provided from the New York State Education Department

Materials for Further Learning:

- [Diploma Requirements Video Series](#)

Stop 1: Welcoming Activity

Project the image of an apple (slide 2). Explain: *To welcome you today while also promoting creative and fluid thinking, we are going to engage in a welcoming activity called Synectics. Your task is to complete the sentence stem, "New York State Graduation Requirements are like apples because..."*. Allow participants 2-3 minutes to generate and record as many comparisons between graduation requirements and apples as possible.

After 2-3 minutes of brainstorming, ask participants to choose one comparison to share with a small discussion group (2-3). Provide 2 minutes for each individual to share one comparison with a small group.

Invite 2-3 participants to share their completed sentence stems with the whole group.

Note: The Synectics welcoming activity can be referenced in CASEL's [3 Signature Practices Playbook: A Tool that Supports Systemic Social and Emotional Learning](#).

Stop 2: Goals and Objectives

Advance the presentation to slide 3. Read aloud the goals and objectives (listed above and on slide 3).

Advance the presentation to slide 4.

Explain:

To earn a NYS diploma, students must meet credit and assessment requirements. These requirements are separate and distinct and do not have to happen simultaneously.

In New York State, students maintain their educational entitlement until age 21 or until they earn a high school diploma (whichever happens first).



Did You Know?

Awarding the CDOS Commencement Credential as a stand-alone exiting credential does not terminate a student's entitlement to a free public education. Such student continues to be eligible to attend the public school without payment of tuition until the student has earned a Regents or local high school diploma or until the end of the school year in which such student turns age 21, whichever shall occur first.

Additional information can be referenced in the [New York State \(NYS\) Career Development and Occupational Studies \(CDOS\) Commencement Credential Questions and Answers](#).

Stop 3: Credit Requirements

Advance the presentation to slide 5.

Explain:

This credit distribution table shows the minimum number of credits required for each discipline.

There are many times that students and families are under the impression that certain courses are “required” by the New York State Education Department, (for instance, most high schoolers would tell you that they are taking earth science because it is “required”). This is mainly because these are the courses that have traditionally existed in our schools. However, there is a lot of local flexibility allowed in offering students a wide range of course options to meet diploma requirements. Innovation and engagement are encouraged as courses are developed.

In most disciplines, students choose the courses they want to take to fulfill the minimum requirements. For example, in science some students take Biology, Chemistry, and Earth Science, while others take Environmental Science, Forensics, and Physics. Any science courses aligned to the high school learning standards can count toward the 3 required credits.

There are a few required courses: all students must take a half credit in health and all the credits in social studies are prescribed for students (2 credits in Global History and Geography, one credit in US History and Government, a half credit in Participation in Government, and a half credit in Economics).

Entertain questions about credit requirements.



Did You Know?

While most students earn a unit of diploma credit through successful completion of a unit of study aligned to the commencement level learning standards, there are alternative means for students to earn diploma credit including:

- Credit by examination
- Credit by participation
- Independent study for elective credit
- Dual or Concurrent enrollment in college coursework

Additional information can be referenced on the [Earning Units of Credit](#) webpage.



Did You Know?

While the rest of New York State awards one unit of diploma credit for one unit of study, the New York City (NYC) Department of Education (DOE) awards one unit of diploma credit for one half unit of study. This results in schools within the NYC DOE requiring 44 units of credit. Additional information can be referenced on the [NYC DOE's Graduation Requirements](#) webpage.

Stop 4: Assessment Requirements

Advance the presentation to slide 6.

Explain:

In addition to the 22 units of credit, students must also meet the NYS assessment requirements to earn a diploma.

To meet the assessment requirements for a Regents or local diploma, students must successfully complete 4 assessments +1 pathway. All students must pass one assessment (Regents exam or Department-approved alternative) in each of the four disciplines (English, mathematics, science, social studies) plus one pathway.

Advance the presentation to slide 7.

Students can access Regents exams by completing a course which culminates in the associated Regents exam. Pathways requirements are as follows:

In order to complete the STEM Pathway, a student must obtain a passing score on one additional Regents exam or Department-approved alternative in mathematics or science.

In order to complete the Humanities Pathway, a student must earn a passing score on one additional Regents exam or Department-approved alternative in English or social studies.

In order to complete the Arts Pathway, a student must earn a passing score on a Department-approved pathway exam in the Arts. Currently, that means they must pass an AP or IB test in Art.

In order to complete the Language other than English (LOTE) Pathway, a student must earn a passing score on a Department-approved pathway exam in a language other than English. This usually means the student has to complete 3 courses in a language in order to access that examination.

In order to complete the CTE Pathway, a student must successfully complete a Department-approved Career and Technical Education program, including 3-5 CTE courses and earning a passing score on the 3-part technical assessment.

There are two options available for students to complete the CDOS Pathway. In order to complete Option 1 for the CDOS pathway, a student must meet each of the following requirements:

- 1. Development of a Career Plan*
 - Including documentation of student's:*
 - Self-identified career interests*
 - Career-related strengths and needs*
 - Career goals*
 - Career and technical coursework and work-based learning experiences the student intends to engage in to achieve their career goals*
- 2. Demonstrated achievement of the commencement level [CDOS learning standards](#) in the areas of:*
 - Career exploration and development (Standard 1)*
 - Integrated learning (Standard 2)*
 - Universal foundation skills (Standard 3a)*
- 3. Successful completion of at least 216 hours of CTE coursework and/or work-based learning experiences (of which at least 54 hours must be in work-based learning experiences)*
- 4. At least one employability profile, completed within one year prior to student's exit from high school, documenting student's:*
 - Employability skills and experiences*
 - Attainment of each of the commencement level CDOS learning standards*
 - As appropriate, attainment of:*
 - Technical knowledge and work-related skills*
 - Work experiences*
 - Performance on industry-based assessments*
 - Other work-related and academic achievements*

In order to complete Option 2 for the CDOS pathway, a student must meet the requirements for one of the [Department-approved Pathway Assessments in Career Development and Occupational Studies](#).

If students are not able to earn a passing score of 65 on Regents exams, they may be eligible for appeals, safety nets, and/or Superintendent Determination. Typically, students who avail themselves of these options receive a State approved local diploma instead of a Regents Diploma. Information about these options can be found in the [New York State Graduation Requirements: Additional Options](#) flyer.

Entertain questions about assessment requirements.

Stop 5: Types of Diplomas

Advance the presentation to slide 8.

Explain:

There are currently three types of high school diplomas: local, Regents, and Regents with Advanced Designation.

The current regulations allow some flexibility in meeting the assessment requirements. These include appealing scores that are within a certain number of points of passing, low pass safety nets for students with disabilities, and the Superintendent's determination option for students with disabilities that have successfully completed all their coursework but were unable to pass or meet a safety net on 1 or more required assessments.

All diploma types require students to earn 22 units of credit as outlined in the credit distribution table. Students who meet the credit requirements and use appeals, safety nets, or Superintendent Determination to meet the assessment requirements typically earn a local diploma.

Students who meet the credit requirements and earn passing scores on all required assessments earn a Regents diploma. Students can appeal one Regents exam no more than 5 points below passing (60-64) and still earn a Regents diploma.

Students who meet the credit requirements, earn passing scores on all required assessments including 2 additional math and 1 additional science, and complete a sequence in LOTE, the Arts, or CTE, earn a Regents diploma with Advanced Designation.

Entertain questions about types of diplomas.



Did You Know?

Students may not use the appeal process in order to earn a Regents diploma with advanced designation. Additional information can be referenced in the [Appeal to Graduate with a Lower Score on a Regents Examination memo](#) (April 17, 2017).

Stop 6: Seals & Endorsements

Advance the presentation to slide 9.

Explain:

To acknowledge students who go above and beyond the minimum diploma requirements in certain areas, the current regulations allow for a variety of recognitions to be added to a student's diploma in the form of seals and endorsements.

The technical endorsement can be added to any diploma type (local, Regents, or Regents with Advanced Designation) for any student who completes a Department-approved Career and Technical Education (CTE) program including the three-part technical assessment in addition to the minimum diploma requirements.

The Seal of Biliteracy can be added to either the Regents diploma or the Regents with Advanced Designation. This seal recognizes a high level of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages, in addition to English. The intent of the NYS Seal of Biliteracy is to encourage the study of languages; identify high school graduates with language and biliteracy skills for employers; provide universities with additional information about applicants seeking admission; prepare students with twenty-first century skills; recognize the value of foreign and native language instruction in schools; and affirm the value of diversity in a multilingual society. Since one of the requirements for earning the NYS Seal of Biliteracy is meeting all requirements for graduating with a Regents diploma, this seal cannot be added to the local diploma.

The honors endorsement can be added to either the Regents diploma or the Regents with Advanced Designation for students who score particularly well on their Regents examinations. Students who earn a computed average of 90 or above on all of the Regents exams required for their diploma type receive an honors endorsement.

Students who meet the Advanced Diploma requirements may also earn a Mastery designation in either math or science, or in both math and science. The Mastery designation for mathematics and/or science can be added to the Regents with Advanced Designation for students who earn a score of 85 or above on three Regents exams in mathematics and/or science.

Entertain questions about seals and endorsements.

Stop 7: Exiting Credentials that are Not Diplomas

Advance to the presentation to slide 10.

Explain:

New York State has two exiting credentials. These exiting credentials are not equivalent to a diploma.

The CDOS Commencement Credential is unique as it can serve three purposes:

- *a pathway to a diploma (as the +1 assessment option);*
- *an addition to a diploma; or*
- *an exiting credential.*

Students who attempt but do not successfully complete all the NYS diploma requirements, and do complete all of the CDOS Commencement Credential requirements can earn the CDOS as an exiting credential. This is an earned credential, but it is not equivalent to a diploma. Students must demonstrate entry level work place readiness skills.

Advance the presentation to slide 11.

Explain:

The Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential is available to students with disabilities who are assessed using the NYS Alternate Assessment.

This credential must be accompanied by documentation of the students' skills and strengths and levels of independence in academic, career development, and foundation skills needed for post-school living, learning, and working.

To issue the Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential, students must have completed at least 12 years of schooling (excluding kindergarten) or the school year in which they turned 21.

Entertain questions about exiting credentials that are not diplomas.



Did You Know?

- All students, except those deemed eligible for the Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential, are eligible to earn the CDOS Commencement Credential as a pathway, in addition to a diploma, or as an exiting credential.
- Students cannot earn both the Skills and Achievement Commencement Credential and the CDOS Credential.
- Additional information can be referenced in the [New York State \(NYS\) Career Development and Occupational Studies \(CDOS\) Commencement Credential Questions and Answers](#).

Stop 8: Local Requirements

If your school or district has additional local requirements students must meet to earn a diploma (i.e., additional credits, community service hours), use this time to explain and discuss such requirements.

If your school or district has resources for parents or students to track their progress in fulfilling diploma requirements, use this time to explain how to use the resource. The [NYS Diploma Requirements Tracking Tool](#) could be shared as an option for students to track the requirements they have met.

Stop 9: Optimistic Closure

Allow sufficient time to address any questions pertaining to NYS or local diploma requirements, then engage participants in the optimistic closure activity “Suit Yourself”.

Advance the presentation to slide 12.

Ask participants to choose a suit (hearts, clubs, diamonds, or spades) and respond to the associated prompt or question(s).

- Hearts: Something from the heart. How did you feel? What did it mean to you?
- Clubs: Things that grew. What new ideas, new thoughts, or new points of view emerged?
- Diamonds: Gems that last forever. What are some of the gems of wisdom gathered from people or content?
- Spades: Used to dig in the garden. What new ideas were planted? What ideas were dug up?

Give one minute of quiet time for each participant to record (or think about) their response. If time allows, ask participants to share their responses in the small groups. Then ask for one participant from each suit to share their response. Consider collecting written responses to gain feedback on the presentation.

Note: The Suit Yourself optimistic closure activity was adapted from CASEL’s [3 Signature Practices Playbook: A Tool that Supports Systemic Social and Emotional Learning](#).