



Superintendent's Circular

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MASSCORE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

This Circular will remain in effect unless rescinded or superseded by a subsequent version.

Boston Public Schools (BPS) has a priority to create policies and practices that support the preparation of every student to be college, career, and life ready while removing barriers that prevent students from graduating from BPS. Accordingly, it is imperative that BPS utilize standards-aligned graduation requirements across the district that will promote and ensure rigor and excellence in our schools, resulting in the elimination of opportunity and achievement gaps and ensuring that every student graduates prepared for life after high school.

Approved by the Boston School Committee in May of 2021, Boston Public Schools (BPS) adopted the MassCore Course of Study as its graduation requirement for all students in the district. The requirements will begin for students entering 9th grade in School Year 2022-2023 (SY22-23), with full implementation by the start of SY25-26. This circular outlines the details of graduation course requirements, alignment to DESE standards and state graduation requirements, and the course waiver process.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Beginning with grade 9 in SY23-24, the following credits in

various content categories are required for graduation from BPS. The table below visually represents the course requirements for graduation:

MassCore Framework Massachusetts High School Program of Studies		
Content Category	Units	Notes
English Language Arts	4 Units	ESL courses for students designated as ELD 1, 2 or 3 will count toward ELA credits
Mathematics	4 Units	Including completion of Algebra II or Integrated Mathematics III. A mathematics course during senior year is recommended for all students.
Science	3 Units of lab-based science	Coursework in technology/engineering courses may also count for MassCore science credit.
History and Social Science	3 Units	Including U.S. History and World History and one additional core or MassCore elective. Inclusion of an Ethnic Studies course is strongly encouraged.
Foreign Language	2 Units	Both units must be in the same language.

Physical Education	1 unit, as required by law	Students will have one quarter course (or its equivalent) of PE per year or an equivalent.
Arts	1 Unit	Students will have one quarter course (or its equivalent) of Art per year or a cumulative unit.
Additional Core Courses	5 Units	Inclusive of PE (1 credit) plus four additional courses. Other additional coursework (including Health Education* & Career and Technical Education) or any of the above.

**Health Education: The BPS Wellness Policy requires 1 semester (at least ¼ course equivalent) of Health Education in high school.*

STATE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The policy does not and will not replace state laws and DESE regulations pertaining to high school graduation. These additional requirements include, but are not limited to:

- Action Civics Projects required by Chapter 296 of the Acts of 2018, An Act to promote and enhance civic engagement.
- Earning a “competency determination” [passing scores on the Grade 10 English language arts and mathematics and high school level science and technology/engineering Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests]. For students who do not pass an MCAS test, educators develop an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP) for the subject(s). Students need to meet course requirements for their EPP in addition to meeting MassCore requirements.

SUBSTITUTIONS

The following substitutions may be used to meet graduation requirements without an additional waiver:

Physical Education

MassCore reflects the legal requirement that physical education be taught as a required subject in all grades. The BPS Wellness Policy requires all schools to offer high quality physical education for students in all grades. Under some circumstances, students can meet the requirement through an approved organized program of instructional physical activity, including but not limited to: participation in interscholastic athletics, skating, hockey, dance, yoga, martial arts, capoeira, or swimming; and any physical activity through school based or community programs, or independent study. Substitutions and independent study opportunities must be approved by the Office of Health and Wellness.

Computer Science

Students may substitute one unit of Computer Science (*AP Computer Science Principles*, *Computer Science Principles*, or *Exploring Computer Science*) that includes rigorous mathematical concepts and aligns with the Digital Literacy and Computer Science standards for a mathematics course.

Humanities Course

Double-blocked Humanities courses may count toward 1 ELA credit and 1 History credit. One period Humanities courses count as 1 History credit and cannot be used toward ELA credit.

Career and Technical Education

Students enrolled in a DESE approved Chapter 74 program can fulfill MassCore requirements without fulfilling arts and world language requirements. While arts and world language requirements may be waived, students are strongly encouraged to take these courses to comply with college admission requirements.

Credit for Courses in Grades 7 and 8

Students will be able to apply high school credits for high school level courses completed successfully in 7th or 8th grade.

World Language Competency

Multilingual learners may earn up to two World Language credits for demonstrated competency in their native language by achieving Intermediate Mid Level of language proficiency on the AVANT Stamp Assessment. The AVANT Stamp administration will be administered at the BPS Welcome Center in the fall and spring of each year. Students scoring at the Intermediate High Level of language proficiency can utilize the assessment results towards attainment of the MA State Seal of Biliteracy upon graduation if they also meet the minimum criteria for English language proficiency set forth by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Course Waiver Process

Schools may seek additional waivers for individual students or courses.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Each school will collaborate with the Academics team on ensuring alignment of its course schedule with MassCore requirements.
- All 9th grade students should follow the recommended course sequence and must take at least a quarter of physical education in SY23-24.
- Schools should work with districts on ensuring they have the proper staffing model to meet MassCore requirements, especially for students in grade 9.

For more information about this circular, contact:

Owner:	Elementary Superintendent
Department:	Academics and Professional Learning
Mailing Address:	2300 Washington St., Roxbury, MA 02119
Phone:	617-635-6053
Email:	OPL@bostonpublicschools.org

Mary Skipper, Superintendent