

HB 491 ~ Provisions to Allow Alternative Graduation Pathways, & Modification to Student Suspension Law Regarding Make-up Work

Alternative graduation requirements

The bill extends the two alternative graduation pathways for public and chartered nonpublic high schools established by H.B. 49 of the 132nd General Assembly (the main operating budget act for the 2017-2019 biennium) for an additional two years. Under current law, students in the class of 2018 may choose certain graduation pathways as alternatives to those afforded under continuing law (see "Background – graduation requirements" below). The bill extends the alternatives to the classes of 2019 and 2020. Additionally, the bill modifies one of the alternative pathways for the class of 2020.

Main alternative pathway

The first pathway qualifies a student for graduation if the student:

- (1) takes all of the end-of-course exams required for the student or takes an alternate assessment for chartered nonpublic school students,
- (2) retakes, at least once, any end-of-course exam in English language arts or math for which a student received an equivalent score of lower than "3,"
- (3) completes the district's or school's required units of instruction, and
- (4) meets at least two of the following other conditions:
 - (a) Has an attendance rate of at least 93% during the twelfth grade (for classes of 2018 and 2019 only);
 - (b) Takes at least four full-year or equivalent courses during the twelfth grade and has a grade point average of at least 2.5 for those courses;
 - (c) Completes a capstone project during the twelfth grade;
 - (d) Completes, during the twelfth grade, 120 hours of work in a community service role or in a position of employment, including internships work study, co-ops, and apprenticeships;
 - (e) Earns three or more transcribed credit hours under the College Credit Plus program at any time during high school;
 - (f) Passes an Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) course, and receives a score of 3 or higher on the corresponding AP exam or a score of 4 or higher on the corresponding IB exam, at any time during high school;
 - (g) Earns at least a level 3 score on each of the "reading for information," "applied mathematics," and "locating information" components of WorkKeys assessment;
 - (h) Obtains an industry-recognized credential or a group of credentials equal to at least three total points; or
 - (i) Satisfies the conditions required to receive an OhioMeansJobs-Readiness Seal.

Changes to the main alternative pathway for the class of 2020

The bill modifies the conditions for the class of 2020 under the main alternative pathway, including:

- (a) A student in the class of 2020 may not use the attendance in twelfth grade as a condition to graduate (as noted above).

(b) A student in the class 2020 must have a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 of courses taken during eleventh and twelfth grades (instead just the twelfth grade).

(c) A capstone project completed by a student in the class of 2020 must comply with guidance issued by the Department of Education. The bill specifies that the guidance must be issued by May 31, 2019, and must describe the components of a successful capstone project and the process for evaluating each component, and ensure that each project is designed as a culmination of the student's high school experience.

(d) The student's completion of 120 hours of work in a community service role or a position of employment must comply with guidance developed by the Department in consultation with the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation. That guidance must be issued by May 31, 2019. It must describe the requirements for school district or school approval and verification of the work and must indicate that it is preferable that students complete the work with a business or nonprofit organization registered in Ohio.

Career-technical alternative pathway

The second pathway applies equally to the classes of 2018, 2019, and 2020. It qualifies a student for graduation if the student (1) takes all of the end-of-course exams required for the student or takes an alternate assessment for chartered nonpublic school students, (2) completes the district's or school's required units of instruction, (3) completes a career-technical training program approved by the Department that includes at least four career-technical courses, and (4) completes one of the following other conditions:

(a) Attains a cumulative score of at least proficient on career-technical education exams, or test modules, that are required for a career-technical education program;

(b) Obtains an industry-recognized credential, or a group of credentials equal to at least 12 points; or

(c) Demonstrates successful workplace participation, as evidenced by documented completion of 250 hours of workplace experience and by regular, written, positive evaluations from the workplace employer or supervisor and representative of the district or school. (This condition must be based on a written agreement signed by the student, a representative of the district or school, and an employer or supervisor.)

Background – graduation requirements Graduation pathways

The term "graduation pathways" refers to three general options under which a student can graduate from high school. The pathways for both public and chartered nonpublic schools are:

(1) score at "remediation-free" levels in English, math, and reading on nationally standardized assessments,

(2) attain a cumulative passing score on the state high school end-of-course exams, or

(3) attain a passing score the WorkKeys job skills assessment and obtain either an industry-recognized credential or a state agency- or board-issued license for practice in a specific vocation. A fourth option –

attaining a passing score on an alternate assessment approved by the Department – is available only to students in chartered nonpublic schools.

High school achievement assessments

The high school state achievement assessments are referred to in the Revised Code as the College and Work-Ready Assessment System and consist of the following:

- (1) a nationally standardized assessment that measures college and career readiness, such as the SAT or ACT, and
- (2) seven end-of-course exams in English language arts I, English language arts II, biology, Algebra I, geometry, American history, and American government.

Recommendations regarding diploma requirement revisions

The bill states that the General Assembly intends to engage in ongoing discussions about modifying high school graduation requirements for students in the classes of 2020 and later. For that purpose, the bill requires the Department of Education, in consultation with the business community, to make recommendations, as confirmed by the State Board of Education, to the General Assembly about revising diploma requirements for students in public or chartered nonpublic high schools.

The recommendations must include a long-term proposal for diploma requirements that reduces reliance on state testing, encourages local innovation, and supports student readiness for a career, college, and life. They also must include a transition plan to allow time for the implementation of the new requirements. The Department must present the recommendations to the House and Senate Education committees by April 1, 2019, for consideration for inclusion in the main operating budget of the 133rd General Assembly.

Policy on assignments missed because of a student's suspension

The bill replaces a provision of H.B. 318, enacted in 2018, requiring that students be permitted to complete classroom assignments missed during a suspension with a requirement that each district or school adopt a policy for completing and grading those assignments. Each policy must provide the student an opportunity to (1) complete missed classroom assignments and (2) receive at least partial credit for any assignment completed. While the policy may permit grade reductions on account of the student's suspension, it must not permit the receipt of a failing grade solely on account of the student's suspension.