



Ohio Revised Code

Section 3313.603 Requirements for high school graduation; workforce or college preparatory units.

Effective: March 23, 2015

Legislation: House Bill 367

(A) As used in this section:

(1) "One unit" means a minimum of one hundred twenty hours of course instruction, except that for a laboratory course, "one unit" means a minimum of one hundred fifty hours of course instruction.

(2) "One-half unit" means a minimum of sixty hours of course instruction, except that for physical education courses, "one-half unit" means a minimum of one hundred twenty hours of course instruction.

(B) Beginning September 15, 2001, except as required in division (C) of this section and division (C) of section 3313.614 of the Revised Code, the requirements for graduation from every high school shall include twenty units earned in grades nine through twelve and shall be distributed as follows:

(1) English language arts, four units;

(2) Health, one-half unit;

(3) Mathematics, three units;

(4) Physical education, one-half unit;

(5) Science, two units until September 15, 2003, and three units thereafter, which at all times shall include both of the following:

(a) Biological sciences, one unit;

(b) Physical sciences, one unit.



(6) History and government, one unit, which shall comply with division (M) of this section and shall include both of the following:

- (a) American history, one-half unit;
- (b) American government, one-half unit.

(7) Social studies, two units.

Beginning with students who enter ninth grade for the first time on or after July 1, 2017, the two units of instruction prescribed by division (B)(7) of this section shall include at least one-half unit of instruction in the study of world history and civilizations.

(8) Elective units, seven units until September 15, 2003, and six units thereafter.

Each student's electives shall include at least one unit, or two half units, chosen from among the areas of business/technology, fine arts, and/or foreign language.

(C) Beginning with students who enter ninth grade for the first time on or after July 1, 2010, except as provided in divisions (D) to (F) of this section, the requirements for graduation from every public and chartered nonpublic high school shall include twenty units that are designed to prepare students for the workforce and college. The units shall be distributed as follows:

- (1) English language arts, four units;
- (2) Health, one-half unit, which shall include instruction in nutrition and the benefits of nutritious foods and physical activity for overall health;
- (3) Mathematics, four units, which shall include one unit of algebra II or the equivalent of algebra II;
- (4) Physical education, one-half unit;



(5) Science, three units with inquiry-based laboratory experience that engages students in asking valid scientific questions and gathering and analyzing information, which shall include the following, or their equivalent:

(a) Physical sciences, one unit;

(b) Life sciences, one unit;

(c) Advanced study in one or more of the following sciences, one unit:

(i) Chemistry, physics, or other physical science;

(ii) Advanced biology or other life science;

(iii) Astronomy, physical geology, or other earth or space science.

(6) History and government, one unit, which shall comply with division (M) of this section and shall include both of the following:

(a) American history, one-half unit;

(b) American government, one-half unit.

(7) Social studies, two units.

Each school shall integrate the study of economics and financial literacy, as expressed in the social studies academic content standards adopted by the state board of education under division (A)(1) of section 3301.079 of the Revised Code and the academic content standards for financial literacy and entrepreneurship adopted under division (A)(2) of that section, into one or more existing social studies credits required under division (C)(7) of this section, or into the content of another class, so that every high school student receives instruction in those concepts. In developing the curriculum required by this paragraph, schools shall use available public-private partnerships and resources and



materials that exist in business, industry, and through the centers for economics education at institutions of higher education in the state.

Beginning with students who enter ninth grade for the first time on or after July 1, 2017, the two units of instruction prescribed by division (C)(7) of this section shall include at least one-half unit of instruction in the study of world history and civilizations.

(8) Five units consisting of one or any combination of foreign language, fine arts, business, career-technical education, family and consumer sciences, technology, agricultural education, a junior reserve officer training corps (JROTC) program approved by the congress of the United States under title 10 of the United States Code, or English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies courses not otherwise required under division (C) of this section.

Ohioans must be prepared to apply increased knowledge and skills in the workplace and to adapt their knowledge and skills quickly to meet the rapidly changing conditions of the twenty-first century. National studies indicate that all high school graduates need the same academic foundation, regardless of the opportunities they pursue after graduation. The goal of Ohio's system of elementary and secondary education is to prepare all students for and seamlessly connect all students to success in life beyond high school graduation, regardless of whether the next step is entering the workforce, beginning an apprenticeship, engaging in post-secondary training, serving in the military, or pursuing a college degree.

The requirements for graduation prescribed in division (C) of this section are the standard expectation for all students entering ninth grade for the first time at a public or chartered nonpublic high school on or after July 1, 2010. A student may satisfy this expectation through a variety of methods, including, but not limited to, integrated, applied, career-technical, and traditional coursework.

Whereas teacher quality is essential for student success when completing the requirements for graduation, the general assembly shall appropriate funds for strategic initiatives designed to strengthen schools' capacities to hire and retain highly qualified teachers in the subject areas required by the curriculum. Such initiatives are expected to require an investment of \$120,000,000 over five years.



Stronger coordination between high schools and institutions of higher education is necessary to prepare students for more challenging academic endeavors and to lessen the need for academic remediation in college, thereby reducing the costs of higher education for Ohio's students, families, and the state. The state board and the chancellor of the Ohio board of regents shall develop policies to ensure that only in rare instances will students who complete the requirements for graduation prescribed in division (C) of this section require academic remediation after high school.

School districts, community schools, and chartered nonpublic schools shall integrate technology into learning experiences across the curriculum in order to maximize efficiency, enhance learning, and prepare students for success in the technology-driven twenty-first century. Districts and schools shall use distance and web-based course delivery as a method of providing or augmenting all instruction required under this division, including laboratory experience in science. Districts and schools shall utilize technology access and electronic learning opportunities provided by the broadcast educational media commission, chancellor, the Ohio learning network, education technology centers, public television stations, and other public and private providers.

(D) Except as provided in division (E) of this section, a student who enters ninth grade on or after July 1, 2010, and before July 1, 2016, may qualify for graduation from a public or chartered nonpublic high school even though the student has not completed the requirements for graduation prescribed in division (C) of this section if all of the following conditions are satisfied:

(1) During the student's third year of attending high school, as determined by the school, the student and the student's parent, guardian, or custodian sign and file with the school a written statement asserting the parent's, guardian's, or custodian's consent to the student's graduating without completing the requirements for graduation prescribed in division (C) of this section and acknowledging that one consequence of not completing those requirements is ineligibility to enroll in most state universities in Ohio without further coursework.

(2) The student and parent, guardian, or custodian fulfill any procedural requirements the school stipulates to ensure the student's and parent's, guardian's, or custodian's informed consent and to facilitate orderly filing of statements under division (D)(1) of this section. Annually, each district or school shall notify the department of education of the number of students who choose to qualify for



graduation under division (D) of this section and the number of students who complete the student's success plan and graduate from high school.

(3) The student and the student's parent, guardian, or custodian and a representative of the student's high school jointly develop a student success plan for the student in the manner described in division (C)(1) of section 3313.6020 of the Revised Code that specifies the student matriculating to a two-year degree program, acquiring a business and industry-recognized credential, or entering an apprenticeship.

(4) The student's high school provides counseling and support for the student related to the plan developed under division (D)(3) of this section during the remainder of the student's high school experience.

(5)(a) Except as provided in division (D)(5)(b) of this section, the student successfully completes, at a minimum, the curriculum prescribed in division (B) of this section.

(b) Beginning with students who enter ninth grade for the first time on or after July 1, 2014, a student shall be required to complete successfully, at the minimum, the curriculum prescribed in division (B) of this section, except as follows:

(i) Mathematics, four units, one unit which shall be one of the following:

(I) Probability and statistics;

(II) Computer programming;

(III) Applied mathematics or quantitative reasoning;

(IV) Any other course approved by the department using standards established by the superintendent not later than October 1, 2014.

(ii) Elective units, five units;



(iii) Science, three units as prescribed by division (B) of this section which shall include inquiry-based laboratory experience that engages students in asking valid scientific questions and gathering and analyzing information.

The department, in collaboration with the chancellor, shall analyze student performance data to determine if there are mitigating factors that warrant extending the exception permitted by division (D) of this section to high school classes beyond those entering ninth grade before July 1, 2016. The department shall submit its findings and any recommendations not later than December 1, 2015, to the speaker and minority leader of the house of representatives, the president and minority leader of the senate, the chairpersons and ranking minority members of the standing committees of the house of representatives and the senate that consider education legislation, the state board of education, and the superintendent of public instruction.

(E) Each school district and chartered nonpublic school retains the authority to require an even more challenging minimum curriculum for high school graduation than specified in division (B) or (C) of this section. A school district board of education, through the adoption of a resolution, or the governing authority of a chartered nonpublic school may stipulate any of the following:

(1) A minimum high school curriculum that requires more than twenty units of academic credit to graduate;

(2) An exception to the district's or school's minimum high school curriculum that is comparable to the exception provided in division (D) of this section but with additional requirements, which may include a requirement that the student successfully complete more than the minimum curriculum prescribed in division (B) of this section;

(3) That no exception comparable to that provided in division (D) of this section is available.

(F) A student enrolled in a dropout prevention and recovery program, which program has received a waiver from the department, may qualify for graduation from high school by successfully completing a competency-based instructional program administered by the dropout prevention and recovery program in lieu of completing the requirements for graduation prescribed in division (C) of this section. The department shall grant a waiver to a dropout prevention and recovery program,



within sixty days after the program applies for the waiver, if the program meets all of the following conditions:

- (1) The program serves only students not younger than sixteen years of age and not older than twenty-one years of age.
- (2) The program enrolls students who, at the time of their initial enrollment, either, or both, are at least one grade level behind their cohort age groups or experience crises that significantly interfere with their academic progress such that they are prevented from continuing their traditional programs.
- (3) The program requires students to attain at least the applicable score designated for each of the assessments prescribed under division (B)(1) of section 3301.0710 of the Revised Code or, to the extent prescribed by rule of the state board under division (D)(5) of section 3301.0712 of the Revised Code, division (B)(2) of that section.
- (4) The program develops a student success plan for the student in the manner described in division (C)(1) of section 3313.6020 of the Revised Code that specifies the student's matriculating to a two-year degree program, acquiring a business and industry-recognized credential, or entering an apprenticeship.
- (5) The program provides counseling and support for the student related to the plan developed under division (F)(4) of this section during the remainder of the student's high school experience.
- (6) The program requires the student and the student's parent, guardian, or custodian to sign and file, in accordance with procedural requirements stipulated by the program, a written statement asserting the parent's, guardian's, or custodian's consent to the student's graduating without completing the requirements for graduation prescribed in division (C) of this section and acknowledging that one consequence of not completing those requirements is ineligibility to enroll in most state universities in Ohio without further coursework.
- (7) Prior to receiving the waiver, the program has submitted to the department an instructional plan that demonstrates how the academic content standards adopted by the state board under section



3301.079 of the Revised Code will be taught and assessed.

(8) Prior to receiving the waiver, the program has submitted to the department a policy on career advising that satisfies the requirements of section 3313.6020 of the Revised Code, with an emphasis on how every student will receive career advising.

(9) Prior to receiving the waiver, the program has submitted to the department a written agreement outlining the future cooperation between the program and any combination of local job training, postsecondary education, nonprofit, and health and social service organizations to provide services for students in the program and their families.

Divisions (F)(8) and (9) of this section apply only to waivers granted on or after July 1, 2015.

If the department does not act either to grant the waiver or to reject the program application for the waiver within sixty days as required under this section, the waiver shall be considered to be granted.

(G) Every high school may permit students below the ninth grade to take advanced work. If a high school so permits, it shall award high school credit for successful completion of the advanced work and shall count such advanced work toward the graduation requirements of division (B) or (C) of this section if the advanced work was both:

(1) Taught by a person who possesses a license or certificate issued under section 3301.071, 3319.22, or 3319.222 of the Revised Code that is valid for teaching high school;

(2) Designated by the board of education of the city, local, or exempted village school district, the board of the cooperative education school district, or the governing authority of the chartered nonpublic school as meeting the high school curriculum requirements.

Each high school shall record on the student's high school transcript all high school credit awarded under division (G) of this section. In addition, if the student completed a seventh- or eighth-grade fine arts course described in division (K) of this section and the course qualified for high school credit under that division, the high school shall record that course on the student's high school transcript.



(H) The department shall make its individual academic career plan available through its Ohio career information system web site for districts and schools to use as a tool for communicating with and providing guidance to students and families in selecting high school courses.

(I) Units earned in English language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies that are delivered through integrated academic and career-technical instruction are eligible to meet the graduation requirements of division (B) or (C) of this section.

(J) The state board, in consultation with the chancellor, shall adopt a statewide plan implementing methods for students to earn units of high school credit based on a demonstration of subject area competency, instead of or in combination with completing hours of classroom instruction. The state board shall adopt the plan not later than March 31, 2009, and commence phasing in the plan during the 2009-2010 school year. The plan shall include a standard method for recording demonstrated proficiency on high school transcripts. Each school district and community school shall comply with the state board's plan adopted under this division and award units of high school credit in accordance with the plan. The state board may adopt existing methods for earning high school credit based on a demonstration of subject area competency as necessary prior to the 2009-2010 school year.

(K) This division does not apply to students who qualify for graduation from high school under division (D) or (F) of this section, or to students pursuing a career-technical instructional track as determined by the school district board of education or the chartered nonpublic school's governing authority. Nevertheless, the general assembly encourages such students to consider enrolling in a fine arts course as an elective.

Beginning with students who enter ninth grade for the first time on or after July 1, 2010, each student enrolled in a public or chartered nonpublic high school shall complete two semesters or the equivalent of fine arts to graduate from high school. The coursework may be completed in any of grades seven to twelve. Each student who completes a fine arts course in grade seven or eight may elect to count that course toward the five units of electives required for graduation under division (C)(8) of this section, if the course satisfied the requirements of division (G) of this section. In that case, the high school shall award the student high school credit for the course and count the course toward the five units required under division (C)(8) of this section. If the course in grade seven or



eight did not satisfy the requirements of division (G) of this section, the high school shall not award the student high school credit for the course but shall count the course toward the two semesters or the equivalent of fine arts required by this division.

(L) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in this section, the board of education of each school district and the governing authority of each chartered nonpublic school may adopt a policy to excuse from the high school physical education requirement each student who, during high school, has participated in interscholastic athletics, marching band, or cheerleading for at least two full seasons or in the junior reserve officer training corps for at least two full school years. If the board or authority adopts such a policy, the board or authority shall not require the student to complete any physical education course as a condition to graduate. However, the student shall be required to complete one-half unit, consisting of at least sixty hours of instruction, in another course of study. In the case of a student who has participated in the junior reserve officer training corps for at least two full school years, credit received for that participation may be used to satisfy the requirement to complete one-half unit in another course of study.

(M) It is important that high school students learn and understand United States history and the governments of both the United States and the state of Ohio. Therefore, beginning with students who enter ninth grade for the first time on or after July 1, 2012, the study of American history and American government required by divisions (B)(6) and (C)(6) of this section shall include the study of all of the following documents:

- (1) The Declaration of Independence;
- (2) The Northwest Ordinance;
- (3) The Constitution of the United States with emphasis on the Bill of Rights;
- (4) The Ohio Constitution.

The study of each of the documents prescribed in divisions (M)(1) to (4) of this section shall include study of that document in its original context.



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The study of American history and government required by divisions (B)(6) and (C)(6) of this section shall include the historical evidence of the role of documents such as the Federalist Papers and the Anti-Federalist Papers to firmly establish the historical background leading to the establishment of the provisions of the Constitution and Bill of Rights.