

The Ohio Core

Purpose of the Ohio Core

The stated purposes of the Ohio Core are:

- To establish the Ohio Core as the standard expectation for all students graduating from high school;
- To prepare Ohioans to apply increased knowledge and skills to meet the demand of the 21st century;
- To prepare high school graduates to succeed in their post-secondary endeavors including entry-level jobs, apprenticeships, military service and college;
- To create stronger coordination between high schools and institutions of higher education in order to prepare students to take a more challenging curriculum; and
- To reduce remediation at the college level.

The requirements of the Core extend to students attending Ohio public and community schools. This outline and many other Core resources can be found online:

- <http://www.education.ohio.gov>, Keyword search: Ohio Core

Ohio Core Graduation Requirements

Beginning with students who enter ninth grade for the first time on or after July 1, 2010, the requirements for graduation from every public and chartered nonpublic high school shall include twenty units that are designed to prepare students for college and the workforce. The units shall be distributed as follows:

- English language arts, four units;
- Health, one-half unit;
- Mathematics, four units, which shall include one unit of algebra II or its equivalent;
- Physical education, one-half unit;
- 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:
 - Physical sciences, one unit.
 - Biology, one unit.
 - Advanced study in one or more of the following sciences, one unit:
 - Chemistry, physics, or other physical science;
 - Advanced biology or other life science;
 - Astronomy, physical geology, or other earth or space science.
- Social studies, three units, which shall include both of the following:
 - American history, one-half unit;
 - American government, one-half unit.
 - Each school shall integrate the content of economics and financial literacy, as expressed in the social studies academic content standards adopted by the State

Board of Education (SBOE), in a social studies or other course so that all students receive this instruction.

- One sequence or any combination of foreign language, fine arts, business, career-technical education, family and consumer sciences, technology, agricultural education, an approved Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program or English language arts, mathematics, science, or social studies courses not otherwise required, for a total of five units*.
 - Other electives may then apply, as determined by the district's policies.

Special Considerations

Fine Arts: the Core requires two semesters or the equivalent to be completed before graduation. The coursework can be completed in any of grades 7-12. Prior to grade nine, the coursework will count for high school credit only if the course satisfied the requirements for advanced work (i.e., [1] the class is taught by a teacher licensed or certified to teach high school; and [2] the local board of education designates the work as meeting the high school curriculum requirements). Otherwise, the course counts toward the two-semester requirement. Career-technical students are exempted from the fine arts requirement.

Physical Education: 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 an approved Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) program for two 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 60 hours of instruction, in another course of study.

More resources on the graduation requirements are available online:

- <http://www.education.ohio.gov>, Keyword search: Graduation Requirements

Honors Diploma

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) is prohibited from granting an Honors Diploma to any student not meeting the Core requirements. The SBOE has created rules for obtaining an Honors Diploma based upon exceeding the Core criteria. *All but one* of the following requirements must be fulfilled for an Honors Diploma:

- English language arts, four units;
- Health, one-half unit;
- Mathematics, four units, including one unit of Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II or its equivalent, and another higher level course or four-year sequence of courses that contain equivalent content;
- Physical education, one-half unit; (may be excused by local policy)
- Science, four units which shall include the following, or their equivalent:

* Prior law required only three units of mathematics and three units of science, permitting six electives. There were no foreign language requirements.

- Physical sciences, one unit.
- Chemistry, one unit.
- Advanced study in two or more of the following sciences, two units:
 - Chemistry, physics, or other physical science;
 - Advanced biology or other life science;
 - Astronomy, physical geology, or other earth or space science.
- Social studies, four units, which shall include both of the following:
 - American history, one-half unit;
 - American government, one-half unit;
- Foreign language, three units, two of which are in the same language;
- Fine arts, one unit;
- GPA of 3.5, or above, on a 4.0 scale
- Score of 27 on the ACT or a score of 1210 on the SAT

For more information on the Honors Diploma, visit ODE's website:

- <http://www.education.ohio.gov>, Keyword search: Honors Diploma

Alternative Graduation Requirements

The Core establishes alternative methods to earn a diploma without completing the Core curriculum through 2014. The requirements are as follows:

- The student must complete two years of high school and the student's parent must sign a statement consenting to the child's graduation without completing the CORE and acknowledging that the child may not be able to proceed directly to a four-year university.
- The student successfully completes, at a minimum, curriculum prescribed in current law.
- The student and parent, guardian, or custodian must fulfill any procedural requirements the school stipulates to ensure the student and parent, guardian, or custodian are informed of the informal consent process.
- The student, the parent and the high school must develop a career plan for the child.
- The student's high school must provide counseling and support for the student related to the plan.

Carnegie Unit Credit Flexibility

Developed in 1908, "Carnegie units" represent 120 hours of instruction, or the number of hours a student spent in a high school class (seat time). One hundred years later, the nation's school credit system is still largely dictated by the clock. While useful for management purposes, the value of seat time as an accurate measure of student learning is limited.

The Core directed the SBOE to adopt a plan that enables 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"(ORC§3313.603(J)). Credit flexibility is designed to allow students to shorten the time necessary to complete a high school diploma, broaden the scope of curricular options available to students, and increase the depth of study available for a particular subject.

In March 2009, the SBOE adopted a plan for credit flexibility that will move Ohio education away from industrial age notions of the production process towards a system of demonstrated proficiency. Local boards of education are required to adopt their own plan no later than the start of the 2010-11 school year. Local policies must provide for the following:

- Students may earn credits through:
 - The completion of courses;
 - Testing out or otherwise demonstrating mastery of the course content; or
 - Pursuit of one or more “educational options” (e.g., distance learning, educational travel, independent study, an internship, music, arts, after school program, community service or engagement project, and sports).
- Issuance of credit will be determined locally by teachers or through the use of a:
 - Multi-disciplinary team;
 - Professional panel from the community; or
 - State performance-based assessment.
- Schools and students who choose educational options style learning will pre-identify and agree on the learning outcomes.
- Credits earned through this alternative means will be reflected on students’ transcript in the same way as traditional credits earned via seat time.

The plan’s report outlines the roles for the state as well as other issues (data coding, attendance reporting, and funding). To find this report and other information, visit ODE’s website:

- <http://www.education.ohio.gov>, Keyword search: Credit Flexibility

Dropout Recovery Programs

Students attending Dropout Recovery Programs as defined by the statute may be exempt from the requirements of the Core if the program has received a waiver from ODE and meets the following conditions:

- The program offered by the school is a competency-based instructional program.
- The program serves only students not younger than 16 years of age and not older than 21 years of age.
- 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.
- The program requires students to attain at least the applicable score designated for each of the Ohio Graduation Tests.
- The program develops an individual career plan for the students.
- The program provides counseling and support for the student related to the plan.
- The program requires the student’s and parent’s informed consent to the student graduating without completing the Core.
- The program has submitted to ODE an instructional plan that demonstrates how the academic content standards will be assessed.

Opt Out Extension

The Opt Out provision can be extended beyond 2015 if, based on data, the Partnership for Continued Learning, in collaboration with ODE and the Ohio Board of Regents (OBR), determines there are mitigating circumstances to extend the provision. The group's finding must be presented to state policy makers by August 1, 2014. Additional legislation would be needed to extend the provision.

Readiness Assessment

The Core requires that students be assessed on their readiness to attend college or enter the workforce. In response, the Partnership for Continued Learning drafted recommendations in early 2008 that charge ODE to work with the OBR to:

- Develop multi-purpose assessment prototypes (including end-of-course exams).
 - Consult with a stakeholder panel
- Pilot two to three assessment methods for feasibility and review.
- Recommend a high school assessment system that:
 - Aligns with Ohio College Readiness Expectations in English and Mathematics;
 - Provides meaningful feedback to students;
 - Promotes a challenging high school curriculum;
 - Streamlines the assessment system.

These recommendations mirror the Governor's education reform plan which includes the ACT and end-of-course exams. ODE is also piloting performance assessments.

Dual Enrollment

The Core requires each public and nonpublic high school to provide students enrolled in grades 9-12 with the opportunity to participate in a dual enrollment program. Dual enrollment and accelerated learning are the major means for high school students to earn college credit, while attending high school.

- **Dual enrollment**
 - These options enable a student to earn both high school and college credit during high school as a result of participating in a college course offered at the high school, at a college or university, or via distance learning.
 - The significant feature is earning and the transcription of college credit while still in high school.
- **Accelerated learning**
 - These opportunities enable a student to complete coursework while enrolled in high school that may earn credit toward a degree from an institution of higher education upon the student's admittance to a college or university; and in some cases the college credit is based on the attainment of a specified score on an examination covering the coursework.
 - The significant feature is that the college credit is not earned until the student matriculates to college.

The law provides a legislative mandate that the Partnership for Continued Learning make policy recommendations for “increasing opportunities for students to earn credit toward a degree from an institution of higher education while enrolled in high school.” These suggestions include:

- Develop a statewide vision, goals, and communication plan;
- Add accelerated learning/dual enrollment “report only” indicators to report cards;
- Expand online college credit opportunities;
- Encourage regional efficiencies;
- Revise funding provisions for nonpublic students to maximize access; and
- Establish funding for a comprehensive Advanced Placement system.

Current *Dual Enrollment* Programs for High School Students

- **Early College High Schools**
 - Early College High Schools combine high school and the first several years of college. In grades 9 and 10, students take college-prep classes. In grades 11 and 12, students take college-level classes, earning both college and high school credit. Tuition at most Early College High Schools is free, which can lower the overall cost of a student’s college education.
 - <http://www.earlycolleges.org>
- **Early Entrance Programs**
 - Early Entrance Programs are college programs that enroll younger students. They usually do not ask for a high school diploma. Unlike the PSEO Program, many early entrance programs cost money. Their structure, admission requirements, costs, and scholarships offers vary.
 - <http://www.earlyentrance.org/Home>
- **Ohio College Tech Prep**
 - Ohio College Tech Prep blends college prep academics with technology education. In grades 11 and 12, students combine their high school studies with college equivalent courses. Programs are offered in career centers, high schools, and colleges throughout Ohio. Students can advance to two-year or four-year college programs after graduation and are prepared for jobs in high demand technical fields.
 - <http://www.techprepohio.org>
- **Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) Program**
 - Students take college classes at a local college or university for free. Students earn both high school and college credit. PSEO is available to students in grades 9-12 who meet GPA and testing criteria.
 - <http://education.ohio.gov>, Keyword search: PSEO
- **Seniors to Sophomores**
 - Seniors to Sophomores is a new dual enrollment opportunity. It allows qualified high school seniors to enroll full time on a University System of Ohio Campus and earn a year of college credit at no cost to the student. Seniors to Sophomores is distinct, although the two programs are similar, from the Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) Program.
 - <http://uso.edu/opportunities/seniors2soph/index.php>

Current Advanced Learning Programs for High School Students

- **Advanced Placement (AP) Program**
 - AP classes are college-level classes taken in high school. At the end of the course, students take an exam. If they receive a qualifying score, many colleges will offer them college credit or advanced placement.
 - <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html>
- **International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program**
 - IB is a challenging two-year program that leads to a special qualification when participants graduate from high school. Students in participating schools take IB coursework during grades 11 and 12, culminating in an exam. The IB Diploma Program focuses on international learning, service, creativity and critical thinking. While it does not provide a specific college credit, but it prepares students for college-level work.
 - <http://www.ibo.org/diploma>

Report Card Implications

Not later than June 30, 2012, the SBOE must select one or more methods of measuring high school graduates' preparedness for higher education and the workforce. The measures may include, but need not be limited to:

- Student performance on the college- and career-readiness assessments,
- The percentage of students who earn credit towards a degree from an institution of higher education while enrolled in high school, or
- The percentage of students who take remedial coursework upon enrollment in an institution of higher education.

The SBOE is required to include the school district's or school building's performance on each applicable measure on the Local Report Card (LRC) beginning with the LRC issued for the 2012-2013 school year.

Annual Report on Teacher Preparation Institutions

The SBOE, in collaboration with the OBR, is required to issue an annual report on the quality of institutions approved for the preparation of teachers. The report includes:

- Identification of best practices in the preparation of teachers drawn from research conducted by the teacher quality partnership;
- A plan for implementing best practices in approved teacher preparation institutions;
- The number of graduates of approved teacher preparation institutions who graduated with a subject area specialty and teach grades seven through twelve;
- A plan to be implemented by the teacher preparation program for increasing the number of classroom teachers in science, mathematics and foreign language.

For more information and to view the reports, visit ODE's website:

- <http://www.education.ohio.gov>, Keyword search: Teacher Preparation

College Remediation

The Core establishes a disincentive funding calculation for state subsidies for remedial courses offered by four-year state institutions of higher learning on their main campuses. Under the provisions, the OBR is required to reduce the amount of subsidy it extends to four-year degree granting institutions for remedial courses.

Exceptions are provided for Central State University, Shawnee State University and Youngstown State University due to geographic location.

College Admission Requirements

Beginning with the 2014-15 academic year, each state university (excluding Central State University, Shawnee State University and Youngstown State University) will only admit Ohio students if they have completed the Ohio Core curriculum. A student will be exempted from this requirement if one of the following applies:

- The student has earned at least ten semester hours, or the equivalent, at a post-secondary institution except a state university.
- The student met the high school graduation requirements by successfully completing an individualized education program.
- The person is receiving or has completed the final year of instruction at home as or has graduated from a non-chartered, nonpublic school in Ohio, and demonstrates mastery of the academic content and skills in reading, writing, and mathematics.
- The person is a high school student participating in the post-secondary enrollment options program or another dual enrollment program.
- The student graduated from high school in another state and has completed a curriculum equal to the Ohio Core, or has demonstrated mastery of the academic content, or is seeking admittance to the university as an international student.
- The student did not graduate from high school, but has completed a GED and demonstrated mastery of the academic content. More than twelve months must have elapsed since the student attended high school.
- Any student demonstrating mastery of some, but not all, academic content of the Ohio Core may be admitted on a case by case basis at the discretion of the university, so long as the university develops and implements a remediation plan for the students designed to achieve mastery of all academic content of the Ohio Core.

Use of Technology

School districts, community schools and chartered nonpublic schools shall integrate technology into learning experiences whenever practicable 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 may 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 whenever practicable, utilize technology access and electronic learning opportunities provided by the eTech Ohio Commission, the Ohio Learning Network, education technology centers, public television stations, and other public and private providers.

Transfer and Articulation

The Core requires a collaboration between ODE and OBR to propose a standard method and form for documenting credits earned on high school transcripts that are compatible with the standards used by OBR.

The first phase of the project, completed in April 2009, was to agree upon data elements that would become a part of a common transcript. Those data elements identified as critical were:

- Student Information;
- District/Building Information;
- Course Information;
- GPA/Class Rank Information;
- Attendance data;
- Assessment data;
- Credit Summary; and
- Transcript information validation.

A second work group will be assigned to: [1] assure that definitions are consistent, [2] determine how student identifier data elements should be implemented, and [3] determine which items should be mandatory or optional.

Additional information will be included with the transcript in some other form. This data is commonly used in determining scholarships, financial aid, and placement in honors programs. Extra elements include:

- Student honors and awards
- Extra curricular activities and community service
- Profile that describes the school/community and explains specific school district policies

Once the technical framework has been developed and the common data elements are incorporated into that framework, a pilot will be conducted. This pilot will likely occur during the 2010-2011 school year, using selected schools and universities. Initially this project involves only Ohio's system of state universities, but it can be adopted by both private colleges and out-of-state institutions. The goal is that this process will be available for all schools in Ohio to submit data to all state universities (including four year institutions, regional campuses and state community colleges) by the 2011-2012 school year.

Parental Involvement Policies

The SBOE, in consultation with the National Center for Parents at the University of Toledo, developed recommendations to enhance local policies on parental involvement. These recommendations form a model parent and family involvement policy that will help districts meet and exceed new legal requirements. The recommendations cover three areas: Parent and family involvement in education, schools, and the program implementation.

A copy of the report and a full list of policy recommendations can be found on ODE's website:

- <http://www.education.ohio.gov>, Keyword search: Parent and Family Involvement

Foreign Language Advisory Council

The Core requires the SBOE – in consultation with the OBR and the Partnership for Continued Learning – to create the Foreign Language Advisory Council (FLAC). This council proposed a statewide foreign language education implementation plan and recommendations for legislation to implement the plan by the 2014-15 school year. The completed FLAC report contains the following recommendations:

- Require all students to take a world language as part of the Ohio Core during high school or before.
- Award world language credit based on demonstration of proficiency.
- Increase the number and capacity of language teachers.
- Build capacity in languages critical for economic and strategic importance.
- Provide access to a sequence of world language instruction across grades PreK-16, so that instruction at each level builds upon the proficiency that students have attained at an earlier level.
- Use e-learning as a model for instructional delivery.

Public-Private Collaborative Commission

The Core establishes a public-private collaborative consisting of top public and private officials in Ohio. This collaborative is charged with creating recommendations for methods of encouraging students and their families to develop a greater vision for their successful future in Ohio. Released in August 2008, the collaborative has provided ten recommendations:

- Promote the development of local or regional public-private partnerships and charge them with birth-to-career education planning.
- Design and implement a public education campaign to show families and civic leaders the importance of postsecondary education.
- Expand students' access to high-quality, out-of-school learning opportunities that address both academic needs and nonacademic barriers to learning success.
- Eliminate the gaps between P-12 and postsecondary expectations, accelerating learning whenever possible. Ensure that students who master the Ohio Core Curriculum have the knowledge and skills needed for college and the workplace, without remediation.
- Expand students' access to work- and career-based learning experiences (including but not limited to internships, mentoring, youth apprenticeships and co-ops).
- Make student dropout prevention a priority statewide, beginning in the early grades.
- Develop and implement a state-level and community-wide intervention plan that focuses community resources and efforts at the key points where and when students fall off the path to high school graduation.
- Support communities' efforts to eliminate dropping out as an option for students through P-16 councils or other community-based, public-private partnerships.
- Build school leaders' skills for engaging communities and working collaboratively with families, community leaders and organizations, employers, and other stakeholders.
- Secure resources for the use of school-family-community coordinators, ensuring they have the competencies needed for the dimensions of P-16 improvement planning.