



Ohio Revised Code

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

Effective: October 09, 2026

Legislation: House Bill 455 - 136th General Assembly

(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, or one unit of advanced computer science as described in the standards adopted pursuant to division (A)(4) of section 3301.079 of the Revised Code. However, students who enter ninth grade for the first time on or after July 1, 2015, and who are pursuing a career-technical instructional track shall not be required to take algebra II or advanced computer science, and instead may complete a career-based pathway mathematics course approved by the department of education and workforce as an alternative.

For students who choose to take advanced computer science in lieu of algebra II under division (C)(3) of this section, the school shall communicate to those students that some institutions of higher education may require algebra II for the purpose of college admission. Also, the parent, guardian, or legal custodian of each student who chooses to take advanced computer science in lieu of algebra II shall sign and submit to the school a document containing a statement acknowledging that not taking algebra II may have an adverse effect on college admission decisions.

A student may fulfill one unit of mathematics under division (C)(3) of this section by completing one-half unit of financial literacy instruction to satisfy the requirement prescribed under division (C)(9) of this section and one-half unit of a mathematics course. The one-half unit course in mathematics shall not be in algebra II, or its equivalent, or a course for which the department requires an end-of-course examination under section 3301.0712 of the Revised Code.



Students who choose to take one unit of advanced computer science in lieu of algebra II, as described in division (C)(3) of this section, shall not be permitted to complete one-half unit of financial literacy instruction to satisfy the mathematics unit requirements of that division. Instead, those students shall be required to complete the one-half unit of financial literacy instruction under division (C)(8) of this section.

(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;

(iv) Computer science.

No student shall substitute a computer science course for a life sciences or biology course under division (C)(5) of this section.

(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 (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 which may include computer science, 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.

One-half unit of instruction under division (C)(8) of this section may be instruction in financial literacy to satisfy the requirement under division (C)(9) of this section.

(9)(a) Except as provided in division (C)(9)(b) of this section, for students who enter ninth grade for the first time on or after July 1, 2022, financial literacy, one-half unit. Each student shall elect to complete the one-half unit of instruction in financial literacy either in lieu of one-half unit of instruction in mathematics under division (C)(3) of this section or an elective under division (C)(8) of this section. A student may fulfill the financial literacy instruction requirement under division (C)(9) of this section through the successful completion of an advanced placement course in microeconomics or macroeconomics.

(b) A student attending a nonpublic school accredited through the independent schools association of the central states or any other chartered nonpublic school shall not be required to complete the one-half unit of financial literacy instruction prescribed in division (C)(9)(a) of this section, unless that student is attending the school under a state scholarship program as defined in section 3301.0711 of the Revised Code.

The study and instruction of financial literacy required under division (C)(9) of this section shall align with the academic content standards for financial literacy and entrepreneurship adopted under division (A)(2) of section 3301.079 of the Revised Code. The instruction provided under an advanced placement course in microeconomics or macroeconomics shall be considered to be aligned with those academic content standards. In developing the curriculum for the study and instruction of financial literacy, schools may 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.

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.

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 department and the chancellor of higher education 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 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 science;

(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.

(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.

If a school district or chartered nonpublic school requires a foreign language as an additional graduation requirement under division (E) of this section, a student may apply one unit of instruction in computer coding to satisfy one unit of foreign language. If a student applies more than one computer coding course to satisfy the foreign language requirement, the courses shall be sequential and progressively more difficult.

(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 or, to the extent prescribed by rule of the department under division (D)(5) of section 3301.0712 of the Revised Code, under 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 department 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) A school district or chartered nonpublic school may integrate academic content in a subject area for which the department has adopted standards under section 3301.079 of the Revised Code into a course in a different subject area, including a career-technical education course, in accordance with guidance for integrated coursework developed by the department. Upon successful completion of an integrated course, a student may receive credit for both subject areas that were integrated into the course. Units earned for subject area content delivered through integrated academic and career-technical instruction are eligible to meet the graduation requirements of division (B) or (C) of this section.

For purposes of meeting graduation requirements, if an end-of-course examination has been prescribed under section 3301.0712 of the Revised Code for the subject area delivered through integrated instruction, the school district or school may administer the related subject area examinations upon the student's completion of the integrated course.

Nothing in division (I) of this section shall be construed to excuse any school district, chartered nonpublic school, or student from any requirement in the Revised Code related to curriculum, assessments, or the awarding of a high school diploma.

(J)(1) The department, 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 plan shall include a standard method for recording demonstrated proficiency on high school transcripts. Each school district and community school shall comply with the department's plan adopted under this division and award units of high school credit in accordance with the plan. The department 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.

(2) The department shall update the statewide plan adopted pursuant to division (J)(1) of this section to also include methods for students enrolled in seventh and eighth grade to meet curriculum requirements based on a demonstration of subject area competency, instead of or in combination with completing hours of classroom instruction. Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, each school district and community school also shall comply with the updated plan adopted pursuant to this division and permit students enrolled in seventh and eighth grade to meet curriculum requirements based on subject area competency in accordance with the plan.

(3) The department shall develop a framework for school districts and community schools to use in granting units of high school credit to students who demonstrate subject area



competency through work-based learning experiences, internships, or cooperative education. Beginning with the 2018-2019 school year, each district and community school shall comply with the framework. Each district and community school also shall review any policy it has adopted regarding the demonstration of subject area competency to identify ways to incorporate work-based learning experiences, internships, and cooperative education into the policy in order to increase student engagement and opportunities to earn units of high school credit.

(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, show choir, 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.

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.

(N) A student may apply one unit of instruction in computer science to satisfy one unit of mathematics or one unit of science under division (C) of this section as the student chooses, regardless of the field of certification of the teacher who teaches the course, so long as that teacher meets the licensure requirements prescribed by section 3319.236 of the Revised Code and, prior to teaching the course, completes a professional development program determined to be appropriate by the district board.

If a student applies more than one computer science course to satisfy curriculum requirements under that division, the courses shall be sequential and progressively more difficult or cover different subject areas within computer science.

(O) 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 financial literacy instruction requirement under division (C)(9) of this section each student who, during high school, participates in a financial literacy program offered through a student branch, as defined in section 1733.04 of the Revised Code, or by a bank, as defined in section 1101.01 of the Revised Code. The policy shall require the financial literacy program to meet or exceed the academic content standards and model curriculum for financial literacy and entrepreneurship instruction adopted under section 3301.079 of the Revised Code. The policy shall require a student to participate in the program for the equivalent of at least one-half unit of instruction to qualify for an exemption under this division.



Not later than July 1, 2026, the department shall develop and post on its web site a model policy and guidelines for districts and schools to use in developing a policy under this division.
