



## NJDOE News

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### State Board of Education Adopts Revised High School Graduation Requirements and Revised Curriculum Standards in Six Content Areas

The State Board of Education today adopted revised high school graduation requirements, culminating a three-year effort to ensure that a New Jersey high school diploma reflects a level of student achievement that will lead to a successful future.

In related action, the board also adopted revised Core Curriculum Content Standards in six areas, assuring that the knowledge and skills students obtain in high school will prepare them for college or the workplace.

Together, the revised graduation requirements and revised content standards lay the cornerstone in the foundation for a planned re-design of New Jersey's high schools to reflect new demands and expectations from employers and the higher education community.

"I congratulate our state board members for taking action today to assure a bright and prosperous future for our children and our state's economy," said Governor Jon S. Corzine. "Last year, the High School Redesign Steering Committee made it clear through its recommendations that we must break from the traditional high school structure so that our children can meet the new challenges of a changing world.

"Since that time, Commissioner Davy and her staff have launched a comprehensive, multi-faceted effort, forging partnerships with leaders in New Jersey and other states to translate the vision of a 21st century education to reality," Governor Corzine continued. "Today, we are closer than ever in reaching this critical goal."

Governor Corzine appointed the New Jersey High School Redesign Steering Committee in 2006, shortly after he assumed office. He has consistently supported the state's efforts to participate in multi-state efforts, such as the American Diploma Project and the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, and has been involved in their work.

"We have waited for this day with much excitement and anticipation," said Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy. "The daunting idea of transforming our high schools to meet the demands of the 21st century has been the subject of a thorough, open process that has taken place over many months.

"Through extensive research and many discussions, we have continuously worked with the state's education community, business community and parents to build a strong consensus without detracting from or diluting our goals. The result is that everyone who contributed to this statewide conversation has brought added value to the state-endorsed high school diploma," the Commissioner said. "Together, we have raised the rigor of the high school experience to ensure that as the world and its demands change, so will the preparation of New Jersey's students. Our students will be better prepared for college, careers and citizenship in the 21st century."

#### **REVISED GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

The new high school graduation requirements include a total of 120 credits and the infusion of 21st century skills across all content areas. New course requirements will be phased in as follows:

- Three years of mathematics, including algebra I, effective with the 2008-09 ninth-grade class; geometry, beginning with the 2010-11 ninth grade class; and a third year of math that builds upon these two courses, beginning with incoming freshmen in 2012-13;
- Three years of lab science, including biology, effective with the 2008-09 ninth grade class; a choice among chemistry, physics or environmental science, beginning with incoming freshmen in 2010-11; and a third inquiry-based lab or technical science, beginning with incoming freshmen in 2012-13; and
- One half-year of economics and financial literacy, beginning with incoming freshmen in 2010-11.

## ***REVISED CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS***

The revised Core Curriculum Content Standards for students in grades K-12 are in the following six areas: science, visual and performing arts, comprehensive health and physical education, technology, 21st century life and careers and world languages. The content standards serve as the state's academic standards and are automatically reviewed every five years.

They also serve as the standard for measuring student achievement to determine whether individual schools and school districts are making adequate yearly progress under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Local curricula must be aligned to the revised content standards in these six areas by September 1, 2012. Curricula must be aligned to previously approved K-12 content standards in science by September 1, 2011.

In addition to the six content areas, the State Board of Education has directed that revised Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards of Quality for all six content areas immediately serve as standards of quality for public school preschool students and programs in New Jersey. The preschool standards replace the former Preschool Teaching and Learning Expectations: Standards of Quality and for the first time are directly aligned with the revised K-12 content standards.

The Department of Education is expected to propose revisions to the standards for language arts, mathematics and social studies later this year.

## ***ASSESSMENT / PERSONALIZED STUDENT LEARNING PLANS***

Changes to the state assessment schedule and the current initiative to pilot personalized student learning plans are topics tied closely to the graduation requirements and content standards.

Since research by New Jersey and other states revealed that it has become increasingly difficult to measure adequately students' preparedness for college and careers at one specific grade level, the state is moving away from general, grade-level exams, to more specific end-of-course content exams. An end-of-course exam in biology already has replaced a state-level high school science exam in New Jersey.

Pilot end-of-course exams for Algebra I and Algebra II were administered this spring part of the development of official exams that will replace the current high school assessment in mathematics. Other high school level end-of-course exams are expected to be developed in the years to come.

Personalized Student Learning Plans (PSLPs), a component of New Jersey's plan to transform its secondary schools, will use adult mentors, including parents, teachers and counselors, to help students recognize and achieve their education goals. Commissioner Davy last week announced that 6 middle schools and 10 high schools will pilot the plans at the 6th- and 9th- grade levels for a two-year period, beginning in 2009-10.

After reviewing the results of the pilot programs, the Department of Education will then decide whether to expand the concept to all students in grades 6 through 12. The pilot will allow the state to identify sample formats for PSLPs and the process to guide their implementation.