

Chapter 36: Curriculum

Rule 36.7 Early Graduation Policy. The purpose of the early graduation policy is to provide guidance to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with early graduation opportunities. Early graduation is defined for this policy as successful completion of all existing standards required by both state and respective districts prior to completing eight (8) semesters of high school work from the start of grade 9.

1. Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, any LEA that provides an early graduation opportunity shall implement a policy that has been adopted by the local school board and includes rules, regulations, and processes. The policy shall be available to faculty, students, and parents/guardians. At a minimum, LEAs shall address the following areas in the policy:
 - i. The desire to better tailor the educational system to students' needs is the motivation behind allowing early graduation from high school.
 - ii. There are students who are prepared to enter the workforce or begin college when they are 17 years old; however, this may not apply to all students.
 - a. Preparedness for post-secondary endeavors shall be taken into account when discussing the option of early graduation with students. The drawbacks to accelerating high school may not reveal themselves until a student enters college or the workforce.
 - b. LEAs shall establish an application process that articulates the student's post-secondary plan and is placed in the student's cumulative folder.
 - c. The completed application shall require parental or guardian consent for students under the age of 18.
 - iii. A student shall acquire, at a minimum, the required number of Carnegie units and other existing standards for a traditional diploma. Additionally, the student must have documented evidence in their Individual Success Plan (ISP) of actively working toward one of the state-recognized diploma endorsements (Career and Technical Education (CTE), JROTC, Academic or Distinguished Academic) unless one of the following exceptions applies:
 - a. A non-Senior who will turn 18 on or before December 1st of the current academic school year.
 - b. A student who has been retained in one or more grades.
 - c. A student with a hardship situation (child, family, health, etc.).
 - iv. A student's application to graduate early shall be approved by the school counselor and the local high school principal.
 - v. A student's application to graduate more than one semester early shall be submitted prior to the end of the first semester of the student's junior year. Applications submitted after this priority deadline may be reviewed and approved at the discretion of the local school district, in accordance with district policies and procedures. The students applying for this option shall have completed at least one of the following:
 - a. Met National Benchmarks for ACT College and Career Readiness Standards for English/Reading and Math

- b. Scored Silver or Higher on ACT WorkKeys
 - c. Earned a CTE national certification
 - d. Earned at least nine (9) hours of academic or CTE dual credit
 - e. Passed all End-of-Course Assessments needed to meet graduation requirements
 - f. Completed a one Carnegie unit credit-bearing work-based learning class or a similar 140-hour work-based learning experience in industry that could provide sustainable employment leading to a family-sustaining wage.
 - vi. A student's application may be terminated by the local school and/or district at any time due to academic, behavioral, or attendance issues.
2. Early graduates should be reported to MSIS upon exit using the appropriate withdrawal code of 01921 (Graduated with a regular, advanced, International Baccalaureate, or other type of diploma) and the associated date. Final grades should be reported at the time of exit.