High School Proficiency Based Graduation

The requirements for a Cumberland High School Diploma will be set by the School Committee and published annually in the High School’s Program of Studies and/or Student Handbook. Such requirements will be consistent with Rhode Island Board of Regents (BoR) Regulations. Diploma requirements will be developed for all specific statutory requirements otherwise set forth in the Rhode Island General Laws, such as, specific requirements for Rhode Island history, health, and physical education. Only students who demonstrate fulfillment of these graduation requirements and proficiencies shall participate in the graduation ceremony and receive a diploma.

I. Requirements

The requirements for a Cumberland High School Diploma will include:

A. Successful completion of the minimum required coursework credits, both in total and for specific subjects. Fourteen of the required credits will be represented by four academic credits of English Language Arts, four academic credits of mathematics, three academic credits of science and three academic credits of history/social studies. Specific courses required for graduation in each content area will be listed in the Program of Studies.

Coursework Credits Requirements for the class of 2013, 2014, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical Education/Health</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
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</table>

A minimum of 21 credits is required to graduate.

Coursework Credits Requirements for the class of 2016 and beyond

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education/Health</td>
<td>2.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>World Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
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</table>

A minimum of 24 credits is required to graduate.
B. Successful completions of Comprehensive Course Assessments designed to measure student skill and ability within a content area.

C. Achieve proficiency or better on a Graduation Portfolio presentation including a collection of performance assessments that documents a student’s academic performance over time and demonstrates deep content knowledge and applied learning skills.

D. Achieve proficiency or better on a minimum fifteen (15) hour community service activity demonstrating one or more of the school’s identified expectations for learning.

E. Successful completion of state assessments according to a timetable determined by the BoR. Students will be required to reach a minimum achievement level of proficiency on the state assessments or assessments in content areas designated by the BoR.

F. Successful participation in the PSAT in both the sophomore and junior year.

G. Successful completion of an application to at least one post-secondary degree program, career certificate program, apprentice program, and/or military program; completion of the common application and the application for federal student aid. Parents may opt out of completing the application for federal student aid only.

H. Successful completion of all interim assessments required by CHS including but not limited to: RIDE Interim Assessments, Star Assessments, Stanford Reading Diagnostic, and the District Technology Assessment.

I. All requirements for graduation with regard to subparagraphs A through H above shall be set by the School Committee and published in the Program of Studies and/or Student Handbook.

J. Each student, beginning no later than entry into sixth grade, will create an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) with assistance from the Guidance Department, parents and community contacts. The ILP will be actively used by educators, students, and families to guide and monitor student progress along individual pathways toward proficiency for graduation and postsecondary plans.
II. Definition of Proficiency

Proficiency is assessed through multiple measures at Cumberland High School. Proficiency is a measure of a student’s knowledge and skill demonstrated in a consistent manner across multiple disciplines in various settings over time. Beginning with the Class of 2014, a composite measure of a student’s overall proficiency shall be derived from a conjunctive review of three sources of evidence: (a) individual student results on state assessments in content areas designated by the Board of Regents, (b) successful course completion; and (c) Cumberland’s performance-based diploma assessments set forth in Section I above. These three areas are non-compensatory - meaning that low performance in one of the three areas cannot be offset automatically by high performance in one or both of the other areas.

III. Role of State Assessments

State assessments are given to high school students according to a timetable determined by the BoR. If a student does not meet the minimum achievement level necessary in an area of study subject to assessments designated by the BoR, the student shall be required to retake the state assessment. If after retaking the state assessment, the student does not meet the required level of achievement or make progress toward proficiency, the student may demonstrate graduation readiness through successful completion of a Regents-approved alternative assessment. If a student is unable to demonstrate graduation readiness through the state assessment or testing alternative, the student, in rare cases, may apply for a waiver of the state assessment portion of the graduation requirements. (See Section VII.)

Students may substitute scores from approved tests once they have taken the NECAP two times. The intent of the testing alternatives is to allow students the opportunity to provide evidence from an external, standardized assessment that they have met or exceeded the assessment expectation required to earn a high school diploma. RIDE will publish the list of alternative tests annually.

IV. Progress Plans

Students failing to reach the minimum level of achievement on state assessments on the initial administration as established by the BoR shall be provided a Progress Plan. Progress Plans will include the types and durations of academic and educational supports and academic performance targets necessary for graduation.

V. Progress Toward Proficiency

Progress Toward Proficiency is defined as meaningful, quantifiable improvement of academic skills in those areas in which a student has academic gaps, as evidenced by state assessments (i.e., content areas in which a student has not met the minimum level of required achievement). The Board of Regents has established that meaningful, quantifiable progress is demonstrated by improvement that is statistically significant between the first and subsequent administrations of the state assessment. Therefore, a
student who earns a scaled score on subsequent administrations of the state assessment that reaches or exceeds the threshold for statistical significance based on his or her score on the initial administration will meet the state-assessment requirement for graduation. The Board of Regents will publish the scores needed to meet the *Progress toward Proficiency* standard on the State Assessments required for graduation.

**VI: English Language Learner (ELL) Limited Exemption**

According to RI Secondary Regulations (L-6-3-3.8e), ELLs who are not classified as having Limited Formal Schooling (LFS) or as Students with Interrupted Formal Schooling (SIFE) and who have been attending RI Public Schools for less than 4 years and who have low levels of English proficiency as demonstrated on the WAPT or ACCESS will not be held to using the state assessment as a graduation requirement. The Commissioner shall identify an alternative assessment or assessments appropriate to determine the academic proficiency for graduation purposes of English Language Learners that meet the above conditions.

**VII: Waivers**

Waivers may be granted in *rare* cases in which the state assessment is not a valid means of determining the proficiency of individual students. Waiver eligibility will be considered only for those students for whom: (1) there is a preponderance of evidence of academic content mastery consistent with BoR regulations and (2) the student has completed the sequence of testing requirements set forth in this section. This will not be construed as waiving any course requirements for graduation as coursework subsumes proficiencies beyond those measured by state assessments. State assessment results will be included on each student’s permanent high school transcript. The waiver is not an option for those students who have not completed the assessment sequence described in the Regulations.

**VIII. Diploma Commendations and Certificates**

Cumberland will recognize students who achieve at above the minimum achievement level through state assessments, course work and performance-based assessments. Cumberland shall establish the minimum criteria necessary to earn a Regent’s commendation (i.e. Latin System). These requirements will be published annually in the Program of Studies and/or Student/Parent Handbook.

Cumberland may award industry recognized certificates of academic and technical skill achievement and work readiness and life skills to any student who has satisfactorily completed specific course work or other standards-based activities that indicate a recognized level of knowledge and/or skills. Certificates may be included as part of a student’s transition plan to post-secondary academic or work training programs.
IX. Rhode Island Alternate Assessment (RIAA)

RIAA eligible students will be measured based on alternate academic achievement standards. Beginning with the 2014 graduating class, the RIAA cannot be used to meet the state assessment requirement for receiving a diploma since the RIAA is based on alternate grade level and grade span expectations. (Guidance for 2011 Secondary Regulations, L-6-3.3)

X. RIAA Certificates

A parent or guardian of a student with an IEP may request that the student participate in graduation ceremonies and receive a Certificate of Individual Achievement. The Certificate of Individual Achievement can only be granted if the following requirements are met:

A. The student has an active Individualized Education Program (IEP) and is eligible for the RI Alternative Assessment, and;
B. The student will have completed four (4) years of high school and wishes to participate in a graduation ceremony.

The receipt of a Certificate of Individual Achievement will not affect a student’s right to receive Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) until the age of 21.

XI. Supports and Accommodations to Students

A. Students with disabilities and students who are English language learners are expected to present evidence of successful completion of proficiency-based graduation requirements in order to be eligible for a diploma. Students with disabilities have the right under federal law to continue working toward successful completion of the proficiency-based graduation requirements until the age of 21.

B. Cumberland will provide all students access to a guaranteed and viable curriculum, monitoring each student’s progress toward literacy and numeracy, and providing sufficient supports including a Scaffolded Literacy System for all students. A state aligned computerized testing system will be utilized to screen and diagnose learning achievement and readiness issues. Results of these assessments may result in changes to student course requests and program placement. Students reading one to two years below grade level must receive targeted intervention that includes the development, implementation, and progress monitoring of a Personal Literacy Plan (PLP). Students who have substantial reading difficulties (reading more than two years below grade level) must receive intensive literacy instruction from a reading specialist.
C. Identified English language learners (who have been served by Rhode Island public schools for less than three full years) may participate in an age-appropriate commencement ceremony, whether or not they are receiving a diploma at that time.

D. Students will be provided with the requisite supports designed to offer meaningful opportunities, including alternate pathways, to complete the proficiency requirements for their diploma.

E. The Middle School and High School shall implement strategies for creating more personalized learning environments, including the provision of a structure by which every student is assigned a responsible adult, in addition to a school counselor.

XII. Communication to Parents and Students
Adequate notice of graduation requirements will be provided to each member of each class and their family upon their entry to middle school and again upon their entry to high school. Students will be screened and diagnostically assessed to determine their literacy and numeracy needs. Appropriate instructional interventions will be provided, and students with identified literacy and/or numeracy needs will continue to have their progress monitored.

XIII. Transfer Students
It is recognized that students entering the school system close to graduation may have difficulty completing graduation requirements, particularly if they transfer from a school with substantially different requirements. Consequently, the following process will be used for transferring students.

A. Students entering Cumberland High School requiring two or more years of work necessary prior to graduation (typically before the start of the junior year) will meet all requirements in order to receive a Cumberland High School diploma.

B. Students entering Cumberland High School with less than two years of work necessary prior to graduation (typically after the start of the junior year) from a Rhode Island high school with a graduation system approved by the Rhode Island Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education may use the requirements of their prior school. In addition, other independent activities or assessments may be included with the requirements of Cumberland High School to meet proficiency standards, subject to the supervision and standards of the High School Appeal Review Board. The student shall meet all other graduation requirements as determined by the High School Appeal Review Board.
C. Students entering Cumberland High School with less than two years of work necessary prior to graduation (typically after the start of the junior year) from any high school not covered in letter (B.) shall meet all requirements in order to receive a Cumberland High School diploma.

D. Individual cases not addressed by this policy may be addressed based on the recommendation of the High School Appeal Review Board and subject to the approval of the High School Principal.

XIV. Process of Appeal
Any student who believes that he/she has been improperly denied a diploma may utilize the school system’s appeal procedure through administrative steps as outlined in the student handbook to the High School Appeal Review Board then to the Principal, Assistant Superintendent, Superintendent, School Committee, and Commissioner of Education. This process shall be communicated annually to students and families.

When a student reaches the age of 18, that adult student is presumed under RI law to be capable of making his or her own educational decisions including students with disabilities. This means that the student has full access to the school record and makes the final decision in all matters related to their education including the contents of the Individualized Education Plan.

Reviewed and Approved by Policy & Procedures Sub-Committee: 5/21/13
1st Reading and Amended by Cumberland School Committee: 5/23/13
Reviewed and Approved by Policy & Procedures Sub-Committee: 2nd Reading and Approved by Cumberland School Committee: