




STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P.O. BOX 2360
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

September 20, 2011

TO: The Honorable Cheryl Kauhane Lupenui, Chairperson
Student Achievement Committee

FROM: 
Kathryn S. Matayoshi, Superintendent

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATION FOR BOARD ACTION ON PROPOSED
AMENDMENTS TO BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY 4540 "HIGH
SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS AND COMMENCEMENT
POLICY"

1. **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board of Education (Board) approve the proposed amendments to Board Policy 4540, "High School Graduation Requirements and Commencement Policy" as specified in Attachment A.

2. **RECOMMENDED EFFECTIVE DATE**

Upon Board approval.

3. **RECOMMENDED COMPLIANCE DATE**

Upon Board approval.

4. **DISCUSSION**

a) Conditions Leading to the Recommendation

The recommendation aligns to Hawaii State Department of Education (DOE) Strategic Plan Goal 1, "Assure All Students Graduate College- and Career-Ready Through Effective Use of Standards-Based Education." It also supports the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English Language Arts and Math, these standards are:

- aligned with college and work expectations,
- include rigorous content and application of knowledge through higher-order skills;
- built upon strengths and lessons of current state standards;
- informed by top-performing countries, so that all students are prepared to succeed in our global economy and society; and
- evidence- and/or research-based.

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The transformation of Hawaii's educational system requires a significant strategic shift in approach to ensure that each student graduates college- and career-ready. The implementation of the CCSS requires these major shifts from:

- credits and seat time to the students' demonstration of proficiency;
- a focus on teaching to a focus on teaching and learning;
- discrete content to the integration of content; and
- retention and recall to rigorous analysis, synthesis, and innovation.

Therefore, the Hawaii High School Diploma sets the expectation for each and every student's performance of proficiency as aligned to CCSS English language arts and mathematics, and the next generation standards being developed for science and social studies. The CCSS outline the rigorous proficiencies that students must demonstrate to be college- and career-ready in a global society.

Implementing the Hawaii High School Diploma two years earlier than originally proposed will require the DOE to fully focus its efforts on the delivery of CCSS courses and supports for English language arts and mathematics to incoming ninth graders in Fall 2012 and upperclassmen. Thus, the credit requirements for science and social studies will remain as is until the next generation standards are completed. Beginning with the graduating Class of 2016, the rigorous course of study will include:

- (1) Four credits of language arts (including ELA 1 [1 credit] & 2 [1 credit] and expository writing [.5 credit] and other language arts courses such as Advanced Placement (AP) English **OR** newly-developed CCSS proficiency-based equivalents);
- (2) Three credits of science (including biology [1 credit] and two other laboratory science courses [2 credits] such as chemistry, AP physics, oceanography, etc. **OR** newly-developed standards proficiency-based equivalents);
- (3) Three credits of mathematics (including algebra 1 [1 credit], geometry [1 credit], **AND/OR** a newly-developed CCSS proficiency-based equivalent, a two-year integrated CCSS course sequence, or math courses such as algebra 2, trigonometry, or AP calculus); and
- (4) Four credits of social studies (including Modern History of Hawaii [.5 credit], Participation in Democracy [.5 credit] and three other history and/or social science courses [3 credits] such as U.S. History, World History, AP Psychology **OR** newly-developed standards proficiency-based equivalents).
- (5) Two credits in one of the specified programs of study **OR** proficiency-based equivalents. Specified programs are limited to world language (e.g., Japanese, French, Russian), fine arts (e.g., band, visual arts), and Career and Technical Education.
- (6) One credit of physical education **OR** proficiency-based equivalent.
- (7) One-half credit of health **OR** proficiency-based equivalent.
- (8) One-half credit Personal/Transition Plan.
- (9) Six elective credits may include an (1.0) elective credit for Senior Project or proficiency-based equivalent.

DOE will establish a process for developing and approving all proficiency-based equivalents similar to the process followed for all other new Authorized Courses and Code Numbers. The rigorous review and approval process will ensure that

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the performance- based equivalents meet college-and career-ready expectations. Quality assurance will be addressed though other policies and practices including grading, assessments, and quality teaching initiatives.

In addition, 21st Century skills will be embedded throughout the curriculum and educational experiences. These skills may be demonstrated through:

- problem-based learning;
- senior project/capstone project;
- research projects; and
- oral communication skills and presentations.

The Department of Education (DOE) is committed its Vision of the Public School Graduate who will:

- Realize their individual goals and aspirations;
- Possess the attitudes, knowledge and skills necessary to contribute positively and competes in a global society;
- Exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; and
- Pursue post-secondary education and/or careers.

b) Previous Action of the Board on the same or similar matter

On March 6, 2008, the Board of Education amended the BOE Policy 4540, High School Graduation Requirements and Commencement Policy for Class of 2013 and beyond.

On April 7, 2011, the Board of Education amended the BOE Policy 4540, High School Graduation Requirements and Commencement Policy for Class of 2018.

On June 21, 2011, the Student Achievement Committee amended the BOE Policy 4540, High School Graduation Requirements and Commencement Policy for Class of 2016 and beyond.

This recommendation makes further amendments to the graduation requirements for the Class of 2016.

c) Other policies affected

None.

d) Arguments in support of the recommendation

Global Skills. Students will need more knowledge and communication skills to be prepared for the changing global economy based on proficiency determined by college and career standards.

Common Core State Standards. Diploma requirements reflect the implementation and expectations of the Common Core State Standards and the standards being developed for Science and Social Studies.

Proficiency Equivalent. The DOE is proposing that the opportunity for “proficiency equivalent” coursework credit be stated explicitly in the policy, to allow continued and robust development of alternatives.

Memorandum of Agreement. A Memorandum of Agreement signed on October 6, 2009 between the Governor of the State of Hawaii and The Department of Education and The University of Hawaii requires a rigorous high school diploma signifying career and college readiness by 2018.

Hawaii’s Race to the Top Plan. The Hawaii’s Race To The Top proposal submitted in June 2010 which states “...the BOE is scheduled to adopt its “college- and career-ready” high school diploma. . .for students entering high school in 2014. Students earning the Hawaii High School Diploma will. . .be prepared for workforce or college without the need for remediation.”

While some specifics of this recommendation differ from the Race to the Top plan, the goal of students achieving proficiency in the Common Core State Standards so that graduates meet national and international standards for college and career readiness remains the same.

Other States. Twenty-one (21) states, including the District of Columbia, are implementing (prior to the Class of 2018) rigorous diplomas that meet “college and career ready” expectations.

Data. Multiple sources of national as well as local data, including military enlistment data of recent high school graduates, employer feedback, apprenticeship program application tests, and University of Hawaii placement testing, indicate the pressing need for graduates to have a solid academic foundation that prepares them to have opportunities to succeed in their choice of career and/or college after high school. DOE has worked together with the University of Hawaii, Hawaii Business Roundtable and Hawaii P-20 since 2006 to align high school diploma expectations with the demands of work and postsecondary education and training opportunities.

e) Arguments against the recommendation

Resources. While graduation requirements ensure rigor and alignment to internationally benchmarked common core standards, it will also require resources to be aligned to support students in the attainment of this diploma. Given the tight fiscal times, this need is unlikely to be addressed by additional resources. DOE will need to review and reallocate resources at the state, complex and school levels to achieve the outcomes; furthermore additional funding may be needed to provide students every opportunity to achieve this diploma.

Mathematics Teachers. Having enough effective mathematics teachers is a local and national challenge. The recommendation to require only three credits of mathematics is impact neutral on diploma requirements. However, students may need a fourth year of mathematics to become proficient in Common Core State Standards. DOE is committed to ongoing professional development to

increase the effectiveness of its mathematics teachers, and Hawaii's Race to the Top plan includes strategies for increasing the number of qualified and effective mathematics teachers.

f) Findings and conclusions of the Board committee

To be determined.

g) Other agencies or departments of the State involved in the action

The Office of School Facilities and Support Services will be involved in the renovation of Science laboratory classrooms.

The Office of the Governor and the University of Hawaii continue to be involved.

h) Possible reaction of the public, professional organizations, unions, DOE staff and/or others to the recommendation

Business organizations will likely express continued support for a more rigorous high school diploma which better prepares students for the work force.

Institutes of higher education have consistently supported a diploma which requires students to complete courses more closely aligned to the requirements of entry-level college course work.

Parents, educators, and the community may express concerns about the potential negative impact of the proposed requirements on graduation rates.

i) Education implications

Leaders and teachers at the state, complex and school levels will need to:

- implement systems to support student learning;
- provide multiple opportunities for demonstrating proficiency;
- develop job-embedded professional development through data/collaborative teams;
- adjust instruction and assessment practices; and
- coordinate with teacher preparation programs to ensure that beginning teachers are prepared to meet new requirements and expectations of the new CCSS/new standards.

Counselors will need to provide additional assistance to students in course planning that aligns with their post secondary goals and closely monitor their progress. Support for students' Personal Transition Plan creation and monitoring may need to be increased.

j) Financial and Personnel implications

Professional Development (PD) for teachers, K-12, to support successful student learning in rigorous courses will always be needed as curricular changes occur (i.e. Common Core). Present PD resources will be aligned to meet teacher support needs. Additional resources may be required to fully support relevant professional development activities.

Both online learning and professional development are planned to achieve the objective of an effective teacher in every classroom and will be pursued irrespective of policy action on this recommendation.

5. OTHER SUPPLEMENTAL RECOMMENDATIONS

None.

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Attachments

c: Office of Curriculum, Instruction and Student Support