



Office of the
Superintendent

THE JERSEY CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Charles T. Epps, Jr., Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

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Dear Parents of Students Enrolled in Grades 6-12:

As the Jersey City Public Schools prepare for the opening of the 2009-2010 school year, one of the significant challenges facing the district is to improve our district middle and high schools so that every one of our students enrolled in grades 6 through 12 graduate prepared for success in their postsecondary experiences - in college, in other learning opportunities, or in the workplace.

On June 17, 2009, The New Jersey State Board of Education raised the requirements for earning a high school diploma in New Jersey by phasing in more challenging academic standards and course requirements over the next seven years (through 2016) for students who are now in grades 6 through 12. The adoption of the newly revised high school graduation requirements culminates a three-year effort by the State Board of Education "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 State Board of Education 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.

According to the NJ Department of Education's News, "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."

According to Commissioner of Education Lucille E. Davy, "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 NJDOE GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The NJ Department of Education's new high school graduation requirements include a total of 120 credits (formerly 110) 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 1, effective with the 2008-2009 ninth grade class; geometry beginning with the 2010-2011 ninth grade class;

and a third year of math that builds upon these two courses, beginning with incoming freshmen in 2012-2013;

- Three years of lab science, including biology, effective with the 2008-2009 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 2012-2013; and
- One half-year of economics and financial literacy, beginning with incoming freshmen in 2010-2011.

REVISED CORE CURRICULUM CONTENT STANDARDS

On June 17, 2009, the State Board of Education adopted revised Core Curriculum Content Standards for students in grades K-12 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.

The standards 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. Every district's local curricula must be aligned to the revised content standards in these six areas by September 1, 2012.

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 for language arts, mathematics and social studies later this year.

ASSESSMENT/PERSONALIZED LEARNING PLANS

Changes to the state assessment schedule and the NJDOE's current initiative to pilot personalized student learning plans are topics closely tied 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 1 and Algebra 2 were administered in Spring 2009 as 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 years to come.

Personal 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 announced in June 2009 that 6 middle schools and 10 high schools throughout the state will pilot the plans at the 6th- and 9th-grade levels for a two-year period, beginning in 2009-2010.

After reviewing the results of the pilot programs, the NJ 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.

As the Jersey City Public Schools embark upon the 2009-2010 school year, ensuring that Jersey City's students meet the new state graduation requirements is a tough challenge, but not an unachievable goal. For more than the past decade, the Jersey City Public Schools required all high school students to attain 140 credits to obtain a district diploma, surpassing the NJDOE's total number of credits required for graduation. McNair Academic High School requires 160 credits for graduation. Our district requires specific and sequential courses in all of the nine New Jersey Core Curriculum Content areas to obtain a district diploma.

Now that the state has adopted revised Core Curriculum Content Standards, the district will continue to revise existing curriculum in grades 6 through 12 to align with the new NJCCCS to ensure that students are prepared to take the proposed end-of-course content exams being planned for statewide implementation at the high school level.

For your information, attached are 2 charts that explain all of the information contained in this memo. The charts should help you better navigate the new State Board of Education's revised graduation requirements, course requirements, end-of course assessments along with the present district requirements.

If you need additional information, or have questions about the information contained in the charts, please contact your school's principal or guidance counselor.

Additionally, feel free to contact the following district level administrators:

Dr. Adele T. Macula, Associate Superintendent - Curriculum and Instruction
amacula@jcboe.org or 201-915-6020

Ms. Mary Ann Hammer, Associate Superintendent - Division A Schools
mhammer@jcboe.org or 201-915-6254

Mr. Franklin Walker - Associate Superintendent - Division B Schools
fwalker@jcboe.org or 201-915-6130

Mr. Jenaro Rivas - Associate Superintendent - Programs and Services
jrivas@jcboe.org or 201-915-6996

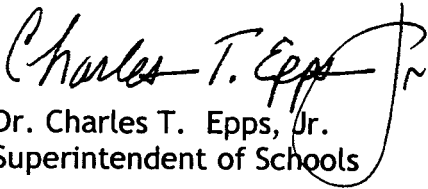
Ms. Ellen Ruane, Special Assistant - Secondary Education Initiative
eruane@jcobe.org or 201-413-6934

For more information about the New Jersey Department of Education's plans to transform secondary education, visit: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/ser/>.

For information about the Jersey City Public Schools' Secondary Education Initiative, visit the district's website: www.jcboe.org.

Thank you for your interest in this important work and I look forward to working with you during the 2009-2010 school year. Educating our students is not an option, it is our mandate if Jersey City and New Jersey are going to continue to compete in the increasingly demanding global world!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles T. Epps, Jr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr. Charles T. Epps, Jr.
Superintendent of Schools

Attachments

NJDOE REVISED ADOPTED GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

For ALL 9th Graders - Begins with Class Entering in September 2008 to Graduate June 2012 and Beyond (Revised June 17, 2009)

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

NJ Core Curriculum Content Area	NJDOE Graduation Requirements	NJDOE Course Requirements	NJDOE End of Course Assessments (proposed*)	JC Public Schools Graduation Requirements	JC Public Schools (McNair Academic)
	120 Credits			140 Credits	160 Credits
Language Arts Literacy	20 Credits		LAL 3*	30 credits - English 1, 2, 3, 4	30 credits - English 1-4 and electives
Mathematics	15 Credits	Algebra 1 content (2008-09 9 th grade), geometry content (2010-2011 9 th grade), Yr. 3 math content (2012-2013 9 th grade)	Algebra 1 Geometry* Yr. 3 Math* or Algebra 2	20/25 credits Algebra 1 Geometry Trigonometry Algebra 2	22.5 Includes: Algebra 1 Geometry Algebra 2 and other electives
Science (Lab)	15 Credits	Biology (2008-2009 9 th grade), 1 Lab Science (choice: Chemistry, Physics, or Environmental Lab Science - 2010-11 9 th grade) and 1 additional Lab or Technical Science (2012-2013 9 th gr.)	Biology Chemistry* Physics* Environmental Lab Science*	15 credits Biology Chemistry Physics	22.5 credits Includes: Biology Chemistry Physics and other Lab Science electives
Social Studies	15 Credits	Histories and integrated Civics, Economics, Geography and Global Content	Local Assessment	15 credits US History 1 US History 2 World History/Cultures	20 credits Includes varied courses: US1, US2, WH/C and electives
Economics and Financial Literacy	2.5 Credits	Financial, Economic, Business and Entrepreneurial Literacy (2010-2011 9 th grade)	Local Assessment		
Visual and Performing Arts	5 credits*		Local Assessment	5 credits VPA	5 credits VPA
World Languages	5 credits awarded upon prof.		Local Assessment	10 credits Language 1 and 2	15 credits Lang. 1, 2 and 3
Technological Literacy	Integrated throughout all content areas*		Local Assessment	Integrated throughout Curriculum/Courses	Integrated throughout Curriculum/Courses
Career Education and Consumer, Family, and Life Skills or CTE	5 credits*		CTE or Local Assessment	5 credits Practical Arts	5 credits Practical Arts
Health/PE	3.75 credits per year of enrollment* (15 credits = 4 yrs.)		Local Assessment	20 credits Health 1, 2, 3, 4 PE 1, 2, 3, 4	20 credits Health 1, 2, 3, 4 PE 1, 2, 3, 4
Electives				20/15 credits NJCCCS and SLC	20 credits NJCCCS and SLC
Community Service Learning Requirement				50 hours minimum Gr. 9 - 15 hr. Gr. 10 - 15 hr. Gr. 11 - 20 hrs. Performed integrated within SLC curriculum.	50 hr. min. Gr. 9 - 15 hr. Gr. 10 - 15 hr. Gr. 11 - 20 hrs. Performed integrated within SLC curriculum.

**JERSEY CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

Updated: 7/2009

Students must meet district and state requirements, comply with the district's Code of Conduct, complete 50 hours of Community Service, pass the New Jersey High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), and successfully complete all district and state mandated/elective courses in order to graduate. ALL students enrolled in a Jersey City Public High School are required to successfully complete a minimum of 140* credits to graduate. At McNair Academic High School, students are required to successfully complete 160 credits**.

REQUIRED COURSES	REQUIRED CREDITS –			
	Student's Year of Entry: Grade 9 Student's Year of Graduation – Grade 12			
SUBJECT	Sept '08/ June '12	Sept '09/ June '13	Sept '10/ June '14	Sept '11/ June '15
English (NJASK 8 proficiency level helps to determine whether students need supplemental English courses.)	30	30	30	30
Mathematics (NJASK8 proficiency level helps to determine whether students need supplemental Mathematics courses.)	20/25*	20/25*	20/25*	20/25*
Social Studies	15	15	15	15
Science	15	15	15	15
Visual and Performing Arts – Art, Music, Theater, Dance	5	5	5	5
Practical Arts – Career Education and Consumer, Family and Life Skills	5	5	5	5
World Languages	10	10	10	10
Health and PE – One year of PE for every year enrolled in HS. Conflict Resolution is infused in Health Curriculum.	20	20	20	20
Economics			2.5	2.5
Electives - NJCCCS and SLC	20/15*	20/15*	20/15*	20/15*
Technology	Technology Literacy, Consistent with the CCCS, must be integrated throughout the curriculum.			
TOTAL	140*		140*	140*

All students will complete 50 hours of Community Service Learning over a three-year period to be eligible for graduation.

Community Service	Hours
9 th Grade	15 hours
10 th Grade	15 hours
11 th Grade	20 hours

The passing grade for all courses is 70. All courses have a weighted grading system: Regular Course – 1.0; Honors Course – 1.05 and Advanced Placement Course – 1.10.

**The McNair Academic High School profile in the HS Course Selection Catalog details the courses available to meet that high school's 160-credit graduation requirements.