

ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Clarified Feb., 2014

(Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-1-02(8) and (8)(a))

Effective for students in the ninth grade in the 2013-2014 school year, all students shall earn the required credits for the Alabama High School Diploma. A local board of education may establish requirements for receipt of diplomas and endorsements, but any diploma or endorsement shall include the requirements of the Alabama High School Diploma. The Alabama courses of study shall be followed in determining minimum required content in each discipline.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

<u>Four credits to include:</u>		<u>Credits</u>	
English Language Arts	English 9	1	
	English 10	1	
	English 11	1	
	English 12	1	
	<i>Equivalent/substitute options may include: Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE approved courses</i>		
English Language Arts Total Credits		4	
<u>Three credits to include:</u>		<u>Credits</u>	
Mathematics	Algebra I or its equivalent/substitute	1	
	Geometry or its equivalent/substitute	1	
	Algebra II w/Trigonometry or Algebra II, or its equivalent/substitute	1	
	<i>Equivalent/substitute options may include: Career and Technical Education/Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE approved courses.</i>		
	<u>One credit from:</u>		
<i>Alabama Course of Study for Mathematics or equivalent/substitute courses from Career and Technical Education/Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE approved courses.</i>		1	
Mathematics Total Credits		4	
<u>Two credits to include:</u>		<u>Credits</u>	
Science	Biology	1	
	A physical science (Chemistry, Physics, Physical Science)	1	
	<i>Equivalent/substitute options may include: Career and Technical Education/Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE approved courses.</i>		
	<u>Two credits from:</u>		
	<i>Alabama Course of Study for Science or equivalent/substitute courses from Career and Technical Education/Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE approved courses</i>		2
Science Total Credits		4	
<u>Four credits to include:</u>		<u>Credits</u>	
Social Studies*	World History	1	
	United States History I	1	
	United States History II	1	
	United States Government	0.5	
	Economics	0.5	
	<i>Equivalent /substitute options may include: Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/postsecondary courses/SDE approved courses</i>		
Social Studies Total Credits		4	
Physical Education	Lifelong Individualized Fitness Education (LIFE) or one JROTC Credit	1	
Health Education		0.5	
Career Preparedness		1	
Career and Technical Education and/or Foreign Language and/or Arts Education		3	
Electives		2.5	
Total Credits		24	

The Alabama High School Graduation requirements provide the opportunity for students to pursue multiple pathways to earn a diploma. Students will have options to pursue areas of interest through expansion of elective credits. Flexibility in course substitutions and course equivalents allows for personalized education plans for all students. Though there is increased flexibility, there continues to be high expectations for Alabama's students. The ninth graders of 2013-2014 are required to follow the new graduation requirements. But, since the AHSGE was phased out in November, these options are now available to all students.

Each high school student is required to have a four-year plan. It is critical that the plan reflects the student's aspirations for life after high school. Careful consideration should be given to the selection of electives, substitute courses, and equivalent courses to ensure that a student is prepared for postsecondary, four-year college, and work. Administrators and counselors should continue to review NCAA requirements for prospective student athletes before approving their electives, substitute courses, or equivalent courses.

For clarification purposes, the definitions below will apply to courses identified as:

- Equivalent – the course includes at least a 90% match in standards
- Substitute – the course is approved as an appropriate replacement, but is not equivalent as defined above

The ALSDE will continue to expand equivalent and substitute course offerings. If an LEA would like to have a course considered as a substitute or equivalent, please see the process for approval below:

- Locally developed CTE courses must be submitted to the CTE Section.
- Locally developed core courses (Mathematics, English, Science, and Social Studies) must be submitted to the Instructional Services Section.
- Once submitted to either section, a cross-sectional team will review courses for alignment to standards and approval for equivalent or substitute credit.

Other clarifications:

Math

There are three new math courses. The description of the three courses with teacher certification requirements is attached. Please note that Algebra with Finance can be used as a **substitute** course. Again, as stated above, a student's plans for college or postsecondary should be considered when selecting any substitute course. Also attached is a draft of the Algebra with Finance course so you can make informed decisions for students.

If you have questions, please contact Dawn Morrison dmorrison@alsde.edu or Susan Davis sdavis@alsde.edu

Arts (includes Dance, Music, Theater, and Visual Arts)

Several questions have been asked about students who desire to follow an arts pathway and take their electives in arts. The current COS and the Subject and Personnel Code limit a student's options to half credit courses. These were written to meet the need of the former graduation requirements (.5 required Arts credit). There are a few options. You can take the half credit courses back to back this year as we make adjustments to the COS. There are many arts courses available, but have a notation that they cannot count toward required credits. We are working on getting that changed ASAP. Substitute and equivalent courses are options for the Arts as they are for the core content courses, as well. Arts courses that are used for substitute/equivalent options must contain the three strands-- Produce, Respond, and Understand as found in

the *Alabama Course of Study: Arts Education*. These courses may serve for any of the three credits required under “CTE, Foreign Language, or Arts” category. Arts courses lacking these three strands may serve only as a general elective credit (the 2.5 credit category).

Please contact Robin Nelson with any questions (rnelson@alsde.edu).

Science

The following courses have been approved for equivalent credit in the corresponding courses:

- Aquascience (science course)—Aquaculture Science (CTE course)
- Chemistry (science course)—Chemistry of Food (CTE course)
- Environmental Science (science course)—Environmental Management (CTE course)
- Forensic Science (science course)—Forensic and Criminal Investigations (CTE course)
- Genetics (science course)—Introduction to Biotechnology (CTE course)
- Human Anatomy and Physiology (science course)—Human Body Structures and Functions (CTE course)
- Botany (science course)—Plant Biotechnology (CTE course)

Please contact Nan Burgess for further information nburgess@alsde.edu.

Essential Skills Pathway

Attached is a copy of the Alabama High School Graduation Requirements Substitute Courses for Special Education Students. These **substitute** courses (Essential Skills Pathway) are intended for students with IEPs. However, they are available for any student whose four-year plan recommends one of these courses. As stated above, careful consideration should be given before a student is allowed to take one of the courses. None of these courses will be accepted in a four-year university. If a student aspires to attend post secondary, admission requirements should be reviewed before selecting one of these courses.

Waivers

Waivers for the LIFE PE course are still required to substitute Band, Athletics, etc. The standards from the LIFE PE course must be included in the course. A student roster is no longer required to include in waiver letter. Please contact Nancy Ray with any questions nray@alsde.edu.

Some districts are pursuing innovative schedules, instructional delivery models, etc. that are requiring permission to waive certain policies. Please feel free to contact us with any questions. jhannah@alsde.edu