

## **Chapter 31**

### **Wyoming Graduation Requirements**

**Section 1. Authority.** These rules and regulations are promulgated pursuant to W.S. 21-2-304(a)(i) – (iv) and W.S. 21-3-110(a)(i) and (xxv).

**Section 2. Purpose.** These rules and regulations pertain to the minimum requirements for graduation from any public high school within any school district of this state, the required components of each district’s assessment system designed to determine student performance levels as aligned to the state standards pursuant to W.S. 21-2-304(a)(iv), and the consultation process between the State Board of Education and local school districts on the establishment of Wyoming high school diploma requirements.

**Section 3. Definitions.** As used in this chapter:

(a) “Alignment” means evidence that a district assessment system is aligned to the state standards, both in terms of content and cognitive complexity.

(b) “Assessment” means an ongoing process that includes collecting, synthesizing, and interpreting information about what students know (knowledge) and are able to do (skills).

(c) “Cognitive Complexity” means the type and level of thinking required to successfully achieve the standard.

(d) “Coursework” means a progression of courses aligned to the state standards that provides students with a quality education as described under W.S. 21-2-304(a)(ii).

(e) “Department” means Wyoming Department of Education.

(f) “District Assessment System” means a system that measures various levels of student performance on content-specific learning goals that are aligned to the state standards.

(g) “Functional Equivalent” means a course that is aligned to the state standards and is as rigorous as or more rigorous than a college- or career-preparatory course taken in high school.

(h) “Graduation Requirements,” or high school diploma requirements, means successful completion of courses required by this chapter, as evidenced by each district’s assessment system, which is aligned to the state standards, and prescribed by the State Board of Education under W.S. 21-2-304 (a)(iii).

(i) “Performance Level Descriptor” means a statement set by the State Board of Education in Chapter 10 Education Rules that describes how well a student must perform at an identified level for every course the student takes and completes. The following are the three options for performance level descriptors:

- (i) Basic. A limited display of knowledge and skills that shows student is not approaching or approaching, but not yet meeting the standard.
- (ii) Proficient. A satisfactory display of knowledge and skills that shows student is meeting the standard.
- (iii) Advanced. A superior display of knowledge and skills that shows student is exceeding the standard.

(j) “State Standards” means the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards, also known as the Uniform Student Content and Performance Standards, that define what students should be provided the opportunity to learn in the ten (10) content areas as described in W.S. 21-9-101(b) and set by the State Board of Education in Chapter 10 Education Rules.

#### **Section 4. High School Diploma Requirements.**

(a) Graduation requirements for earning a high school diploma from any high school within any school district of this state shall include successful completion of the following components as evidenced by passing grades or by successful performance on competency-based equivalency examinations:

(i) Coursework, including courses taken for the attainment of a high school diploma, shall include courses that, taken together, signify students are equipped to compete both intellectually and economically in society. Coursework for the attainment of a high school diploma shall be aligned to the state standards in grades nine (9) through twelve (12) and, at a minimum, include the following:

- (A) Four (4) school years of English;
- (B) Three (3) school years of mathematics;
- (C) Three (3) school years of science, one (1) year of which may be a computer science course; and
- (D) Three (3) school years of social studies, including history, American government, and economic systems and institutions, provided business instructors may instruct classes on economic systems and institutions.
- (E) Courses taken before grade nine (9) used to satisfy high school diploma requirements shall be aligned to the state standards in grades nine (9) through twelve (12).
- (F) Courses designated as functional equivalents may be used to satisfy the coursework described in this subsection. The Department may verify appropriate alignment of the functional equivalents to the state standards in grades nine (9) through twelve

(12).

(ii) Satisfactorily passing an examination on the principles of the constitution of the United States and the state of Wyoming.

(iii) Evidence of proficient performance on the district assessment system, which includes all courses taken for the attainment of a high school diploma.

(A) Proficient performance shall be evidenced by successful completion of courses included in a district's assessment system that are aligned to and inclusive of the state standards as defined in this chapter.

(B) The district determines successful completion through a district assessment system that meets the criteria outlined in Section 5 of this chapter.

(b) Each local school district shall establish high school diploma requirements that shall be reflected in policy and related documents as appropriate. The district's policy shall include:

(i) A description of the district's definition of course credit for any course which may be taken to satisfy the high school diploma requirements;

(ii) A description of the process by which successful performance on a competency-based equivalency examination may be used to satisfy coursework, as defined in this chapter;

(iii) A description of the way in which successful completion of courses taken for graduation will be used as a factor in awarding course credit;

(iv) A requirement that students demonstrate satisfactory performance on an examination of the principles of the constitution of the United States and the State of Wyoming as required by W.S. 21-9-102;

(v) An assurance that academic credit toward the district's high school diploma requirements will be awarded for the successful completion of any course offered under a qualifying post-secondary education program specified under W.S. 21-20-201; and

(vi) A description of any additional requirements that a student must successfully complete at the discretion of the district.

(c) The district shall maintain and publish a list of eligible courses to satisfy the high school diploma requirements, including the minimum graduation requirements established in these rules. All eligible courses shall be aligned to the state standards established for the high school grades and require a logical sequence and the progression of instruction aligned with content and benchmark standards from one school year to the next. This list shall not be required to include post-secondary courses for which academic credit may be awarded.

## **Section 5. District Assessment System.**

(a) In conjunction with district accreditation, a district's assessment system shall be subject to review and approval by the State Board of Education at least once every five (5) years. A district containing schools that are designated as partially meeting expectations or not meeting expectations under W.S. 21-2-204(f)(i) may have its district assessment system reviewed more often as deemed appropriate by the State Board of Education and in accordance with W.S. 21-2-204(h)(vii).

(b) Pursuant to W.S. 21-3-110(a)(xxiv) and (xxxiv), the review shall apply to all ten (10) content areas and verify that the district assessment system includes each of the following criteria:

(i) **Alignment.** The district has a process in place to ensure its district assessment system is aligned to the state standards in both content and cognitive complexity. The district assessment system must be aligned to the state standards within three (3) full years of the Board approving a standard.

(A) Districts shall ensure that their aligned district assessment system produces student performance levels relative to the state standards.

(B) Districts shall ensure that their aligned district assessment system measures the knowledge or skill for the appropriate grade level and content.

(C) Districts shall ensure that their aligned district assessment system provides every student with multiple opportunities to demonstrate what the student understands, knows, and can do.

(ii) **Data Results.** The district has a process in place to regularly monitor student performance in order to determine progress toward the attainment of knowledge and skills aligned to the state standards.

(iii) **Ongoing Evaluation.** The district has a process in place to evaluate its district assessment system on an ongoing basis to inform subsequent adjustments to the district assessment system that will ensure the district's needs, priorities, and goals are met and remains aligned to the state standards.

(c) Not later than November 1 of each year, the district shall report compliance with the criteria of its district assessment system, including compliance with the high school diploma requirements identified in Section 4 of this chapter.

(d) A district that does not meet the criteria of the district assessment system or does not comply with the high school diploma requirements may have its accreditation status lowered in accordance with Chapter 6 Education Rules.

**Section 6. Consultation with Local School Districts.**

(a) Within twelve (12) months of the effective date of these rules, each local district shall submit to the State Board of Education, through the Department its revised policy establishing high school diploma requirements for review and consultation. Within one hundred and twenty (120) days of receiving a local district's high school diploma requirements, the State Board of Education shall identify any areas in which the district does not comply with state-established requirements and consult with the district on any findings.

(b) Any modification to a district's high school diploma requirements, including a copy of the revised requirements, shall be included in the district's November 1 report required under W.S. 21-3-110(xxv) and Section 5(c) of this chapter.