

DIPLOMA OPTIONS AVAILABLE BEGINNING WITH CLASS OF 2017

Effective for students beginning ninth grade in the 2013-2014 school year, the state of Alabama will provide one diploma option. The Alabama High School Diploma allows a local board of education to 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.

Shelby County Schools Endorsement Requirements

The following coursework is required to receive the *Shelby County Advanced Endorsement*:

- Minimum of Algebra II/Trigonometry
- Chemistry
- Foreign Language - two years of the same foreign language
- One half credit of an approved fine arts
- Minimum of two AP courses with one in a core content or the equivalent (dual enrollment, dual credit, or IB)

DIPLOMA OPTIONS FOR CLASS OF 2016 COHORT

Diploma Types

- Alabama High School Diploma with Advanced Academic Endorsement
- Alabama High School Diploma with Advanced Academic Endorsement with Distinction
- Alabama High School Diploma with Advanced Academic Endorsement with Honors
- Alabama High School Diploma with Advanced Academic Endorsement with Merit
- Standard Alabama High School Diploma
- Standard Alabama High School Diploma with Career Technical Endorsement
- Standard Alabama High School Diploma with Advanced Career Technical Endorsement

Endorsement Requirements

- Advanced Academic Endorsement – Must take Algebra II with Trigonometry and two foreign language courses
- Advanced Academic Endorsement with Distinction (Students Taking 4 AP Courses)
- Advanced Academic Endorsement with Honors (Students Taking 3 AP Courses)
- Advanced Academic Endorsement with Merit (Students Taking 2 AP Courses)
- Career Technical Endorsement – All coursework and pass three career tech courses
- Advanced Career Technical Endorsement – All coursework, including courses in the Advanced Academic Endorsement in addition to three career tech courses

If a student does not pass all required courses necessary for graduation, they may not participate in the commencement exercises.

Clarified Feb., 2014

ALABAMA HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

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

COURSE REQUIREMENTS			
English Language Arts	Four credits to include:	Credits	
	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	
Mathematics	Three credits to include:	Credits	
	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>		
	One credit from:		
<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	
Science	Two credits to include:	Credits	
	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>		
	Two credits from:		
<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	
Social Studies	Four credits to include:	Credits	
	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	

*Students must receive one full year of the LIFE Physical Education curriculum. Waivers are offered through one year of JROTC or two years of marching band. Students are granted credit when they pass the end of course test for the LIFE Physical Education course administered by a certified physical education teacher.

Grading Plan

Because students' grades should reflect academic achievement in the classroom, classroom teachers will measure academic achievement in a variety of ways over the course of a given grading period. To foster a consistent, equitable method of classroom assessment, Shelby County high school teachers will implement the following categorical grading plan:

- GOLD Grades = Major tests and work products / projects will comprise 60% of a student's grade;
- SILVER Grades = Quizzes and secondary assignments will comprise 30% of a student's grade;
- BRONZE Grades = Homework and minor classwork will comprise 10% of a student's grade.

Graduation Credits

Rather than being promoted, high school students progress as credits are accumulated. Grade classifications are determined by the number of credits earned:

- Sophomore = at least six (6) earned credits;
- Junior = at least twelve (12) earned credits;
- Senior = at least eighteen (18) earned credits;
- Twenty-four (24) credits are required for graduation (see page two).

Guidelines for Students Transferring Into Shelby County Schools

Students who transfer to a Shelby County high school from another school must meet the Alabama graduation requirements to receive a diploma from the State of Alabama. Students transferring from another state for their senior year who cannot meet Alabama's graduation requirements because of time restraints may earn a diploma from the school previously attended if so permitted by that school.

1. Transfer students coming in with Honors, AP/IB, or DE/DC courses:
 - Students receive the weight indicated on the transcript for Honors/AP/IB/DE/DC courses. The transcript is not changed. Credit awarded cannot exceed 1.0 for AP/IB and .5 for Honors.
 - Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, Dual Credit courses will receive an additional .5 GPA weight. Dual Enrollment credit weight cannot exceed .5 per three hour course.
 - Weighted credit of 1.0 will be given for AP/IB courses even if former school did not award additional quality point.
 - If former school did not award additional quality points for Honors courses, no additional quality points will be awarded by Shelby County Schools.

2. Transfers from Non-Accredited Schools (to include home/church/virtual schools)*:
 - The evaluation of any student entering a Shelby County high school from a non-accredited institution shall begin with a thorough review of all available standardized test data. In the absence of a transcript from an accredited school, such data provides an objective snapshot of the student's abilities and achievement. Standardized test data that may be considered include the following: ACT and any of its products, SAT, and any other nationally-normed standardized instrument that may be deemed appropriate;
 - Elective credits (defined as any credits earned in non-core courses) will be accepted without any validation beyond the transcript;
 - Credits earned in core courses shall be validated in the following way(s):
 - ❖ Any student whose standardized test results demonstrate benchmark-level proficiency in a given core area will be awarded credit for courses completed in that subject area. For example, if a student has scored a 19 on the English subtest of the ACT, his or her English credits earned at the non-accredited school will be deemed valid;

- ❖ In the absence of satisfactory standardized test data, students will be required to earn a passing score on targeted exams to demonstrate proficiency in various core academic areas. For example, if a student coming from a non-accredited school has most recently completed Geometry, he or she would be asked to take a cumulative exam provided by the school in which the student wishes to enroll;
- ❖ Whenever possible, the most advanced courses completed in each core academic area will be used to validate the credits earned in the respective natural prerequisites. For example, if a student earns a passing score on a Chemistry exam, then his or her Physical Science credit would also be considered valid without an additional exam because both are physical sciences.
- ❖ When courses in the same academic area are qualitatively different based on standards associated with the subject, additional exams shall be required to validate credits. For example, if a student earns a passing score on a Chemistry exam, his or her credit for that course will be accepted. However, a Biology exam will be required to validate the credit earned for that course because the two courses focus on separate standards. While Chemistry was taken more recently, the additional exam is necessary because the two courses are qualitatively different; one is a physical science while the other is a life science. This may be true of other courses regardless of the grade level taught.

3. Courses Required for Graduation:

There are courses required for graduation in Alabama such as PE LIFE, Career Preparedness, and two years of U.S. History. Students who transfer and have not had these courses must take these courses in order to graduate.

***Shelby County Schools are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. This is the only accreditation organization recognized by the Alabama State Board of Education. Transfer credits from other schools will be accepted from other regionally accredited associations as verified in AdvancED without further validation. However, the procedures for awarding credit to students coming to a Shelby County high school from a non-accredited school or home school will follow the *Alabama Administrative Code 290-3-1-02(7)(j)290-3-02(7)(L)*.**

High School Gifted Education Program

The Shelby County School System's High School Gifted Education Program provides indirect services for 9th-12th grade students identified (*according to the Alabama State Department of Education guidelines 290-8-9-.12 Gifted*) for gifted education placement.

The goals are as follows:

- To maintain each student's gifted identity.
- To meet students' academic needs through:
 - Advanced core curriculum classes provided by qualified regular or gifted educators
 - Counseling services for college and career preparation
 - College and career counseling is available through the high school guidance department.

All students enrolled in gifted education courses at the middle school will remain on the gifted education rolls at the high school level. Any students who have been placed in gifted education, but have chosen not to receive services in middle school, may be re-enrolled.

Middle School Offerings for High School Credit

Effective with the 2014-15 school year, 8th grade students completing Algebra I or Spanish I with a final grade of 70 or above (a minimum of 60 each semester) will receive high school credit.

While middle schools currently use yearly averages, high schools use semester averages. Therefore, a student's transcript will be recalculated to reflect a semester grade. Semester grades are a simple average of the two grading periods within a given term.

Acceleration/Credit Advancement

Currently, high school students may pursue the following summer offerings in order to accelerate their acquisition of required credits: Government / Economics, Health, Career Preparedness, and Driver's Education. Other options for credit acceleration may be approved and offered at a later date.

Summer Reading

Understanding that reading is absolutely foundational to all educational endeavors and pursuits, our system fully endorses and encourages the practice of assigned summer reading for high school students. Each school will exercise a certain degree of autonomy in formulating its summer reading plan; however, certain essential features will be true of every school's approach:

- Students at each grade level will be offered a common list of works from which they will choose one or more texts (depending on local requirements).
- The element of choice and the ability to self-select from a prescribed list should enable students to find an appropriate text which appeals to them.
- English teachers will discuss the book choices with their students before summer break in order to help students make informed choices as to which works they will read.
- Every effort will be made to include engaging texts which possess instructional value and literary merit.
- When students return to school in August, they should expect that their English teachers will use summer reading to foster student discussion, diagnostic writing, and connections to informational texts.

In an increasingly graphic, image-driven culture, we believe summer reading provides fertile, common ground from which to begin the academic year and contributes to the ongoing development of the whole child.

(NOTE: All AP courses are exempt and separate from the summer reading guidelines outlined above. AP teachers will communicate summer work requirements to their students prior to summer break.)

Credit Recovery and Summer School

Credit Recovery 2016-2017

Credit Recovery during the academic school year is intended for seniors and select freshmen. Sophomores, juniors, and most freshmen are expected to attend summer school for failed courses. Beginning with freshmen during the 2016-2017 school year, a maximum of one (1) credit per subject area and four (4) total credits may be earned through credit recovery during a student's academic career.

Summer School 2016-2017

A blended model featuring both direct instruction and use of an online learning platform will be utilized. The credit recovery model used throughout the school year will not be used for summer school.

- Two terms will be available for students. Each term will be four (4) hours a day for two (2) weeks.
- In order to make up a lost credit, students will be required to attend the entire term. Absences are not allowed.
- The school administrator responsible for summer school should be contacted about cost.
- No distinction between "credit recovery" and "full course" will be made.
- Students from other schools may attend a Shelby County Summer School session provided there is space and provided the student lives in Shelby County.
- Courses taken during summer school will not count as one of the four (4) credits that may be earned during school-year credit recovery.

Academics First

(Extracurricular Activity Eligibility Guidelines)

The Shelby County Board of Education recognizes the value of extracurricular activities as they relate to the total education of the students; however, the students' pursuit of their academics must be first and foremost and take priority over participation in extracurricular activities.

The following guidelines shall apply to determine eligibility to participate in extracurricular activities:

1. The term "extracurricular activities" as used in this policy refers to athletic activities that are recognized and sanctioned by the Alabama High School Athletic Association as well as other activities sanctioned by the Shelby County Board of Education, which are not related to a student's academic requirements or success in the course. Extracurricular activities include but are not limited to activities offered by the school through math, science, band, choral music, athletic events (pre-game, half-time or other breaks), club conventions, parades, amusement park trips, competitions, tours, and performances not required for the student's academic success in a course.
2. It is not the intent of this policy to classify as an extracurricular activity any activities which are ancillary to a credited classroom course if such activity is required for satisfactory course completion and grading of that course. (For example, a district choir competition or a science class field trip.)
3. The Superintendent and/or his designee has the authority to determine on a case-by-case basis whether or not certain activities not specifically mentioned above qualify as extracurricular activities and whether or not a student has met the eligibility requirements to participate in extracurricular activities as outlined herein.
4. The standards established herein are minimum standards for participation in extracurricular activities. Any group or organization may establish additional academic standards for participation; however, such standards must be submitted in writing to the Superintendent and/or his designee for approval.
5. In order for students in grades 10 through 12 to be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities during an academic school year, the students must for the immediately preceding school year have maintained a passing grade in each of at least six Carnegie unit credit courses and a composite numerical average of 70 for all of the Carnegie unit credit courses.
6. For grades 10 through 12, of the courses used to determine eligibility, students must have at least 4 credits for the four core curriculum courses (English, Science, Social Studies and Math). A student may be exempt from the core curriculum requirements if the student is otherwise on track with the Shelby County Board of Education graduation requirements in the core curriculum courses.
7. In order for students in grades 8 and 9 to be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities during an academic year, the student must for the immediately preceding year have a passing grade in at least five subjects with a composite grade average of 70 or higher in the five courses. Students promoted to the seventh grade for the first time are eligible.
8. Physical education and other related courses may only count as one of the subjects used to determine eligibility.
9. Up to two Carnegie units and the accompanying cumulative grades earned during summer school may be used in computing the credits needed for eligibility.

Academics First (continued)

10. At the end of each grading period, the head coach and/or sponsor of each extracurricular activity will check the current grades of all students participating in extracurricular activities. If a student fails to maintain a passing grade in all of his/her current courses during the preceding grading period, the student will be placed on probation from extracurricular activities.
11. When a student is placed on probation from extracurricular activities, the head coach and/or sponsor of the extracurricular activity will notify the principal. The principal and his/her designee will then meet with the student (and the student's parent/guardian if deemed necessary) to implement a mandated academic remediation program to address the academic performance of the student.
12. When a student is on probation from extracurricular activities, the principal may also mandate modifications in the student's participation in extracurricular activities if the principal feels that the modification is necessary to insure the student's ability to increase his/her academic performance during the probation period.
13. If, at the end of any subsequent grading period, the student makes another failing grade in the same subject, the student must show evidence of satisfactory participation in the remediation program in order to maintain participation in all extracurricular activities. A student who fails to show evidence of satisfactory participation in the mandated remediation program will automatically be suspended for all extracurricular activities.
14. Mandatory academic remediation will last for a minimum of one grading period.
15. The Community Education Program will make available its resources to assist with remedial plans.

Ref: Alabama Administrative Code §290-3-1-.02 (17)

Approved by the Shelby County Board of Education on 8/21/97, Revised on 10/15/98, in accordance with the State Board of Education's Policy