

Frequently Asked Questions

High School Math Graduation Requirements

UPDATED AUGUST 2009

In the 2009 legislative session, state lawmakers made several changes to the state's high school math graduation requirements. The changes can be found in House Bill 1562, which eliminated the need for students who earn two credits of math after 10th grade to take an annual math assessment, and ESSB 5889, which eliminated the math Collection of Evidence as a CAA Option for the Class of 2010 and beyond. Any wording with a strikethrough ~~line~~ was amended by the two bills. ESSB 5889 was passed by the Legislature on April 29, 2009.

Beginning with the Class of 2008, students who meet the reading, writing and math high school standards will earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (CAA) or Certificate of Individual Achievement (CIA). Students in the graduating classes of 2008-2012, however, can still earn a high school diploma without earning a certificate. The graduating class of 2013 will now be the first class required to meet the state's reading, writing, math and science standards and earn a certificate.

(Updated 3.30.09) *For the graduating classes of 2008-2012, students may graduate without a Certificate of Academic Achievement or Certificate of Individual Achievement if they:*

- (1) Do not meet the math standard on the High School WASL, an approved objective alternative assessment, or an assessment for students in special education;*
- (2) Meet the reading and writing standards;*
- (3) Meet all other state and school district graduation requirements; and*
- (4)(a) For the graduating class of 2008, earn one math credit (or career and technical course equivalent, including appropriate courses offered at skill centers,) after the student's 11th-grade year. ~~The student must also continue to take an appropriate math assessment at least once annually until graduation. (For most students in the class of 2008 who will graduate on time, this means they need to earn one more math credit and take one more assessment before graduation.); and~~*
- (b) For the graduating classes of 2009-2012, earn two math credits (or career and technical course equivalent, including appropriate courses offered at skill centers) after the student's 10th grade year. ~~The student must also continue to take the appropriate math assessment at least once annually until graduation.~~*

Note: *A student's graduation requirements are determined by the date they start ninth grade. Graduation requirements remain the same for the student regardless of whether they graduate early or need more than four years to graduate.*

Q1. Did the Legislature postpone the requirement that high school students pass the math WASL, one of the CAA Options, or an assessment for eligible students in special education to graduate?

Yes. The graduating class of 2013 – who are eighth graders in the 2008-09 school year – will now be the first class expected to pass the math High School WASL, one of the CAA Options or an assessment for students in special education. But, students in the classes of 2008-2012 still need to show their math skills to be eligible to graduate (see next question).

Q2. (Updated 3.30.09) If students in the classes of 2008-2012 have not met the math standard, what do they need to do to be eligible to graduate?

Students in the class of 2008 who have not met the math standard must:

- 1) Earn one math credit after 11th grade. The course(s) taken to earn the credit must be intended to increase the student's math proficiency toward meeting or exceeding the math standards measured on the WASL. The math credits may be earned in certain career and technical education courses, including courses offered at skill centers, *if the courses have been determined at the local district to be equivalent to a math course*; and
- 2) ~~Take the "appropriate math assessment" at least once annually until graduation.~~

Students in the classes of 2009-2012 who have not met the math standard must:

- 1) Earn **two** math credits (as described above) after 10th grade; and
- 2) ~~Take the "appropriate math assessment" at least once annually until graduation.~~

Q3. What is "the appropriate math assessment" students must take to meet the new math credit graduation requirement?

Students must take the high school math WASL, math SAT, math ACT, or a math Collection of Evidence; or, if they are students in special education, students may take the Developmentally Appropriate WASL, WASL-Modified or the WAAS-Portfolio.

Q4. Are students in special education programs also required to earn two math credits after 10th grade if they have not met the math standard on the WASL, one of the CAA options, or on a special education alternate assessment?

Yes.

Q5. What math courses meet the definition of increasing the "student's math proficiency toward meeting or exceeding the math standards measured on the WASL?"

The purpose of this requirement is to keep struggling math students enrolled in rigorous math courses, so that they can improve their skills. Students should be in courses that will move them toward or beyond the standards measured on the High School WASL. The content of these courses must be aligned to the 9/10 grade level expectations. *The courses at the local high school that meet this requirement are made at the local district according to local school board policy.* According to State Board of Education rules (WAC 180-51-025), the "content of courses and the determination of which courses satisfy particular subject area requirements and whether a particular course may satisfy more than one subject area requirement shall be determined locally in accordance with written policies adopted by boards of directors of districts." A credit is defined in State Board of Education rules (WAC 180-51-050) as "one hundred fifty hours of planned instructional activities approved by the district" or "satisfactory demonstration by a student of clearly identified competencies established pursuant to a process defined in written district policy."

ESSB 6023 clearly spells out that a career and technical education (CTE) course that meets the above criteria delineated in State Board of Education rules and that has been deemed equivalent to a math course by the local district will meet this additional math credit requirement.

Q6. Which career and technical education (CTE) courses are equivalent to a math credit and could then be counted as the additional math credit needed for graduation?

See the answer to Q5 to determine under which conditions districts may award credit. Districts currently have the authority to determine course equivalencies within certain conditions. RCW 28A.230.097 requires each school board to adopt an approval process for academic course equivalencies for CTE courses. These CTE courses must (1) provide content that would increase student's math proficiency toward meeting or exceeding that math standards on the high school WASL and (2) be aligned to the 9/10 grade level expectations for it to count toward the new math credit requirements.

Q7. Do extension courses and/or online courses in math count toward the additional math credit requirement?

See the answer to Q5 to determine under which conditions districts may award credit. The authority to award high school credit resides with the school district. If the district policy provides for credit to be awarded to students taking extension and/or online courses, these courses would count toward the additional math credit requirement

Q8. If students in the classes of 2008-2012 earn the additional math credits until graduation but do not pass the High School WASL or an alternative assessment, will they earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement or Certificate of Individual Achievement?

No. ESSB 6023 allows students to earn a high school diploma without earning a Certificate of Academic Achievement or Certificate of Individual Achievement. Students who fulfill the math requirement by earning math credits do not receive a certificate but may earn a diploma.

Q9. Will the newly designed "segmented math course" count toward the additional math credit requirement?

Yes. This course will be designed by OSPI to meet the criteria stated in the answer to Q5 above.

Q10. If a student in the graduating class of 2008 takes the High School WASL for the first time as a senior and does not meet the math standard, does this student have the option of accessing the new math credit requirements to graduate?

Yes. As long as the student earns one math credit after 10th grade ~~and annually takes an appropriate math assessment until graduation.~~

Q11. Did the 2007 Legislature appropriate funds specifically for use by districts to add new math courses to meet the new math credit requirements?

No. The Legislature funded the additional student FTE associated with part-time students adding courses to meet the new math requirement. Districts can use PAS funds to add math courses; I-728 funds are also appropriate.

Q12. Do Running Start students need to take a math course every quarter, every semester, or just once to meet this math requirement?

The new requirement for an additional math credit adopted by the 2007 Legislature is about students earning one math CREDIT for the class of 2008 and two math CREDITS for the graduating classes of 2009-2012. Therefore, the way a school district converts Running Start classes to math credits answers the question. For instance, if a student takes Math 105 at a college and the high school grants the student one math credit for this class, then Math 105 would meet the requirement. However, if a student takes Math 105 and the high school grants the student half a math credit and half an elective credit for this class, then the student would still be required to earn an additional half math credit in that school year.

Q13. Do “summer credit retrieval” math courses count toward the additional math credit requirement?

ESSB 6023 specifically states that one credit must be earned after 11th grade for students in the class of 2008 and two credits be earned after 10th grade for students in the graduation classes of 2009-2012. For example, if a student in the class of 2008 earned partial credit in the 11th grade and partial credit after 11th grade for the same class, this would not meet the letter of the law. The full credit must be earned AFTER 11th grade. Further, if a student earned partial credit in the summer between the 11th grade and 12th grade (which would officially be part of the 11th grade year) and earned partial credit in the 12th grade for the same class that in total earned the student one credit of math after 11th grade, this also would NOT count toward the additional math credit requirement because the full one credit must be earned AFTER 11th grade.

Q14. *(Updated 3.30.09)* What happens if a student in the class of 2009 does not take an appropriate math assessment during 11th grade (2007-08 school year)?

The law was changed on March 30, 2009 and the student does not need to take an annual math assessment.

Q15. Does a student in the class of 2009 who has not met the math standard have to earn one math credit in 11th grade and earn one credit in the 12th grade?

No, not necessarily. Students in the classes of 2009-2012 must earn two math credits after 10th grade. These two credits could, for instance, be earned in one school year.

Q16. *(Updated 3.30.09)* Does a student in the class of 2008 who has earned one math credit after 11th grade AND took an appropriate math assessment in 2007-08 but returns to school in the 2008-09 school year need to earn one more math credit and take an appropriate math assessment?

No. Not with the change in law on March 30, 2009.

MORE INFORMATION

Please contact Chris Barron, assessment communications manager, at chris.barron@k12.wa.us, or (360) 725-6032.

For more information on Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6023, go to: <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/summary.aspx?bill=6023> and House Bill 1562 go to <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/Summary.aspx?bill=1562&year=2009>