

Graduation Requirements

Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

The DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education's Postsecondary and Career Education Division has prepared the following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about OSSE's Reimagining High School Graduation Requirements initiative.

Background

The aim of this initiative is to identify and implement new high school graduation requirements that incorporate outcome measures and support innovative approaches to preparing young people for life after graduation.

This work is also inclusive of the development of a DC-wide Graduate Profile to establish comprehensive academic, personal, and interpersonal characteristics/competencies for high school students.

Frequently Asked Questions

Question 1: Why was this initiative started?

Amending the current OSSE High School Graduation Requirements addresses the changing nature of high school and society inclusive of certifications, apprenticeships, internships, micro-credentials, articulation agreements, more relevant coursework, and out of school and after school activities.

Question 2: Why are the Graduation Requirements being amended?

Final Rulemaking for current Graduation Requirements regulations, Section: 5-A2203: Academic Requirements, was April 8, 2016. OSSE will examine the changing nature of high schools as the current graduation requirements are revised. We want our high school graduation requirements to reflect a new set of competencies that embrace the demonstration of knowledge, skills, and personal dispositions needed for success in today's world.

Question 3: How will the new Graduation Requirements be developed?

OSSE will partner with stakeholders across the District to identify and implement new graduate requirements preparing young people for life after graduation. This is inclusive of engaging community stakeholders via listening sessions during the Summer and Fall of 2023. Feedback from these listening sessions will be used to influence the development of the new graduation requirements.

An External Steering Committee consisting of individuals from the following sectors will be invited to advise on the development of the new graduate requirements: K-12, adult education, postsecondary, workforce development, and philanthropic communities.

OSSE will use the feedback from listening sessions, interviews, and surveys to develop a draft of the graduation requirements. The draft will be reviewed by the Steering Committee and shared for public comment. The Steering Committee will consider all comments and recommend final changes to the graduation requirements.

Question 4: What does incorporating outcome measures and supporting innovative approaches mean?

Incorporating outcome measures means that we want to develop graduation requirements that give students the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and are able to do. This broadens the ways that students can show what they have learned and accepts that there may be a multiplicity of modalities that can be used to demonstrate learning. It does not necessarily replace standardized testing, but is inclusive of project-based learning, competency-based learning, successful completion internships and apprenticeships, college credit accumulation, service learning, etc.

Innovation in schools is critical to engaging students and helping them to see relevance in what they are learning. The inclusion of technology-driven coursework, internet-based learning, and possible core requirements in financial literacy, computer science, and entrepreneurship are all innovative methods of teaching and learning and the graduation requirements should reflect movement in this direction.

Question 5: Who will approve the Graduation Requirements?

The State Board of Education (SBOE) will review the proposed graduation requirements and vote on and approve their adoption. The State Board of Education is responsible for advising the State Superintendent of Education on educational matters, including state standards; state policies, including those governing special, academic, vocational, charter and other schools; state objectives; and state regulations proposed by the Mayor or the State Superintendent of Education. The State Board of Education is also responsible for approving the following state-level policies inclusive of high school graduation requirements. More information about the SBOE can be found at sboe.dc.gov.

Question 6: What is the timeline for identifying and implementing the new Graduation Requirements?

The Reimagining High School Graduation Requirements initiative, inclusive of the development of the DC-wide Graduate Profile, is a three-year initiative. The focal areas for the first year will be the solicitation of community input on the graduation requirements and the DC-wide Graduate Profile. Community and LEA engagement will continue during year 2. The goals for Year 2 are to develop drafts of the DC-wide Graduate Profile and the revised graduation requirements, as well as finalize the DC-wide Graduate Profile. Year 3 will be centered on approval and adoption of the revised graduation requirements, as well as a phased implementation of the DC-wide Graduate Profile, and introducing the new Graduation Requirements to stakeholders.

Question 7: Whom do I contact if I have questions or feedback on the Reimagining High Schools Graduation Requirements initiative?

For additional information on the Reimagining High School Graduation Requirements initiative or the DC-wide Graduate Profile please contact Antoinette Mitchell, Assistant Superintendent of the Division of Postsecondary and Career Education at Antoinette.Mitchell@dc.gov or (202) 741-0471.