

**Class of 2020 - Graduation Requirements and Promotion
Guidance Document**

Ensuring the Class of 2020 is on track to graduate is an important priority. Districts should review the status of each senior to determine the extent which students have met graduation requirements. It is important to understand the needs of students and have, to the extent possible, a plan to help each student complete these requirements during the remainder of the school year. The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of state graduation requirements and to provide a brief summary of local authority around this issue.

Graduation Requirements

Each high school student shall complete a minimum of 200 high school credit hours prior to graduation, and at least 80 percent shall be from the core curriculum prescribed by the State Board of Education ([Nebraska Revised Statute 79-729](#)). The requirements, as outlined in Rule 10: *Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools*, include, but are not limited to the following:

- English Language Arts - 40 credit hours,
- Mathematics – 30 credit hours,
- Science – 30 credit hours, and,
- Social Studies – 30 credit hours.

Brief Summary of Local Authority and Actions

A school district may have graduation requirements that exceed the minimum requirements outlined in Rule 10, but these additional credits are at the discretion of local school boards and can be modified by the local school board.

Grading and Class Promotion

Course grades and promotion for the Class of 2020 are determined by local school board policies and not by state requirements. Districts have latitude in determining what grades to award, if any, for coursework and what coursework is required for credit.

Alternate Learning Environments, Changes in Instruction, and Graduation

It is likely in your Class of 2020, you have students who are in the following categories regarding graduation credits:

- Students who currently have attained the district graduation requirements, which include the state-required credits.
- Students who have completed the state-required graduation credits but have not completed all the district requirements. Local options may include:
 - Local school boards could decide to modify district policy to grant a high school diploma.
 - Local school boards could determine that coursework currently completed is sufficient to award credit for the district-required graduation credits.
 - As part of a Continuity of Learning Plan, districts could provide additional learning opportunities that students could complete in an alternate learning environment to meet district requirements/credits for graduation.
- Students who have not met the minimum state-required graduation credits but were on track to meet those requirements through current coursework prior to entering an alternate learning environment. Local options may include:
 - Local school boards could determine coursework currently completed is sufficient to award credit for the state-required graduation credits.
 - As part of a Continuity of Learning Plan, districts could provide additional learning opportunities students could complete in an alternate learning environment to meet state-required graduation credits.
- Students who are further behind in meeting high school graduation requirements and who would not have been able to meet the state graduation requirements with the normal coursework currently taken prior to the end of the 2019-20 school year. Local options may include:
 - As part of a Continuity of Learning Plan, districts could provide targeted educational opportunities for these students and consider summer educational opportunities to complete coursework.

Requirements Related to American Civics ([Nebraska Revised Statute 79-724](#))

The requirements within Nebraska Revised Statute 79-724 took effect on September 1, 2019, and the NDE considers 2019-2020 a transition year for implementation. Even so, opportunities may exist in an alternate learning environment to meet requirements within 79-724.

- If a district intends to administer the civics portion of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service Naturalization Test, students are required to take the test twice - once prior to completing 8th grade and a second time prior to completing 12th grade. It may be possible for seniors to complete the second testing in an alternate learning environment. For example, the University of Nebraska High School is offering “Citizenship 101” for free (non-credit), and it prepares students to take the naturalization test at the completion.
- For districts that intend to have students attend/participate in a meeting of a public body OR complete a project/paper and class presentation as outlined in 79-724, those requirements may also be met in an alternate learning environment.
- For questions related to these requirements, contact Cory Epler (cory.epler@nebraska.gov).

IDEA Considerations

Graduating with a regular high school diploma or reaching the maximum age of eligibility both result in termination of a student's eligibility for Special Education (IDEA) services. Procedurally, the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team must meet to review the student's status and issue the appropriate coding for the student, specifically 210 or 211 as described in the [ADVISED Data Elements Manual](#), a reasonable time before the student's eligibility is terminated. These meetings may be held via the telephone or through a virtual platform (e.g. Zoom, Google, etc.) and should include the student (if possible). The school district must also provide the student with a summary of performance prior to graduation or ending services because of age. Some IEP teams may have already provided a Notice of Graduation or Notice of Ending Services Due to Age to certain students. As this is an issue of IDEA eligibility, the Nebraska Department of Education recommends that school districts make every effort to complete these steps in a timely manner. For questions related to these requirements, contact Amy Rhone (amy.rhone@nebraska.gov).