

# HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

*How The Changes Impact Your Student*

The Board of Education Standards approved changes to the minimum high school graduation requirements in July of 2018

## WHY THE CHANGES?

- ◆ The High School Diploma requirements are those that EVERY student must earn as set by the South Dakota Department of Education. The total 22 credit requirement and credit-by-subject requirements have remained the same. The change comes in what path the student takes to meet the subject level requirements.

### BASE HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

ADVANCED

ADVANCED CAREER

ADVANCED HONORS

- ◆ The requirements include a base of required coursework and the ability for students to earn endorsements on top of the base diploma.
- ◆ With the framework of general requirements still the same, the changes allow more flexibility for schools to assist students in meeting their academic, personal, and career goals.
- ◆ The endorsements allow students more occasions to explore postsecondary opportunities, participate in work-based learning experiences, and explore areas of interest while they are still in high school.





# Endorsements

Within this framework, students may earn one (or more) advanced endorsements. Advanced endorsements denote a particular area of emphasis that a student has pursued in meeting the high school graduation requirements. While all students must meet the base high school diploma requirements, students may earn advanced endorsements.

## BASE HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

### Advanced

### Advanced

### Advanced Honors

The Advanced Endorsement indicates a student has pursued coursework consistent with entrance requirements for postsecondary education at a university.

The Advanced Career Endorsement indicates a student has career experience in a concentrated area, based on academic and/or workplace experience and a related credential.

The Advanced Honors Endorsement indicates a student has pursued advanced rigorous, academic coursework consistent with the course requirements for the South Dakota

- ◆ The advanced endorsements are stackable and indicate that students have specific preparations, in addition to meeting the base high school diploma requirements.
- ◆ Students *may* earn none or all three of the advanced endorsements.
- ◆ School districts may add additional endorsements at a local level, as long as the base graduation requirements are met.



## TO BE AWARE OF

- ◆ Recent changes in graduation requirements are for ALL high school students.
- ◆ Districts, in collaboration with families and students, determine what type of certificate students receive upon exiting K-12 public education – diploma, modified diploma, or certificate of attendance.
- ◆ Using modifications may result in implications that could adversely affect students throughout their educational career. If coursework is modified, students cannot receive credit for that class or be considered as a graduate under the federal guidelines.
- ◆ Modified requirements do not end district obligation to provide FAPE (Free and Appropriate Education).
- ◆ Every school will have created a plan for student's in their special education program. It will be important for parents and students to meet with their local school district's Principal, Special Education Director, and/or Counselor to ask important questions and discuss their student's plan towards high school graduation.



## What's Next: Understanding How Changes In Graduation Requirements Impact Student's Plans Beyond High School

*The changes in graduation requirements are for ALL High School Students, including those students on Individual Education Plans (IEP) and 504 Plans*

- ◆ Students receiving special education services are encouraged to meet the same graduation requirements as their peers.
- ◆ Parents should check with their individual school district to understand how modified course work will affect their child's status as a high school graduate.
- ◆ The state has guidelines it follows in reporting whether students meet the federal definition as a graduate. If a student on an IEP cannot meet the essential course standards, they cannot earn a regular signed diploma.
- ◆ Prior to graduation, through the transition process beginning at age 16 (or earlier), IEP teams should be discussing and determining services and supports that best support the student's trajectory through High School and goals for post High School.
- ◆ Parents and students should be aware that the IEP ends upon the completion of their high school program.
- ◆ Individualized accommodations are provided at post-secondary institutions through their student support services department. Parents and students are encouraged to contact support services prior to ending high school to learn more about how those services are delivered. These accommodations are often provided through a student support plan or 504 Plan.
- ◆ For students not pursuing post secondary education, ideally the IEP team has explored transition options and supports, authoring a plan for when the student exits high school.



### QUESTIONS TO ASK

- ◆ Is my child receiving accommodations or modifications on their IEP?
- ◆ How does this impact my child's current transition plan?
- ◆ Can my child continue to receive instruction beyond age 18 or senior year?
- ◆ What will that look like for my child?
- ◆ What should be included in the IEP regarding transition coursework towards graduation?
- ◆ What is the role of the regular education teacher if my student is in the regular classroom yet on an IEP?
- ◆ How many times can my child take a class – what will help them be successful?
- ◆ What are the core competencies needed to pass the class versus the typically required work that may be assigned?
- ◆ How will instruction be differentiated for my child?

# Who To Talk To If You Have More Questions

It's important to begin thinking about the future and to plan with students early and often. Be informed and ask questions to ensure your student is on the right path.

Each school district will have determined how to implement the recent high school graduation requirement changes and may have specific or unique guidance to offer parents and students for their district.

If you have questions or concerns, contact your local school district representatives.



## SD Department of Education

605-773-3678

<https://doe.sd.gov/gradrequirements/>

### Resources

- ◆ 2018 Graduation Requirements Handbook
- ◆ 2018 Graduation Requirements Infographic
- ◆ Guidance Policy

## South Dakota Parent Connection

800-640-4553

[www.sdparent.org](http://www.sdparent.org)

### Resources

- ◆ Parent Brief- What Parents Should Know About Reaching Age 18
- ◆ Family Resource Guide: Transition To Adulthood

## South Dakota Statewide Family Engagement Center (SD SFEC)

605-484-3401

<https://sdsfec.org/>

