

Considerations for the Senior Class of 2020

March 2020

The Kentucky Department of Education's goal for the senior class of 2020 is for them to graduate by meeting high school graduation requirements by the end of the 2019-2020 academic year.

The continuous learning being provided through the Non-Traditional Instruction (NTI) Program for graduating seniors should prioritize meeting graduation requirements, with an emphasis on students who were not meeting expectations as of March 2020.

Per [704 KAR 3:305](#), all students are required to complete at least 22 credits of required and elective coursework. Many local boards of education have local policy that requires more than 22 credits and/or identifies specific courses that are not a part of the state's list of required courses. In these cases, a local board of education can amend its local graduation policy, if desired. Any change by local boards of education must still meet the requirements of 704 KAR 3:305.

End of semester final grades should be calculated, reported and officially recorded on a transcript in the school's student information system, but the process of assigning and reporting student grades is a matter determined at the local level.

Prior to making any decision, thoughtful consideration should be given to each requirement in order to best meet the needs of individual students. Each district will have to make decisions that are unique to their student population, faculty, staff and available resources.

In general, when making local decisions, determine:

- What's working and what's not;
- The needs;
- The challenges; and
- Resources or next steps for overcoming those challenges.

Feedback regarding high school graduation requirements has been given by various stakeholders, including the Education Continuation Task Force, school counselors, superintendents, principals, teachers and students.

High School Graduation Requirements

Required

[704 KAR 3:305](#)

Local District Considerations

- Should local boards of education consider waiving local graduation requirements (e.g., ILP, transition readiness, community service, additional courses) that exceed the minimum requirements set forth in 704 KAR 3:305?
- How can local schools and districts ensure students who are not on track to graduate receive additional support?

- Has the local board chosen to award performance-based credit as established in an existing local performance-based credit system policy that includes performance descriptors and evaluation procedures to determine if content and performance standards have been met by graduating students? How may the policy be used to allow graduating students to meet some of the graduation requirements?

KRS 158.141 Civics Test Requirement – Waived for 2019-2020 School Year

Interim Commissioner of Education, Kevin C. Brown, issued a waiver on April 3, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 emergency. Pursuant to the authority granted in EO 2020-243 and with the approval of Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman, Secretary of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, the [waiver](#) suspends KRS 158.141, which requires students to pass a 100-question civics test to graduate from a Kentucky public high school, for the 2019-2020 school year.

KRS 158.142 Early High School Graduation Program

Interim Commissioner of Education, Kevin C. Brown, issued a waiver on Friday, April 3, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 emergency. Pursuant to the authority granted in EO 2020-243 and with the approval of Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman, Secretary of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, the [waiver](#) suspends the requirement that current high school juniors participating in the KRS 158.142 Early High School Graduation Program take and pass end-of-course (EOC) examinations in order to complete the early high school graduation program and graduate at the conclusion of the 2019-20 school year.

The waiver suspends KRS 158.142 (3)(a), which dictates the requirements for completing an early high school graduation program and receiving an Early Graduation Scholarship Certificate. The suspension excludes current high school juniors who declared their intent to participate in the early high school graduation program prior to Jan. 1 from end-of-course (EOC) examinations. **Therefore, juniors who obtain a qualifying benchmark score on the ACT and who meet all other requirements set forth in KRS 158.142 will remain eligible for early graduation.**

The EOC requirement remains in effect for high school freshmen and sophomores, who will have the opportunity to take EOC exams in future school years.

Grades for Seniors and Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) Awards

Local District Considerations

- How will local decisions around school or district grading policies impact student GPAs and the awarding of student KEES allocations?

Information from Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA)

KHEAA has received questions from administrators at the secondary and postsecondary levels regarding the impact grading policy changes could have on KEES and the dual credit programs. KHEAA provided the [Yearly KEES GPA Calculation Scenarios](#) to assist with decision-making processes.

College Credit earned through AP, IB, Cambridge and Dual Credit

Local District Considerations

- How will Advanced Placement students be provided with access to technology and/or connectivity to complete AP exams? How many students need a device and/or connectivity to complete the online exams?
- How will students enrolled in dual credit courses be provided with access to technology and/or connectivity to complete those courses online?

*Both IB and Cambridge have canceled May/June 2020 exams.

Military Early Graduation Request

Per SB 177(9), notwithstanding KRS 159.035, for the 2019-2020 school year, a principal may award the number of educational enhancement opportunity days needed by a graduating student to meet military service or postsecondary education enrollment obligations that occur prior to the last day of school due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Local District Considerations

- Per SB 177(9), how will local districts establish a process for awarding educational enhancement opportunity days to graduating students with military or postsecondary education enrollment obligations that occur prior to the last day of school due to the COVID-19 public health emergency?
- How will local districts establish a process for issuing graduation diplomas and official transcripts as soon as possible before May or June for graduating students who have signed an enlistment contract for the military and who meet graduation requirements?
- Will local districts be willing to waive additional local graduation requirements above the state required minimum for graduating students who are enlisting in the military?

Communication Plan/Audience

- How will this information be communicated to educators, students, families?
- What are effective ways to ensure transparency?