



Denver Public Schools

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The high school diploma awarded by the Denver Public Schools represents a high standard of quality in curriculum content, instruction, and student learning, and should be maintained as a document that reflects substantial effort by the student and the school district in preparation for the world of work or higher education.

General or the Combined General Course of Study Requirements

Two hundred forty semester hours (24 units) shall be required for students to graduate from high school and receive a high school diploma. Transcripts shall reflect differences in program content. For the Combined General diploma up to 140 semester hours may be earned in Special Education course in any subject area. The content area requirements are as listed below:

General Course of Study Diploma Requirements

Course	Carnegie	
	Credits	Units
1. Language Arts – A minimum of forty semester hours (4 units) shall be earned including ten semester hours (1 unit) of Introduction to Literature and Composition 1 & 2 and ten semester hours (1 unit) of American Literature 1 & 2. Ten semester hours (1 unit) World Literature, or upper division writing course. Ten semester hours (1 unit) other Language Arts.	40	4.0
2. Mathematics – Forty semester hours (4 units) shall be earned. Ten semester hours (1 unit) of Algebra or its integrated equivalent, ten semester hours (1 unit) of Geometry or its integrated equivalent are required, ten semesters hours (1 unit) of Algebra 2 or integrated equivalent, and ten semester hours (1 unit) of a higher level than algebra.	40	4.0
3. Science – Thirty semester hours (3 units) shall be earned: Students will be required to complete 30 semester hours (3 units) of science credit, 20 semester hours (2 units) must come from Earth Science, Biology, Chemistry or Physics.	30	3.0
4. Social Studies – Thirty semester hours (3 units) shall be earned. Ten semester hours (1 unit) of U.S. History, five semester hours (.5 unit) in Civics and fifteen semester hours (1.5 units) of other social studies.	30	3.0
5. Physical Education/Dance, Citywide Marching Band, ROTC, or DPS Athletics – Ten semester hours (1 unit) shall be earned or exempted for athletic participation.	10	1.0
Electives – Ninety semester hours (9 units) shall be earned Academic Electives – Twenty semester hours (2 units) required for graduation, 10 semester hours (1 unit) of Fine Arts which includes Art, Dance, Drama, and Music, or Career & Technical Education. Ten semester hours (1 unit) of academic electives from an approved academic electives list, which includes English/Social Studies electives, World Languages, AVID, Gear-Up, and AP/IB courses. Other Electives – Within the 240 semester hours (24 units) required for graduation, 70 semester hours (5 units) are available for electives. An extensive elective program is offered in the core curriculum subjects. In addition, students may choose electives in art, business/marketing, consumer and family studies, foreign language, industrial technology, music, physical education/dance, or special offerings. Community-based experience – Within the 240 semester hours (24 units) required for a diploma, a minimum of 220 semester hours (22 units) shall be earned in classroom-based instruction. Students may, therefore, earn and apply a maximum of twenty semester hours (2 units) of community-based experience toward graduation requirements. These experiences may include, but are not limited to, field or service experiences, work experiences, and internships.	90	9.0
Total	240	24.0

DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Class of 2011 & beyond

General Information

High School credits may not be earned in middle school. Example: A student who completes Algebra 1 in middle school, still must take 4 years of math in high school.

Exemptions

Athletic sports that are sanctioned by the Denver Public Schools' Board of Education and meet the criteria below may exempt a student from the physical education graduation requirement. No grade or credit will be given for athletic participation and such exemptions will not reduce the total number of hours required to earn a diploma. Both semesters of the physical education requirement may be exempted by athletic participation.

Criteria governing physical education exemptions:

- a. The student must maintain academic eligibility for the entire season.
- b. One full sport season is required to exempt a student from five semester hours (5 units) of PE requirement.
- c. A student must be a high school freshman, sophomore, or junior to qualify for the exemption. Seniors who have not yet met the physical education requirement are not allowed to take this exemption and must enroll in a physical education course.

A high school diploma from Denver Public Schools certifies that a student has fulfilled all graduation requirements in one of the five course areas:

- The General Course of Study
- Designated Course of Study*
- Combined General*
- Work Experience and Study*
- ASCENT Diploma (Accelerating Students Through Concurrent Enrollment)

Additional Information Regarding Requirements

Students who are unsatisfactory or partially proficient in math and Literacy CSAP will be double blocked during their 9th grade year, and in some cases their 10th grade year. This additional blocked class counts as an academic elective credit.

A student may register for 70 credit hours, (35 credits per semester) during the regular school year. The limit may be increased to 80 credits, (5 additional credits per semester) with special permission from the principal.

- The maximum number of credits a student may earn in summer school is 10 semester hours.

Graduation Exercises

To participate in commencement exercises with their class, students must complete the equivalent of 240 semester hours and also complete all required classes by the end of their senior year.

Transfer Students

A transfer student from outside the Denver Public Schools must meet the requirements to receive a diploma from the Denver Public Schools. All graduation requirements must be met prior to graduation, including attendance in the Denver Public Schools for at least two semesters, with a minimum of 50 semester hours (5 units) of credit earned.

Valedictorian/Salutatorian

The average of all eight semesters are used to determine each school's valedictorian/salutatorian. Students must be enrolled in their school of attendance for a minimum of three (3) years and achieve the highest grade point average in their graduating class in order to qualify and be the class valedictorian/salutatorian.

Grade Level Classification of Students	
60 semester hours	Sophomore
120 semester hours	Junior
170 semester hours	Senior
240 semester hours	Award Diploma