

Frequently asked questions about the new high school graduation requirements

1. What are the required credits for graduation for students entering high school in 2009?

*Wilson County Students must have **28** credits to graduate.*

*For a list of all requirements: <http://www.state.tn.us/education/gradreq.shtml> **OR***

<http://www.wcschools.com/districtinfodocs/HsGradRequirements.ppt>

2. Do I have to take a math course every year?

Yes. Every student must take a math each year of high school.

a. What if a student received credits in math from middle school?

The student must still take a math course each year of high school.

b. If Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2 are required math courses, what would a student take during his fourth year of high school?

Students 4th year of math will be assigned based upon his/her math sub score on the ACT.

Students who make below a 19 will be placed in an appropriate math course. Students making a 19 or higher will have more options.

c. Can a student take two math courses in the same year?

Yes. However, the student will still be required to take a math course each year of high school.

3. What is an End-of-Course (EOC) and why is it important to me?

The End-of-Course exam is a state required examination. It is important because students will be required to take these tests when they take certain courses in high school. The exam grade also calculates into the final average for the class with a weight of 20%.

a. Which courses have an EOC test?

English 1, English 2, English 3, Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, US History, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics.

b. When is the EOC given?

The EOC is given near the end of the course (December for fall courses and May for spring courses).

c. How much will the EOC score count towards the final grade a student receives in a class with an EOC?

For the 2009-10 school year, the EOC will count 20% of the student's grade for a particular course. Eventually the state will raise it to 25%.

d. Will students also be required to take gateway exams?

No. There are no longer Gateway exams.

e. **How difficult will an EOC test be?**

EOC exams will be based upon the new state standards, which are aligned with the ACT and SAT. Therefore, the EOC exams will be closely aligned with both the ACT and SAT.

f. **Will courses with an EOC also have a final exam?**

The EOC will serve as the final examination for courses with an EOC. Teacher-made final exams will be given in courses that do not have an EOC.

4. **What is an Elective Focus?**

The elective focus allows a student to concentrate in an area of study he/she might want to pursue beyond high school.

a. **Are all students required to have an elective focus?**

Yes. It is a graduation requirement. ALL students must have a minimum of 3 credits in an approved elective focus.

b. **What are the areas of elective focus?**

Wilson County has approved the following as elective focus options:

- *Math/Science*
- *Humanities*
- *Fine Arts*
- *JROTC,*
- *34 CTE elective focus clusters*

Click here to see a list of the CTE clusters.

[http://www.wcschools.com/Curriculum/secondary/Clusters%20for%200910%20for%2009th%20graders%20\(FCS%20COR\).doc](http://www.wcschools.com/Curriculum/secondary/Clusters%20for%200910%20for%2009th%20graders%20(FCS%20COR).doc)

c. **When does a student choose an elective focus?**

Students will initially choose their elective focus when they complete their initial 4-year plan as an eighth grade student.

d. **Can a student earn elective focus credits in middle school?** *No.*

5. **What if I want to change my Elective Focus?**

A student can change his/her elective focus only if his/her schedule allows it. In order to change an elective focus a meeting must take place with the student, the student's parent/guardian, the student's guidance counselor, and an administrator/instructional supervisor. The plan will be reviewed yearly at the time of registration with the final plan being set at the end of the sophomore year (or when completing the registration process for the junior year).

6. **What is the ACT important to me?**

All eleventh grade students are required to take the ACT. In addition, all 8th graders take the EXPLORE test and all 10th graders take the PLAN test. These two tests help prepare and predict a student's ACT score.

a. **Do I have to make a certain score on the ACT in order to graduate?**

No, but a student must take the ACT in order to graduate. Also, the ACT score, when taken in the 11th grade, will determine what math course can, or will, be taken the senior year.

b. If I do not have to have a particular score on the ACT in order to graduate, why is it that important?

Almost all post-secondary schools (colleges, universities, etc.) require a minimum ACT score in order to be accepted. In addition, the student's math sub-score will determine which math course a student takes his/her fourth year of high school (refer to question #2 above). In addition, honor diplomas are based upon ACT sub scores (see item #7 below).

For more information about ACT:

[HTTP://WWW.ACT.ORG/AAP/](http://www.act.org/aap/)

7. How can I graduate with honors?

Students who score at, or above, all of the subject area readiness benchmarks on the ACT or equivalent score on the SAT will graduate with honors. The readiness benchmarks are as follows: English – 18, Math – 22, Social Studies – 21, and Science – 24.

a. Does a student have to achieve all of the readiness benchmark scores on the same ACT?

No. A student can achieve the scores by taking the ACT multiple times. In order to graduate with honors the student must have achieved the readiness benchmark one time on any ACT.

b. What is a readiness benchmark?

The readiness benchmark is a predictor for student success in college. Students scoring at the readiness benchmark are 50% likely to attain a B in their first college course in that subject area and have a 75% chance of attaining a C in college.

c. Does a student's GPA or transcript help a student get an honor's diploma?

No.

d. Why has Wilson County changed the criteria for an Honor's Diploma?

The State Department of Education is requiring all public schools in the state of Tennessee to follow these requirements. Therefore, an Honor's Diploma will carry the same prestige throughout the state. Wilson County will follow the guidelines set forth by the State Department of Education.

e. What if a student excels elsewhere besides his/her score on the ACT? Will they be recognized?

Yes. The State Department of Education has also designated guidelines so that students may receive a Diploma with Distinction.

f. How may a student achieve a Diploma of Distinction?

A student will receive a Diploma of Distinction when he/ she completes at least one (1) of the following: Earn a nationally recognized industry certification, participate in at least one of the Governor's Schools, participate in one of the state's All-State musical organizations, be selected as either a National Merit Finalist or Semi-Finalist, attain a composite score of 31 or

higher on the ACT, attain a score of 3 or higher on at least 2 AP exams, or earn 12 or more semester hours of transcribed college credit.

g. Can a student receive both an Honor's Diploma and a Diploma of Distinction?

Yes. If a student meets the requirement for both, the student will receive both an Honor's Diploma and a Diploma of Distinction.

8. What is a four-year plan?

In order to help prepare students for their career choice, whether it involves post secondary training, college, or going directly into the work force or the military, a 4-year plan will be developed in the 8th grade. The plan should be developed by the student, parent/guardian, and school official.

a. What is in the plan?

This plan will include what courses are to be taken each year of high school in order to meet the student's specific goal and their elective focus.

b. Can student revisit this plan?

Yes. It will be reviewed and agreed upon in writing yearly with the student, parent or guardian, and school official. During the 2nd term of the sophomore year, the plan will be reviewed and made into their final plan for graduation.

c. Can the plan be changed?

In order for the plan to be changed, it must be done with all 3 parties (student, parent/guardian, and school official) in agreement.

9. What about students served by Special Education programs?

Regular High School Diploma: To receive a regular high school diploma, students with disabilities must earn a minimum of 22 specified units of credit and have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct. Courses that have historically proven to be difficult for students with disabilities, such as Algebra I, Geometry, and Biology will be offered in a setting that permits increased instructional time. Accommodations may be made in courses to prevent the student from being penalized for the effects of the disability. Students failing to earn a final average of 70 in a course that requires an End-of-Course (EOC) test and whose disability adversely affects performance on that test will be allowed through an approved process to add to their end-of-course assessment through an alternative performance based assessment that has been approved by an IEP team. In addition, the Fine Arts and Foreign Language requirements may be waived by the IEP team for students who are sure they are not going to attend a University and replaced with courses designed to enhance and expand the elective focus. Work-based learn (WBL) will be available for all students with disabilities and may be used to satisfy the elective focus. For an explanation of the specified credits, speak with the student's guidance counselor or IEP case manager.

a. What if the student's disability prevents earning the specified credits?

Students with disabilities may be awarded either a Transition Certificate or an IEP Certificate based on the educational program outlined in the student's IEP. The pursuit/awarding of these certificates will be determined by the IEP team

10. Who can I call if I have more questions?

If you have additional questions you may contact the following Central Office Supervisors:

- *Angela Rohen or Monty Wilson / Secondary Curriculum 444.3282*
- *Bill Moss / Career Technical Education 444.1104*
- *Jill Micco / Special Education 444.3282*

You may also contact your high school principal, assistant principal, or guidance counselor:

Mt. Juliet High School

<http://www.wcschools.com/mjhs/>

758.5606

Mel Brown, Principal

Beverly Sharpe, Assistant Principal

Christy Walker, Guidance

Lebanon High School

<http://www.wcschools.com/lhs/>

444.9610

Nancy Ash, Principal

Denise Joyner, Assistant Principal

Tiffany Smith, Guidance

Watertown High School

<http://www.wcschools.com/whs/>

237.3434

Jeff Luttrell, Principal

Terry Thompson, Assistant Principal

Odetta Ellington, Guidance

Wilson Central High School

<http://www.wcschools.com/wch/>

453.4600

Travis Mayfield, Principal

Cathy Toombs, Assistant Principal

Lindsay MacPherson, Guidance