

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

Students must successfully complete the courses required by the Board and the Iowa Department of Education in order to graduate. Students must have attended a high school within the Waterloo Schools for at least one semester immediately prior to graduation. It shall be the responsibility of the High School Principal to ensure that students who have completed the district graduation requirements are recommended to the Superintendent for graduation.

It is the responsibility of the Superintendent to ensure that students complete grades one through twelve and that high school students complete 44 credits prior to graduation.

WCSD recognizes a three-tiered approach for completing graduation requirements. The *Standard Diploma* is the path that the majority of students will follow. The *Honors Diploma* reflects a more rigorous path that includes advanced courses. The *Core Diploma* reflects an alternative choice for students who need to meet graduation requirements in a differentiated manner.

Both the *Honors Diploma* and the *Core Diploma* require approval from school and district administrators, counselor(s), and parents/guardians. Approval should occur during the first semester or later of the third year of high school. The Core Diploma is not applicable for early graduation and students must be in a four-year (or more) high school course of study.

Prior to graduation, the district will advise students on how to successfully complete the free application for federal student aid.

Beginning with the school year starting July 1, 2026, students must receive a passing score on the civics test as set forth by the Iowa Department of Education and required by relevant laws.

I. STANDARD DIPLOMA CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

	Credits
English (must include English 9, 10, Am. Lit./Comp)	8
Mathematics (must include Algebra I or equivalency)	6
Science	
Earth & Space Science	2
Biology	2
<i>And One of the Following Combinations:</i>	
Physical Science A & B	2
Physical Science A & Chemistry A/B	3
Physical Science B & Physics A/B	3
Chemistry A/B & Physics A/B	4
Social Sciences	
U.S. History	2
World History (can be satisfied by taking IB History or IB Econ)	2
Geography (can be satisfied by taking WCSD Pre-IB Advanced World History, IB History or IB Econ)	1
U.S. Government	1
Economics (satisfied by Personal Finance/WCC Personal Finance, IB History, or IB Econ)	1

Health	1
Physical Education (or equivalent exemptions)	4
Career Technical Courses/Electives	2-10+

Standard Diploma Credits for Graduation **44+**

II. HONORS DIPLOMA CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

	Credits
English (must include English 9, 10, Am. Lit./Comp)	8
Mathematics (must include Algebra I or equivalency)	6
Science	
Earth & Space Science	2
Biology	2
<i>And One of the Following Combinations:</i>	
Physical Science A & B	2
Physical Science A & Chemistry A/B	3
Physical Science B & Physics A/B	3
Chemistry A/B & Physics A/B	4
Social Sciences	
U.S. History	2
World History (can be satisfied by taking IB History or IB Econ)	2
Geography (can be satisfied by taking WCSD Pre-IB Advanced World History, IB History, or IB Econ)	1
U.S. Government	1
Economics (satisfied by Personal Finance/WCC Personal Finance, IB History, or IB Econ)	1
Health	1
Physical Education (or equivalent exemptions)	4
Career Technical Courses/Electives	11-20+

Honors Diploma Credits for Graduation **53+**

Additionally, to earn an *Honors Diploma*, students must also successfully complete ten credits of college courses from PSEO (Post-Secondary Enrollment Option), AP (Advanced Placement), IB (International Baccalaureate), and/or Concurrent Courses, which can include CTE (Career Technical Education) courses. A GPA of 3.0 or higher, either weighted or unweighted, is required.

III. CORE DIPLOMA CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

	Credits
English (must include English 9, 10, and a writing course)	8
Mathematics (must include Algebra I or equivalency)	6
Science (must include Earth and Space Science, biology and physical science)	6
Social Sciences (must include US History, World History, Geography and US Government)	6
Economics (can be satisfied by taking Personal Finance)	1
Health	1
Physical Education (or equivalent exemptions)	4
Career Technical Courses/Electives	2-11+

Core Diploma Credits for Graduation **34- 43**

IV. STUDENTS WITH INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLANS

Graduation requirements for special education students include successful completion of four years of English, three years of math, three years of social studies and three years of science.

V. ALTERNATIVE CREDIT

- A. Students may earn outside credit towards graduation upon completion of approved alternative courses of study. Approval of such courses shall be determined by Office of Teaching and Learning. No more than a total of four (4) credits or two (2) units of credit for courses will be approved to apply toward graduation. Procedures for Homebound Instruction are covered under policy 603.4 and 603.4-R.
- B. **Military Credit** - Students enrolled in a junior offers' training corp shall receive 1/8 physical education credit for each semester the student is enrolled in the program.
- C. **Legislative Page Program** – Students who complete a regular session in the Legislative Page Program of the general assembly at the state capitol will be credited ½ credit of social studies.

VI. EARLY GRADUATION

A student who completes the credit requirements in all areas except physical education is eligible for graduation, without regard to the length of time such student has been enrolled in the school. However, students will be encouraged to stay in school to take advantage of postsecondary opportunities while in high school rather than graduate from high school early.

VII. GRADUATION CEREMONY

- A. Students participating in the graduation ceremony must have met all graduation requirements by the graduation date.
- B. Students are not required to participate in the graduation ceremony.

VIII. GRADUATION CLASS

A student who has not met the graduation criteria in time for May graduation with his or her class and:

- A. who meets the requirements prior to school resuming in the fall shall be counted as a graduate with his/her current class. The graduation criteria would need to be met prior to school resuming for the upcoming school year.
- B. who does not meet requirements prior to school resuming in the fall and is not enrolled for the fall semester by October 1, will be counted as a drop out. Students

will be encouraged to re-enroll at any point prior to the age of 21, earn credits toward graduation, and graduate with later cohorts.

- C. who meets graduation requirements during a subsequent fall or spring, will graduate with that year's class.

Legal Ref.: Iowa Code §§ 256.7, .11, .41; 279.8; 279.61; 280.3, .14.
281 I.A.C. 12.3(5); 12.5

Cross Ref.: 106.0 School District Strategic Plans (Goals and Objectives)
505.6 Academic Progress – Promotion/Retention
602.9 Physical Education
603.4 Home or Hospital Services

ADOPTED: 2/11/91
3/14/94
2/12/96
9/13/99
3/10/03
6/13/05
4/14/08
6/8/09
5/14/12
8/24/15
7/10/17
3/11/19
4/28/25
8/25/25

Reviewed: 12/95, 6/10/99, 2/6/03, 3/6/08, 5/7/09, 4/5/12, 8/6/15, 6/1/17, 2/7/19, 4/3/25, 8/7/25