

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF HARFORD COUNTY

INFORMATIONAL REPORT

PRESENTATION OF HCPS Graduation Requirements

November 14, 2022

Background Information

The Maryland High School Graduation Task Force was first convened in January 2018 at the request of the State Board and the State Superintendent of Schools. The Task Force was charged with making recommendations to the Board and Superintendent on the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) Chapter 13A.03.02 *Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland*. Specifically, the Task Force was asked to focus on three areas: credit and program requirements (number of credits, subject areas, and other requirements), assessments, and options for awarding high school diplomas. All decisions were informed by current research, data, and experts. The recommended amendments to credits, beginning with the ninth-grade class of 2021-2022, included an increase in the number of credits required for graduation from 21 to 22, an increase in the number of credits in mathematics from 3 to 4, and an increase in the number of credits in health from one-half credit to one credit.

Within HCPS, we initiated conversations around the same time with our stakeholders regarding the local school system requirements, which is guided by the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) Chapter 13A.03.02.09(B)(2). Since 2005-06, Harford County Public Schools has required students to earn 26 credits to graduate with a high school diploma. This initiative, which fell under the local Comprehensive Secondary School Reform (CSSRP), required students to earn the credits identified by MSDE for a diploma plus an additional ½ credit in Physical Education, 4 credits indicating a pathway if a student was not enrolled in a Career & Technical Education Program (CTE), and up to 26 elective credits.

Discussion

Since beginning these conversations locally in 2018, we have seen tremendous growth in our HCPS North Star Initiative, the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, the development of our Workforce Investment Program, and the beginning of Harford County's Apprenticeship Maryland Program. Our analysis shows that the local graduation requirements prohibit some of our students from taking advantage of the programs that have been developed to help with preparation for college and careers. We believe now is the time to shift our local graduation requirements in order to increase opportunities for students, reduce barriers for students, and shift requirements to add flexibility for early college, apprenticeships, non-credit dual enrollment programs, and workforce development for all interested students.

We have sought feedback from stakeholders since we began this work four years ago. This proposal has been brought to High School Principals, High School Counselors, Blueprint North Star Sub Committee, Harford Business Education Roundtable, HCPS Executive Leadership & Senior Staff, and Parent Advisory Members before coming to the Board of Education. Next, this information will be posted to the HCPS.org website for public comment.

Based on the feedback received from stakeholders, and to increase opportunities for students and reduce barriers, our proposal includes:

- Shift the overall credit requirement from 26 to 24
- Eliminate the local pathway requirement

Superintendent's Recommendation

No action is required.