



High School Transcript Audit FAQs

As the RPS Administration shared with the Richmond City School Board earlier this year, the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) conducted an audit of the division's high school transcripts last spring. That audit indicated that RPS had been erroneously awarding credits for a number of classes, starting as far back as 2015.

Because RPS students did nothing wrong – they were merely following the instructions of RPS administrators – the division requested a waiver from the VDOE to prevent students from losing credits. On November 8, 2018, that request was denied.

As a result of this ruling, RPS will soon begin a process of reviewing every single high school transcript to ensure that erroneously awarded credits are removed and that any other errors are fully corrected.

Below is a set of frequently asked questions regarding the transcript review and correction process.

1. What are the errors that RPS made?

There are four types of errors that must be corrected. Below is a brief description of each:

- **Courses miscoded as worth two credit hours** – From the 2015-16 school year through the 2017-18 school year, some RPS courses were coded incorrectly as worth two credit hours when they were actually only worth one credit. The majority of these courses were in Career and Technical Education (CTE) subjects.
- **Credit incorrectly given for courses taken multiple times** – From the 2015-16 school year through the 2017-18 school year, a number of students erroneously received credit for taking and passing the same course multiple times.
- **Credit incorrectly given for unapproved "local" courses** – From the 2015-16 school year through the 2017-18 school year, there is no documentation of RPS bringing "local" courses – those created by the division – to the School Board for approval, as is required for credit.
- **Credit awarded for high school courses taken in middle school** – From the 2015-16 school year through the 2017-18 school year, RPS erroneously awarded credit to students for some high school courses taken in middle school. The affected courses were either not approved by the Board, taken out of sequence, or in a subject area not typically credit-bearing. Note that most high school courses taken for credit by students

in middle school were permissible (for example, Algebra I and Spanish I). Students will not lose credit for these courses.

2. Is there any way to appeal the VDOE's decision?

No. All erroneously awarded credits will be removed.

3. What happens next?

Starting immediately, a team from RPS and the VDOE will begin to review the transcript of every current RPS high school student. From these reviews, we will make all necessary corrections.

4. Will the removal of credit hold seniors back from graduating?

At this time, we are not aware of any seniors who may lose a credit they need for graduation. Of course, a senior may not graduate for other reasons.

5. Will GPAs or class ranks change for any students?

Yes. Since RPS must remove credit hours and the grades associated with them, GPAs and class ranks will change. Please note that, as a part our transcript review, we will examine our class rank and GPA formulas to ensure they fully reflect all relevant policies and are applied with 100% accuracy.

6. Will this process affect students who already graduated from RPS?

No. We are only correcting errors for current RPS students for issues on transcripts dating back to the 2015-16 school year.

7. If a student took a high school course in middle school and passed the SOL, will s/he still receive credit for that course?

Yes. Many high school level courses taken by middle school students were deemed eligible for credit (for example, Algebra I and Spanish I). Credit for such courses will remain on student transcripts.

8. Is there a way for the School Board to retroactively approve a "local" course?

Yes. If RPS can identify course documentation (for example, a course syllabus), the School Board can retroactively approve the local course, thereby preserving the credit from that course. The Administration will bring any course documentation it can identify to the School Board in January.

9. When will students have their updated transcript?

We will make all necessary adjustments to transcripts for current seniors by February 1, 2019 (to align with the release of report cards). Transcripts for all other high school students (grades 9 through 11) will be reviewed and updated, as necessary, by April 1, 2019.

Guidance will be provided to all RPS counselors and building leaders on how to communicate details about this matter with college admissions officers. Counselors will be prepared to send updated transcripts when all corrections have been made.

10. What steps is RPS taking to make sure this isn't an issue in future years?

In addition to reviewing every current high school transcript, we're ensuring that our course catalog and Program of Studies are fully aligned with state and local policy, and implementing new training for our counselors and school leaders. Additionally, RPS will be launching a redesigned transcript that is fully compliant with state requirements and easier to understand for students and families.

11. When and how will RPS share more information about this process?

We are hosting two initial meetings for students, families, and members of the public:

- Tuesday, December 4, at 5:00 pm, at Thomas Jefferson High School
- Thursday, December 6, at 7:00 pm, at Huguenot High School

Spanish translation services will be available for both events. Additional sessions (at other high schools) will be held in the coming weeks and information will also be on the RPS website as it becomes available.

For more information or additional questions, please contact transcripts@vaschools.net.