



# NEW GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CLASS OF 2021

Denver Public Schools' vision that Every Child Succeeds starts with the belief that all students, from the very first day they walk into a DPS school, can achieve at the highest levels and ultimately cross the graduation stage ready for college, careers and life. One of the five goals in the district's strategic plan — the Denver Plan 2020 — is to ensure our students graduate college- and career-ready through rigorous coursework and high standards.

DPS has adopted new, evidence-based graduation requirements that will go into effect this year for the graduating class of 2021. Our updated graduation standards hinge on three key components:

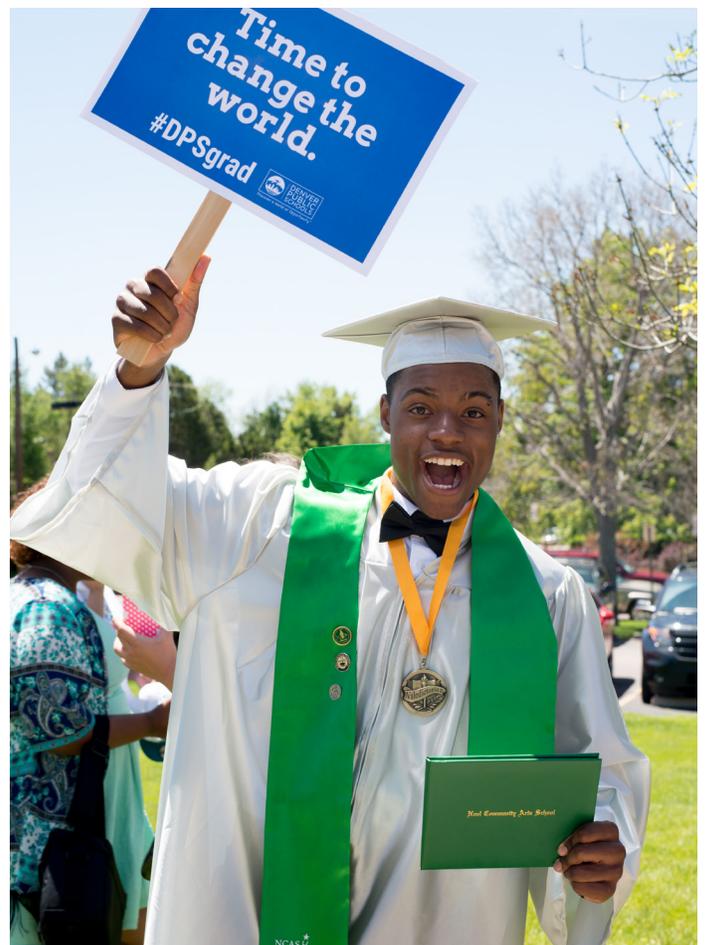


## A DIPLOMA OF POSSIBILITY

We know that most future careers require students to continue on with some form of postsecondary education after they graduate — whether it's college, trade school, an apprenticeship or military service. Our new graduation requirements mirror what is expected for our students to be successful in college, career training or the workplace.

At DPS, we want to ensure our students can reach their full potential and don't need to take remedial classes after they graduate. That's why we have set new higher standards for graduation and are connecting our students with resources to ensure they are prepared for success in college and career.

The new graduation requirements are less about grades earned for time spent in a classroom, and more about students demonstrating they are truly prepared for the world after high school. Some students may need more time to complete the requirements and it is okay to stretch their path to graduation to a fifth or sixth year (up to age 21). By instilling high standards districtwide, our students will be challenged and inspired in their education journey to forge their own future toward a meaningful career.



Learn more at [collegeandcareer.dpsk12.org](https://collegeandcareer.dpsk12.org).

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CLASS OF 2021:

IN ORDER TO EARN A DPS DIPLOMA, STUDENTS WILL BE EXPECTED TO ACHIEVE THE FOLLOWING MILESTONES:

Fundamentally, more education is associated with both higher rates of employment and earning potential – so, preparing every student for postsecondary education and training is critical. To put it in perspective, consider the following projections:



High school dropouts earn on average \$11,667 a year, compared to an average salary of \$62,609 a year for college graduates.



The unemployment rate for dropouts is 27%, compared to 5% for college graduates.



Jobs that require training beyond high school are growing three times as fast as jobs that require only a high school diploma.



By 2020, 74% of all Colorado jobs will require education beyond high school, such as college, trade school, an apprenticeship or military service.

### COURSEWORK REQUIREMENT:

Students will be required to complete 24 units of course credit across an assortment of content areas to prepare them for acceptance requirements at postsecondary institutions. The coursework required includes the following:

- 4 units of English language arts
- 4 units of mathematics
- 3 units of science
- 3 units of social studies
- 1 unit of physical education
- 1 unit of arts or eligible Career Technical Education (CTE)
- 8 units of approved electives

### COMPETENCY REQUIREMENT:

Students will be required to demonstrate competency in English and math, which means proving they understand the content and are able to build upon the skills learned.

We know students are unique and take many paths to achieving success; therefore, we have created multiple opportunities and plans of study through which they can demonstrate competency. The competency demonstrations may be achieved in a variety of ways that reflect Colorado academic standards, such as earning minimum scores on state and national tests, completing rigorous learning projects, passing college-level courses taken during high school or earning an approved professional certification. To review in detail all the ways students can fulfill the competency requirements, please visit [collegeandcareer.dpsk12.org](http://collegeandcareer.dpsk12.org).

### ICAP REQUIREMENT:

Students will continue to work with their counselors, teachers and families to develop, update and complete their Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAPs), a process which starts as early as the sixth grade.

Through this personalized career and academic planning tool, students are empowered to evaluate all aspects of their path to college and career, including goal setting, college opportunities, academic planning, financial literacy and financial aid, and 21st Century skills. This framework creates an attainable roadmap for students, so they are able to visualize how exploring possibilities and achieving milestones translates to their future college and career aspirations.

If you have any questions about the new graduation requirements, please talk with your teacher, counselor or school leader. Our district welcomes feedback on the new graduation requirements, and is working to ensure all families have the support needed to achieve success. For updates and events, follow along at [collegeandcareer.dpsk12.org](http://collegeandcareer.dpsk12.org).