GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS
PPSD POLICY

General Belief	The Providence School Board believes that all students can and should learn at high levels, and that it is incumbent upon the Providence Public School District (PPSD or the District) to provide the structures, tools and supports necessary to enable all students to realize their potential. PPSD's mission is to prepare all students to succeed in the nation's colleges and universities, and in their chosen professions. Earning a diploma from a PPSD school will represent a high standard of student learning, based on rigorous curriculum content, instruction, and technical skill proficiency, ensuring post-secondary and career readiness for all graduates.
Purpose and Scope	The purpose of this policy is to establish a uniformly high standard for graduation for all students in the District. The Providence School Board expects the District to focus on core instruction, and maintain a manifest dedication to high expectations and a commitment to ensuring that all students are fully supported on their paths to graduation. To that end, processes and programs must be implemented at all PPSD schools, in accordance to this policy and subsequent regulations. Each student in every school in the District must be supported to ensure they are able to not only meet the requirements for graduation, but also to reach success in their endeavors after graduation.
Definitions	The following definitions are provided to assist in understanding this policy. **College and Career Readiness-based Exam:** A standardized test or assessment that, at minimum, measures students' reading, writing, and math skills in order to assess their progress towards college and career readiness. **Council on Elementary and Secondary Education:** The subset of the Rhode Island Board of Education (which is the chief policy-setting body overseeing K-20 education in Rhode Island) that focuses on the education of students in grades K through 12. **Course Catalog/Program of Study:** The document that houses all approved courses offered within PPSD schools. A description is provided for each course, which includes number and type of credit(s) earned for successful completion of the course.

Individual Learning Plan (ILP): A planning and monitoring tool that customizes and directs students' goals and development in three domains: academic, career, and personal/social.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A written plan describing a student's special learning needs and the program of special education services provided to meet those needs. The IEP team consists of parents; the student, as appropriate; a general education teacher; a special education teacher and/or provider; a local educational agency representative who can commit agency resources and is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum; and others as requested.

Intervention: A specific program or set of steps to help address a particular area of need, be it behavioral, instructional, or linguistic. Interventions are neither strategies nor accommodations; they are formal, aimed at a known need, and monitored. Interventions are intentional (aimed at a fine-grained, particular weakness), flexible (able to be changed based on student need), and specific.

Literacy: Literacy is traditionally defined as the ability to read, write, speak and listen in order to communicate with others effectively. Literacy also involves the ability to think and respond critically.

Numeracy: Numeracy involves students confidently and effectively using mathematics to solve problems in a variety of contexts. Students learn numerical, spatial, graphical, statistical and algebraic concepts and skills while incorporating critical evaluation, interpretation, application, and communication of mathematical information.

Performance-based Diploma Assessment: A series of multifaceted assignments that serve as a culminating demonstration of a student's applied learning skills and knowledge of one or more content areas.

Proficiency: For a student to demonstrate proficiency, they must obtain a final score of 65 or higher in each of their core courses.

Rhode Island Alternate Assessment: The Rhode Island Alternate Assessment is a state assessment that is used to evaluate the performance of students instructed under modified state standards. The assessment is aligned with the state standards, but the level at which the content is presented is lower in complexity, and students receive more scaffolding and supports.

Graduation Requirements Policy
Page 2 of 11
Providence Public School District
797 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903
www.providenceschools.org

Guidelines and Implementation Strategies	The following graduation requirements are definitive. An individual school shall not waive graduation requirements or their components unless otherwise noted in this policy.
	
	The Superintendent will develop administrative regulations to implement the graduation requirements for the Providence Public School District. The regulations should address and expand upon each of the items articulated below.
	
	<u>Requirements for Graduation</u>
	The Providence Public School District graduation requirements align with and expand on those set forth by the Regulations of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education (Council)[1]. To be eligible for a diploma, all District high school students shall meet the following conjunctive graduation requirements:
	
	1. Successful completion of at least 21 courses[2] through a District-approved course of study, in the following content areas:
	   • English Language Arts (core content area) – 4 credits
	   • Math (core content area) – 4 credits
	   • Science (core content area) – 3 credits
	   • Social Studies (core content area) – 3 credits
	   • Arts (core content area) – .5 credit
	   • Technology (core content area) – .5 credit
	   • World Language (core content area) – 2 credits
	   • Physical Education and Health – 2 credits
	   • Additional Credits of Choice – 2 credits
	
	and
	
	2. Successful completion of one performance-based diploma assessment.
	
	Students who are determined to be eligible for the alternate assessment under federal law, state rules and regulations, and as noted in the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP), may receive a diploma by meeting the above-stated graduation requirements through modified curriculum and proficiency standards.

[1] Middle and High School Learning Environments and the Rhode Island Diploma System

[2] Courses and credits are used interchangeably in this section.

Certificate Options for Students Taking the Rhode Island Alternate Assessment (RIAA)

Providence will award certificates as outlined in the Rhode Island Secondary Regulations for students who qualify for the Rhode Island Alternate Assessment (RIAA). These certificates convey critical information and skill attainment for students who are assessed using the RIAA as they transition to adult life. While these certificates are not diplomas, they are designed to provide critical information to help families and/or adult service programs determine the appropriate supports students will need as they exit high school.

The four certificate areas include:
- Certificate of Academic Achievement
- Certificate of Work Readiness
- Certificate of Self-Determination
- Certificate of Citizenship and Community

Council Designations and Providence Diploma Distinctions

Beginning with the class of 2021, all students who meet Council-defined criteria shall receive a designation notation on their permanent high school transcript.

In addition to state-defined Council designations, students will be eligible for the State Seal of Biliteracy, as well as local designations, including recognition of Career and Technical Education (CTE) accomplishments, as defined in the accompanying PPSD Graduation Requirements regulations document.

Conjunctive Requirements

1. State Assessment Requirement

Students are required to participate in at least one college and career readiness-based exam prior to obtaining a diploma.

2. Credit Attainment

Students must complete no fewer than 21 credits through a District-approved course of study. Those subjects designated as core content areas must include demonstrations of proficiency, as defined by the

Graduation Requirements Policy
Page 4 of 11

Providence Public School District
797 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903
www.providenceschools.org

District.

Alternative methods of course study
Students can meet any and all of the course requirements through courses within state-approved career and technical programs, expanded learning opportunities, dual enrollment, concurrent enrollment, online learning, experiential learning opportunities, and other non-traditional academic readiness learning experiences as defined and approved by the District. The course catalog (program of study) will clearly indicate which of these courses fulfill content-area requirements.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)
CTE courses are designed to help students acquire academic, technical, and employability skills to succeed in postsecondary education and in-demand careers. CTE provides students with a technical skill set and valuable industry credentials that are specific to particular professions such as Automotive Technology or Engineering.

Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO)
The ELO initiative is supported by the state department of education. It is a model of practice for high school youth allowing them to receive high school credit for quality out-of-classroom learning. Students are required to score proficient or exemplary on a series of rubrics in order to gain academic credit for the ELO, with these being a combination of elective credits or credits to meet their technology or art graduation requirement.

Dual Enrollment
Dual enrollment courses are part of the offering institution's (colleges and/or universities) regular schedule and are taught by a college professor on the college campus. High school students will attend classes at the institute of higher education during high school, and will receive college credit(s) and obtain a college transcript upon successful completion of the course.
Concurrent Enrollment
Concurrent enrollment courses are college courses that are approved by an institute of higher education to be taught at the high school, by the high school teacher, allowing students to earn college credit(s) and obtain a college transcript upon successful completion of the course.

Online Learning/Virtual Programs
Online instruction and content are primarily delivered over the Internet with an instructor in a location other than the supervised brick-and-mortar location.

Additional Academic Readiness Learning Experiences
The District reserves the right to review and allow additional academic readiness learning experiences toward graduation course requirements on a case-by-case basis.

Attaining Credits for World Language Proficiency
A student may receive up to six credits via demonstrating proficiency on the American Council for Teachers of Foreign Language (ACTFL) examination, two of which may count towards the World Language requirement (provided they are in the same language).

High school courses taken in middle school
Students who successfully complete District-approved high school courses during middle school shall be provided appropriate credits toward graduation.

Transfer of credits

(1) Standard Secondary Schools: Providence shall accept credits from accredited standard secondary schools in Rhode Island and other states, provided the student received credit in the course(s) from the sending state or district.

(2) Non-Standard Secondary Schools: In the event of student transfer from a non-accredited or non-standard school, the Chief Academic Officer or his/her designee shall make determinations about credit transfer.

(3) Foreign Study/Foreign Schools: The Chief Academic Officer or his/her designee shall have the responsibility for equating subjects taken in a foreign country. In the event that transcripts are impossible to obtain, student performance can be used to make credit transfer, course and graduation determinations.

Grade level classifications
Determinations about student progression shall be made on an ongoing basis and must include any courses successfully completed through summer school and district administered credit recovery programs.

Ninth grade promotion
In order to be promoted from ninth to tenth grade, students must have earned a minimum of five credits.

Tenth grade promotion
In order to be promoted from the tenth to eleventh grade, students must have earned a minimum of 10 credits.

Eleventh grade promotion
In order to be promoted from eleventh to twelfth grade, students must have earned sixteen credits, including two core English Language Arts and two core Math credits.

Performance-based Diploma Assessment
Successful completion of the performance-based diploma assessment shall include demonstrations of both applied learning skills and proficiency in the given content area(s).

This assessment will be evaluated using consistent, District developed scoring criteria that align with state-adopted content standards and applied learning standards. In the absence of state-adopted standards for a particular content area, other relevant nationally recognized content standards will be utilized.

Accelerated Graduation
Students with advanced standing and the ability to demonstrate their completion of all elements of the requirements for graduation may graduate early. Students wishing to pursue accelerated graduation should seek application through their guidance office. Decisions about accelerated graduation shall be made by the Chief Academic Officer or his/her designee.

Participation in Graduation Ceremonies
Only students who have fully completed all graduation requirements or RIAA Certificates will be allowed to participate in graduation ceremonies.

Middle and High School Supports for Students
All Providence students can and must learn at high levels; therefore it is incumbent upon every school to provide adequate academic, career, and social/emotional supports to ensure students reach their

potential. These supports shall include, but are not limited to:

1. The use of District-approved Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for students in grades 6 through 12 and support plans for students failing to reach required levels of proficiency. Per RIDE secondary regulations, the ILPs shall document the students' academic and applied learning interests, as well as any support plans in place for the student, to make sure that all students are on the best pathway to excel and meet all of the graduation requirements and beyond. Parents/ guardians will be notified annually about how to access their child's ILP.

2. Providing research-based interventions, in addition to core instruction and additional academic and instructional support, to all students not on track to meet the requirements for a diploma. Students must be identified and placed in instructional programs that address their knowledge and skill gaps and accelerate their learning. The identification and placement process must be primarily informed by data gathered through the comprehensive assessment system, but should also be informed by other data sources such as in-program assessments and professional recommendations. Instructional programs and their required assessments must be implemented with fidelity to maximize the benefit to the student.

3. Credit-recovery opportunities for high school students who have failed to receive credits for a course. Face-to-face courses or virtual courses must be offered throughout the academic year and summer months for students to have multiple opportunities to recover credits.

Ensuring Grade Level Literacy and Numeracy
Students must be proficient in literacy and numeracy in order to be ready for college and career upon graduation. PPSD will ensure this proficiency through curriculum, monitoring student progress, and providing academic, career and social/emotional supports.

All students will be evaluated, through an established screening/review process, to determine their literacy and numeracy levels. Any student determined to be performing below grade level will be diagnostically assessed and subsequently assigned

appropriate instructional strategies, interventions and supports.

Any interventions initiated will be documented in the student's ILP.

Notification
The Superintendent or his/her designee shall be responsible for ensuring annual communication of the high school graduation requirements to Providence students and families.

Full and effective notice of the requirements for graduation must be provided to students and their families no later than September 15 of the year in which the student first enters the ninth grade, or at which time the student enters a District high school, whichever comes first. Once notice of graduation requirements has been provided, the requirements shall not be altered for students in that cohort.

The District will also provide notice of requirements to any students enrolled by the District in non-public schools and/or programs, and to students attending school in any juvenile correction program.

Students in jeopardy of not earning a diploma will receive multiple timely notices that will include:
- Academic status
- An opportunity to meet and discuss the student's academic program, support and planned interventions.
- Regular updates on the student's progress.

Appeals Process
Any student who fails to meet PPSD's minimum requirements for graduation has the right to appeal that determination. Each level of the appeals process requires written notification to the party indicated below.
The process and levels of the District-managed appeals process include:
- *Level One Appeal:* A student may request an appeal if he/she has been determined to be ineligible for a diploma. Level One appeals shall be the responsibility of the school principal or designee. The principal or designee will respond in writing within five business days and must meet with the student and family at their request.
- *Level Two Appeal:* If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the Level One Appeal, the student may appeal to the Superintendent or his/her designee in writing. The

Graduation Requirements Policy
Page 9 of 11

Providence Public School District
797 Westminster Street
Providence, RI 02903
www.providenceschools.org

	Superintendent or his/her designee will respond in writing within five business days and a review will be scheduled. • *Level Three Appeal*: If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the Level Two Appeal, the student may appeal to the School Board. The student must inform the School Board President or designee in writing after the Level Two Appeal decision is received. The School Board President will respond in writing within five business days and schedule a review.
Training, Oversight and Communication	The Superintendent shall provide an update to the Board by February 28th of each year which includes: • Graduation and Dropout Rates. • A report on student participation and performance in credit-recovery opportunities. • Other pertinent information related to the implementation of the Graduation Requirements policy.
Compliance with Laws, Confidentiality Requirements	The Superintendent will ensure that all PPSD personnel and all PPSD contractors comply fully with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations, and with all Board policies. In the event any part of any policy is unlawful, the Superintendent will report such event to the Board as soon as practicable and request of the Board a modification of this policy.
Legal Reference	Rhode Island Department of Education Initial guidance for High School Regulations – Section 5.0 Graduation by Proficiency**.** Regulations of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education: K-12 Literacy, Restructuring of the Learning Environment at the Middle and High School Levels, and Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements (PBGR) at High Schools. Title L – Secondary Design, Chapter 6 (March 3, 2011). Rhode Island Board of Regents Elementary and Secondary Education Secondary Regulations Guidance (May 2011). Regulations of the Council on Elementary and Secondary Education, Middle and High School Learning Environments and the Rhode Island Diploma System (October 11, 2016; Effective July 1, 2017)
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