

Bristol Warren Regional School District Policy for Waiver of the State Assessment Graduation Requirement

Overview

As set forth in the 2011 RI K-12 Literacy, Restructuring of the Learning Environment at the Middle and High School Levels, and Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements at High Schools, all RI students must complete each of the following graduation requirements in order to earn a diploma:

1. Successful completion of a minimum of 20 courses
2. Demonstration of proficiency through performance-based assessments, and
3. Attainment of the level of “partial proficiency” on the state grade 11 assessment or measurable improvement of the student’s initial score on the grade 11 state assessment

As detailed in the above referenced 2011 Secondary Regulations:

L-6-3.3 Use of state assessments for high school graduation.

- (a) Commencing with the class of 2014, students shall be required to reach a minimum achievement level on the state assessment or assessments in content areas designated by the Regents. The Board of Regents shall (1) designate the content areas in which the state assessment serves as a graduation requirement and (2) establish the minimum student achievement levels on the state assessment necessary for graduation. The Regents will determine the minimal level of required achievement; however, the Local Education Agency (LEA) may set higher levels of student achievement as a requirement to receive a diploma.

In content areas in which the Board of Regents have not approved a state assessment for the purpose of determining student eligibility for graduation, the LEA shall use successful course completion and student performance on performance-based diploma assessments and other local evidence to satisfy state graduation requirements.

Commencing with the graduating class of 2014, state assessments results shall be included on each student’s permanent high school transcript.

- (b) Students who do not meet the Regents-established minimum level of achievement on the state high school assessment(s) shall be provided additional opportunities to demonstrate their proficiency and meet graduation expectations through the processes and in the sequence described below.

Retaking the state assessment: If a student does not meet the level of minimum achievement on a state assessment designated by the Board of Regents, the student shall be required to retake the relevant portion of the state assessment. Through an additional administration or administrations of the state assessment, students can meet the requirements set forth in this section by either reaching

the Regents-defined minimum level of achievement or by demonstrating progress toward proficiency. The Board of Regents shall establish the means of calculation and expression of the minimum requirements for student-level improvement necessary to achieve progress toward proficiency.

Testing alternatives: If, after retaking the state assessment, a student does not meet the required level of achievement or make progress toward proficiency, the student may demonstrate graduation readiness through successful completion of a Regents-approved alternative assessment.

Waivers: If a student is unable to demonstrate graduation readiness through the state assessment or a Regents-approved testing alternative, the student may apply to his or her LEA for a waiver of the state assessment portion of the graduation requirements. LEAs are authorized to grant waivers from the state assessment requirement set forth in this section only in those rare cases in which the state assessment is not a valid means of determining the proficiency of individual students. Waiver eligibility will be considered only for those students for whom: (1) there is preponderance of evidence of academic mastery consistent with L-6-3.0 of these regulations and (2) the student has completed the sequence of testing requirements set forth in this section.

The Bristol Warren Regional School District is the decision-making body for waivers exempting Mt. Hope High School students from the state assessment diploma requirement.

The Bristol Warren Regional School District is authorized to grant waivers in appropriate cases, and through the adoption of this policy hereby establishes a local process that ensures a fair, efficient, and accurate review of waiver applications. The Superintendent is hereby charged with decision-making authority for granting waivers. The Bristol Warren Regional School District commits to be proactive in monitoring a student's eligibility for a waiver and, when appropriate, support the compilation of evidence needed for a waiver.

Implementation

Waivers apply only to the state assessment component of the student graduation requirements. A student must meet the eligibility criteria, outlined in the Waiver Protocol (Appendix 1) in order to be considered for a waiver. At a minimum, the conditions by which students can be considered for a waiver are:

- (1) Demonstration of academic content mastery (as defined in Appendix 2) consistent with 9-10 grade standards.
- (2) Completion of the sequence of state testing requirements including participation and demonstrated effort in their Progress Plan
- (3) Completion of all Mt. Hope High School graduation requirements.

The Bristol Warren Regional School District hereby establishes a local process for the review of waivers that includes district-level involvement in the final decision process. This process shall include:

- a. The establishment, adoption and communication of policy and procedures for the waiver process.
- b. Publication and communication of the timeline for requesting waivers, the length of time for reviewing evidence and for making waiver decisions.
- c. The establishment of a waiver review team.
- d. Identification of the roles and responsibilities for reviewing evidence.
- e. Identification of the types and amount of evidence used in making waiver decisions.
- f. Development and maintenance of a system for managing the evidence used to make waiver determination.
- g. Establishment of a process for documenting and making available waiver decisions.

The Superintendent of the Bristol Warren Regional School District shall ensure that its waiver process grants waivers only in those specific conditions described in this guidance and the attached waiver protocol. It is explicitly acknowledged that the Rhode Island Department of Education will monitor the Bristol Warren Regional School District's waiver process and the granting of waivers during the diploma system review process. It is the responsibility of the Bristol Warren Regional School District to retain all sources of evidence used to make waiver decisions and to make such evidence available as part of student records, upon request in response to appeals, or as part of the diploma system review process.

Legal Reference

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 – Section L-6-3.3, Using of state assessments for high school graduation.

Appendix I: Waiver Protocol

Students are not eligible to begin the waiver process until they have completed, at minimum, the second administration of the state assessment in the required content areas.

The waiver process consists of the following five steps:

1. Determination of Student Eligibility

To determine if a student is eligible for a waiver of the state assessment the student must meet the following criteria:

- a. Successfully completed all elements of their MHHS graduation requirements, except for the state assessment; and
- b. Completed the sequence of state testing requirements (NECAP administration in October of the 11th grade year and NECAP administration in October of the 12th grade year); or
- c. Completed a non-traditional sequence of state testing requirements through credit recovery efforts (1st NECAP administration in October of the 12th grade year and 2nd NECAP administration in March of the 12th grade year) and
- d. Documented evidence of content mastery consistent with the 9-10 grade level standards, which include multiple and different types of evidence; and
- e. Demonstrated effort to improve their skills through participation in their Progress Plan and demonstrated commitment to their academic success through the completion of their senior year; Evidence of participation in the Progress Plan include, but is not limited to:
 - ✓ Participation and successful completion of school-based content support programs offered during the extended-day and extended year
 - ✓ Participation and successful completion of school-based content support programs offered during the instructional day
 - ✓ Participation in and successful completion of RI Department of Education endorsed virtual learning modules
- f. Where appropriate, a documented pattern of discrepancy between the student's level of proficiency and his/her performance on standardized assessments is demonstrated.

2. Documentation of Eligible Evidence

- a. Course performance in academic content aligned to 9-10 grade level standards that reflect the proficiency descriptions (Appendix 2) as measured by:
 - ✓ Course work, course assessments, and course grades
 - ✓ Performance assessments/tasks in math and/or reading
 - ✓ Virtual Learning Math Modules

- ✓ Relevant activities in Progress Plan (Strategies for Success, Summer Academy, additional math and/or reading instructional course offered at Mt. Hope High School)
- b. Digital Portfolio work aligned to 9-10 grade level standards in required content areas
- c. Outcome data collected from Interim or progress monitoring assessments
- d. Outcome data collected from high quality assessments administered by certified test administrator:
 - ✓ 3rd NECAP assessment administered after the results of the October 12th grade NECAP assessment have been reviewed
 - ✓ ACCUPLACER
 - ✓ ASVAB
 - ✓ PSAT, SAT or ACT
 - ✓ Advanced Placement Assessment appropriate content area
- e. A language proficiency adjustment (LPA) score for eligible ELL students

(Evidence can include activities or products that were accomplished with appropriate accommodations but not those activities accomplished with modifications that alter the content of the 9-10 grade level standards.)

3. Evaluation of Evidence

- a. Appropriate course alignment to 9-10 standards
 - ✓ Algebra I aligned to CCSS
 - ✓ Geometry aligned CCSS
 - ✓ 9 and 10th grade English Language Arts aligned to GSEs and CCSS
- b. Demonstrated level of skill and content knowledge in course work in math/reading to attain course credit (See Appendix 2)
- c. Proficiency in PBGR system
 - ✓ Math/Reading Performance Task rubric and minimum acceptable attainment
The task must be proficient.
- d. Successful Completion of Progress Plan activities
 - ✓ Strategies for Success, Summer Academy, and additional math/reading courses

4. Review System

Timeline

The timeline to submit applications for a waiver of the state assessment component of the graduation requirement will commence February 1 of the anticipated year of graduation and will close March 31 of the anticipated year of graduation. This timeline may be extended to align with the release of assessment results from the 3rd administration of the NECAP by the RI Department of Education.

The student and family shall have the opportunity to present documentation to the Review Team during the application period. A decision will be rendered by the Review Team by April 30 of the anticipated year of graduation. This timeline may be extended to align with the release of assessment results from the 3rd administration of the NECAP by the RI Department of Education. Recommendations shall be forwarded by the Review Team to the Superintendent for final approval and signature.

The Review Team for waiver application consideration consists of the following members:

- a. Content specialists from appropriate content areas (Mathematics, English Language Arts Department Chairs)
- b. PBGR Coordinator
- c. Principal
- d. Assistant Principal/Guidance Department Supervisor
- e. Guidance Counselor
- f. Special Education Department Chair

5. Collection of Evidence

The Bristol Warren Regional School District shall collect and maintain evidence used to develop proficiency profiles for student waiver decisions. This collection shall be kept for no less than one year from the time of decision. A summary form (Appendix 3) shall be kept for a period of five years from the date of decision.

Students and families retain the right to appeal overall graduation decisions in accordance with the Bristol Warren Regional School District appeals policy. Appeals encompass all components of the state graduation requirements as well as any local graduation requirements.

Appendix 2: Proficiency Descriptions

Reading Proficiency Description

Students are prepared to read materials in post-secondary settings or in the workplace beyond high school. The student uses a variety of strategies to read with accuracy to understand, summarize and interpret a range of literacy and informational texts across content areas. The student identifies purpose for reading and uses literacy elements, text structures, and/or text features to make and support assertions about texts. The student reflects on and can describe the role of reading in an area of specialized interest (e.g. flexible and appropriate use of strategies for different texts, reading for research, self-selecting text, based on topic, interest, etc.).

Mathematics Proficiency Description

Students can demonstrate a conceptual understanding of numbers and operations; algebra and functions; data, statistics and probability; and geometry and measurement. Students can apply a variety of strategies to determine and defend the reasonableness of solutions through correct, clear, and concise explanations by solving real-life situations. Students can generalize and apply these understandings to new situations and problems. Students can work within and across all types of real numbers and number systems. Students can understand concepts of and use properties of various functions represented in symbolic, graphic, and tabular form. Students analyze and interpret data presented in tables and graphs and use statistical models to prove and defend a position. Students can prove and justify geometric relationships.

