**Section 1.440 Additional Criteria for High Schools**

The School Code [105 ILCS 5] establishes differing requirements for the coursework that high schools must offer, the courses students must take, and the courses students must pass in order to graduate.

a) Instructional Offerings. Each district shall provide a comprehensive curriculum that includes at least the following offerings. The time allotment, unless specified by the School Code or applicable rules, is the option of the local school district.

1) Language Arts

2) Science

3) Mathematics

4) History of the United States

5) Foreign Language

6) Music

7) Art

8) Career and Technical Education − Orientation and Preparation

9) Health Education (see the Critical Health Problems and Comprehensive Health Education Act)

10) Physical Education (see Section 27-6 of the School Code)

11) Consumer Education (see Section 27-12.1 of the School Code)

12) Conservation of Natural Resources (see Section 27-13.1 of the School Code)

13) Driver and Safety Education (see the Driver Education Act [105 ILCS 5/27-24 through 27-24.10] and 23 Ill. Adm. Code 252)

14) Media Literacy (see Section 27-20.08 of the School Code)

b) Required Participation

1) Each student shall be required to take one semester or the equivalent, i.e., at least 18 weeks, of health education during the secondary school experience.

2) Appropriate activity related to physical education shall be required as provided for by Section 27-6 of the School Code. The schedule shall compare favorably with other courses in the curriculum. Safety education as it relates to the physical education program should be incorporated. See Section 1.425 for additional requirements that apply to the provision of physical education instruction.

3) Each student shall be required to take consumer education for 50 minutes per day for a period of nine weeks in any of grades 9-12.

4) Each student shall be required to take a course covering *American patriotism and the principles of representative government, as enunciated in the American Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States of America and the Constitution of the State of Illinois, and the proper use and display of the American flag for not less than one hour per week, or the equivalent.* (See Sections 27-3 and 27-4 of the School Code.)

5) Each student shall be required to complete one semester in civics, which *shall focus on government institutions, the discussion of current and controversial issues, service learning, and simulations of the democratic process.* *Beginning with pupils entering the 9th grade in the 2021-2022 school year, one semester, or part of one semester, may include a financial literacy course.* (See Section 27-22(e)(5) of the School Code.)

6) Each student entering the 9th grade in the 2022-2023 school year and 2023-2024 school year must complete one year of a course that includes *intensive instruction in computer literacy, which may be English, social studies, or any other subject and may be counted toward the fulfillment of other graduation requirements* (Section 27-22(e)(3.5) of the School Code).

c) Specific Requirements for Graduation. A "unit" is the credit accrued for a year's study or its equivalent. A student may be permitted to retake a course that has been already successfully completed (for example, to earn a better grade). However, credit may not be awarded more than once for completion of the same course, and the same course may not be counted more than once toward fulfillment of the State requirements for graduation.

1) Each student shall be required to have accrued at least 16 units in grades 9-12 if graduating from a four-year school or 12 units in grades 10-12 if graduating from a three-year high school. In either case, one unit shall be in American History or American History and Government. (See Section 27‑22 of the School Code.) *No student shall receive certification of graduation without passing an examination* on the subjects discussed in subsection (b)(4).

2) Pursuant to Section 27-22 of the School Code, all students, except students with disabilities whose course of study is determined by an individualized education program, must successfully complete certain courses, depending upon the school year in which they enter grade 9 and subject to the exceptions provided in Section 1.445, as a prerequisite to receiving a high school diploma.

3) Credits earned by students before entry into grade 9 as authorized by Section 27-22.10 of the School Code may be used to fulfill any of the requirements of subsection (c)(2).

4) Financial Aid

A) Pursuant to Section 22-85 of the School Code, *as a prerequisite to receiving a high school diploma from a public high school, the parent or guardian of each student or, if a student is at least 18 years of age or legally emancipated, the student must comply with either of the following:*

i) *File a Free Application for Federal Student Aid with the United States Department of Education or, if applicable, an application for State financial aid.*

ii) *On a form created by the State Board of Education, file a waiver with the student's school district indicating that the parent or guardian or, if applicable, the student understands what the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and application for State financial aid are and has chosen not to file an application.*

B) *A school district must award a high school diploma to a student who is unable to meet the requirements of this paragraph due to extenuating circumstances, as determined by the school district, if (i) the student has met all other graduation requirements under the School Code and (ii) the principal attests that the school district has made a good faith effort to assist the student or, if applicable,* the student's *parent or guardian in filing an application or a waiver.*

d) School districts shall have on file in the local district office a description of all course offerings that may comply with the requirements of the law. A course will be accepted as meeting the relevant requirement for graduation if its description shows that its principal instructional activity is the development and application of knowledge and skills related to the applicable requirement.

1) "Writing-Intensive" Courses

The course description for a "writing-intensive" course will be accepted for purposes of Section 27-22 of the School Code if:

A) a goal of the course is to use the writing that students do relative to the subject matter being presented as a vehicle for improving their writing skills;

B) writing assignments will be an integral part of the course's content across the time span covered by the course;

C) the written products students are required to prepare to receive credit for the course and the feedback students receive are such that:

i) students' writing proficiency is evaluated against expectations that are appropriate to early or late high school and encompass all of the writing standards for those grades enumerated in the Illinois Learning Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Sciences, and Technical Subjects (see Appendix D); and

ii) students receive information from the evaluation of their written products that will permit them to improve their writing skills in terms of correct usage; well-organized composition; communication of ideas for a variety of purposes; and locating, organizing, evaluating, and using information;

D) The writing-intensive study provided in at least one writing‑intensive course is designed to address and integrate the elements of the writing process and to refine or apply research skills.

2) Foreign Language Courses

The description for any foreign language course shall indicate whether the school district will award a State Seal of Biliteracy in accordance with the requirements of 23 Ill. Adm. Code 680 and Section 2-3.159 of the School Code and state the qualifications for receipt of the seal.

3) Advanced Placement Computer Science Course

The description for an Advanced Placement Computer Science course shall indicate that the course is *equivalent to a high school mathematics course and qualifies as a mathematics-based, quantitative* course for purposes of the fulfillment of State graduation requirements in mathematics. (See Section 27-22(f-5) of the School Code.)

e) It is the responsibility of the school district's administration to provide parents and guardians with timely and periodic information concerning graduation requirements for all students, particularly in cases where a student's eligibility for graduation may be in question.

f) Additional requirements for graduation may be adopted by local boards of education.

(Source: Amended at 47 Ill. Reg. 18457, effective November 28, 2023)