

# Graduation Requirements

## High schools set the stage for a student's future success.

When students walk across the stage and receive their diploma, they should walk with the confidence that they are prepared for life after high school, whether that's post-secondary education, the military or a living-wage job. To help ensure students graduate ready, Ohio has set minimum credit and assessment levels.

As high school assessments transitioned over the last four years, the graduation requirements have changed as well. Instead of passing five Ohio Graduation Tests, students have three graduation pathways:

1. Earn at least 18 graduation points across all seven end-of-course exams (students can earn one to five points on each exam);
2. Earn a college- and career-ready score on the ACT or SAT; or
3. Earn an industry-recognized credential or credentials and achieve a workforce readiness score on the WorkKeys.

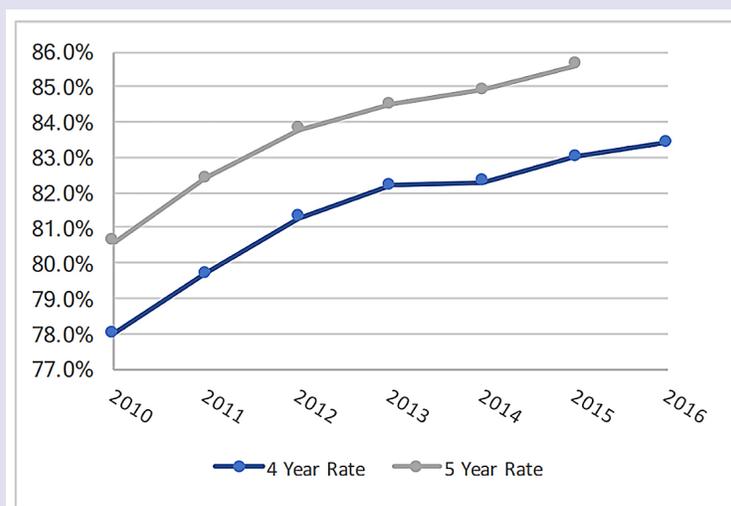
The state introduced flexibility into the graduation requirements while also raising expectations for performance. Stakeholder concerns grew about the ability of students in the Class of 2018—the first class with the new requirements—to reach the new

expectations. As a result, state policymakers and the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) created additional pathways with less-rigorous criteria, such as attendance, GPA and community service to help with the transition to higher standards for the Class of 2018.

Moving forward, the state should hold the line on challenging expectations, especially in literacy and math. Too many students graduate unprepared in these subjects. In Ohio, 30 percent of all public high school graduates in the Class of 2016 who entered a public college or university in Ohio took at least one remedial course in English or math. Students must be prepared with the knowledge and skills to thrive in an economy where nearly half of jobs are at risk of being replaced by technology advances.

However, the state can strike a balance between academic scores and workforce skills through other demonstrations of readiness. ODE's recent strategic plan for education in Ohio outlines the attributes of a high school graduate. These include skills such as critical thinking, resiliency, communication, collaboration and social and emotional skills. The state could include additional elements within the existing graduation requirements to evaluate these skills, such as a rigorous capstone project.

## Graduation Rate Trend for Ohio Schools



Source: Ohio Department of Education, "Ohio School Report Cards," [reportcard.education.ohio.gov](http://reportcard.education.ohio.gov).

## P-20 VISION

Each and every Ohio student is actively engaged in their learning, has access to high-quality education opportunities in early childhood, K-12 and post-secondary education and is prepared to enter the workforce and succeed in life.

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## Recommendations

### Define Graduation Requirements

- ODE, the Governor and General Assembly must work thoughtfully, but urgently, to determine what requirements will be included in the state's graduation requirements for the Class of 2019 and beyond.
- ODE should track and annually report data on graduation, including the pathways that students use to graduate and disaggregated graduation rates for the state.
- ODE, the Governor and General Assembly should develop a challenging, valid and consistent capstone project component for seniors to demonstrate proficiency and earn graduation points within the end-of-course exam pathway for graduation.

### Develop Early Warnings & Interventions

- ODE should support statewide implementation of an early warning system, no later than a students' 9th grade year, that identifies which students are at risk of not meeting graduation requirements or dropping out of school.
- The Governor and General Assembly should require—and ODE should support—interventions for students who are not on track to meet graduation requirements. These interventions should start as early as 10th grade.
- The General Assembly should require school districts, in collaboration with community and technical colleges or other community partners, to develop a 13th year for students who are not prepared to graduate on time so students can continue pursuing a high school diploma and begin pursuing higher education opportunities with their peers.



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## ABOUT PHILANTHROPY OHIO

Philanthropy Ohio is an association of foundations, corporate giving programs, individuals and organizations actively involved in philanthropy in Ohio. Its mission is to lead and equip Ohio philanthropy to be effective, powerful change agents in our communities. It provides the network, tools and knowledge to help people engaged in philanthropy become more effective, powerful change agents in their communities. Together, its more than 220 members hold over \$50 billion in assets and provide over \$4 billion in grants to nonprofit organizations that work to improve the lives of community residents.