

STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT SURVEY QUESTION COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

This section of the survey asks for your feedback on increasing New York State graduation requirements.

Raising standards is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for improving the performance of the entire P-16 system. Each element of the Regents' reform agenda—strengthening standards and assessments, putting in place a statewide curriculum, creating a world-class data system, redesigning teacher and leader preparation, and turning around persistently low-performing schools—has a critical role to play.

Options for revamping New York's graduation requirements should be considered in terms of two criteria: how well they enable all students to maximize their educational potential, and how well they signal to higher education institutions and employers that New York's high school graduates are college- and career-ready. It is possible that some combination of higher standards and increased flexibility would further both goals simultaneously.

1. To what extent would the following strategy improve NYS graduation requirements so that all students become better prepared for college and/or a career?

Require FOUR years of Mathematics

BACKGROUND: Educational researchers have found that the greatest predictor of “college success is the academic intensity and quality of high school course-taking.” Many colleges and universities publish guidelines recommending, among other things, that high school students complete four years of math prior to entering college. New York's high school students are currently required to complete 3 years of math; many do so by the end of grade 10 or 11. Therefore, the Board of Regents might consider requiring four years of math for high school graduation.

2. To what extent would the following strategy improve NYS graduation requirements so that all students become better prepared for college and/or a career?

Require FOUR years of Science

BACKGROUND: High Schools That Work (HSTW), a school improvement initiative with more than 1,200 sites in 30 states (including New York), recommends a challenging curriculum to prepare students for further education and the workplace. In particular, HSTW recommends that schools using block schedules require four years of science. In order to ensure that all of New York's students have access to careers in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields that are so vital to our economy, the Regents could consider requiring four years of science instead of the current three year requirement.

3. To what extent would the following strategy improve NYS graduation requirements so that all students become better prepared for college and/or a career?

Require ONE College/Career Readiness credit

BACKGROUND: The Regents might consider adding a “college and career readiness” credit, which could be fulfilled by passing one of four types of courses: (1) a career and technical education (CTE) course (this option

might only be available to a student who completes an approved CTE program); (2) a college course; (3) an advanced course, such as those for which the Department has approved an alternative assessment pursuant to 8 NYCRR §100.2(f) (e.g., an Advanced Placement (AP) course (including earning a score of 3 or better on the corresponding AP exam); or (4) an International Baccalaureate (IB) course (typically available only in schools that offer the complete 2-year IB diploma program).

4. To what extent would the following strategy improve NYS graduation requirements so that all students become better prepared for college and/or a career?

Require a SECOND Regents examination in Mathematics

BACKGROUND: Rather than, or in addition to, increasing course requirements, the Regents might strengthen exam requirements, either by changing the required exams or by raising cut scores. For example, perhaps in conjunction with an increase in the number of required math credits, the Regents might require that students pass a second Regents exam in mathematics in order to graduate from high school. This second math exam could replace one of the other required exams, or it could be added as a 6th required exam.

5. To what extent would the following strategy improve NYS graduation requirements so that all students become better prepared for college and/or a career?

Increase the required passing score on Regents English AND Mathematics examinations

BACKGROUND: The research that supported the Regents' decision to raise proficiency cut scores on the Grades 3-8 English language arts and mathematics assessments this past summer included several analyses that associated college readiness with cut scores of between 75 and 85 on the Regents exams. Therefore, the Regents might consider increasing the required passing scores on the English and Mathematics Regents exam to a level that is associated with college-readiness (i.e., 75 or 80 on the current scale).

6. To what extent would the following strategy improve NYS graduation requirements so that all students become better prepared for college and/or a career?

Create a new credential, the College/Career Ready diploma, to recognize high achievement on Regents examinations

BACKGROUND: The Regents might create a new state-level credential that recognizes higher achievement across five subjects (similar to the Regents diploma with honors that districts may currently offer). To earn a "Regents College- and Career-Ready diploma," students would be required to earn 22 units of credit and pass all five Regents exams with a higher score (75 or 80 on the current scale).

7. To what extent would the following strategy improve NYS graduation requirements so that all students become better prepared for college and/or a career?

Create an Arts diploma endorsement

BACKGROUND: The Board of Regents can explore the creation of an Arts diploma endorsement modeled after the Chancellor’s Arts Endorsed Diploma in New York City, which honors high school graduates for their accomplishments in dance, music, theater, and visual arts. The Regents can explore whether the New York State Arts diploma endorsement should be obtained in addition to a student’s Regents diploma or in lieu of meeting a Regents exam requirement.

8. To what extent would the following strategy improve NYS graduation requirements so that all students become better prepared for college and/or a career?

Extend the school day

BACKGROUND: Data from the 2003 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the OECD Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) showed that U.S. students scored lower on various tests in math and/or science and that U.S. schools required fewer instructional hours than a number of other countries, including Japan, Finland, Korea, and the Netherlands.

9. To what extent would the following strategy improve NYS graduation requirements so that all students become better prepared for college and/or a career?

Extend the school year

BACKGROUND: The Regents might also consider legislative recommendations that would extend the school day/school year. Among international competitors, the United States has one of the shortest school years. On average, schools around the world are in attendance 200 days per year.

This section of the survey asks for your feedback on allowing greater flexibility in meeting New York State graduation requirements.

10. To what extent would the following strategy improve NYS graduation requirements so that all students become better prepared for college and/or a career?

Allow students to earn credits through demonstration of competency, rather than seat time

BACKGROUND: The Regents might consider allowing students to earn credits through demonstration of competency rather than seat time. Currently, students are required to receive direct instruction for 108 hours in order to earn a unit of credit (8 NYCRR §100.1). For many students, however, this amount exceeds what is needed to demonstrate mastery in a given content area.

11. To what extent would the following strategy improve NYS graduation requirements so that all students become better prepared for college and/or a career?

Provide students a choice in one or more of the five required Regents examinations

BACKGROUND: To further the goal of maximizing each student’s educational potential, the Regents might consider allowing increased flexibility in how students meet graduation requirements, including allowing students’ choice in one or more of their five required Regents exams.

By comparison, England, for example, has a two-stage examination system in which almost all 16-year-olds take examinations in English, math, and science, as well as a half dozen or so other academic or CTE subjects of their choosing; and 18-year-olds who wish to attend university typically take Advanced Level

This section of the survey asks for your feedback on the quality and impact of current Career and Technical Education (CTE) Programs.

Please consider the following definitions when completing your responses.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE): a kindergarten through adult program area of study that includes rigorous academic content closely aligned with career and technical subject matter, using the State learning standards of career development and occupational studies as a framework. In grades nine through twelve, career and technical education includes the specific disciplines of agriculture education, business and marketing education, family and consumer science education, health occupations education, technical education, technology education and trade/industrial education.

INTEGRATED CTE COURSES: a course that combines career and technical education and academic content and addresses commencement level learning standards in both areas. The course may be jointly developed and taught by an academic subject teacher and/or a career and technical education teacher.

13. To what extent would the following strategy improve NYS graduation requirements so that all students become better prepared for college and/or a career?

Increase the maximum number of academic credits students can earn through integrated CTE programs and specialized CTE courses

BACKGROUND: The Board of Regents might consider increasing the maximum number of academic credits that students can earn through integrated CTE programs and specialized CTE courses. Currently, students may earn a maximum of four academic credits [one each in English, mathematics, science, and economics and government] through an integrated CTE program, specialized CTE courses, or a combination of specialized and integrated CTE courses (8 NYCRR §100.5(d)(6)(ii)(a)(2)).

14. To what extent would the following strategy improve NYS graduation requirements so that all students become better prepared for college and/or a career?

Allow a CTE technical assessment to substitute for one of the five required Regents examinations

BACKGROUND: To further the goal of maximizing each student’s educational potential, the Regents might consider allowing increased flexibility in how students meet graduation requirements, including allowing the successful completion of a CTE technical assessment (as part of an approved CTE program) to substitute for one of the five required Regents exam.

15. To what extent would the following strategy improve NYS graduation requirements so that all students become better prepared for college and/or a career?

Provide flexibility in the courses that students may take in middle school

BACKGROUND: Currently, New York's regulations prescribe in detail the courses that students must take in grades 7 and 8. Furthermore, students may only earn diploma credit in grades 8 and above (see 8 NYCRR §100.4(d)). Although districts may apply for flexibility in how they organize middle school coursework, those avenues are so restrictive that only a handful of districts have ever taken advantage of them. Current regulations limit the ability of middle school students to earn diploma credit by taking high school level courses tailored to their different ability levels.

The current regulations would have to be amended to include increased opportunities for students to pursue integrated courses and programs that could increase engagement and advance learning, such as science and health, English language arts and the arts, CTE coursework, or interdisciplinary courses in the science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

16. Please provide your recommendations for revising/enhancing INTEGRATED ACADEMICS for all students, including CTE, non-CTE, students with disabilities and English Language Learners, so that they are better prepared for college and/or a career.

17. Please provide your recommendations for strategies that would INCREASE ACCESS to high quality CTE programs/courses for all students.

18. Please provide any additional recommendations for revising/enhancing the NYS GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS for all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, so that they provide a framework for students to become better prepared for college and/or a career.

This section of the survey asks for your feedback on the critical skills and knowledge for success in college and the workforce.

19. Please rate the following academic and technical skills and knowledge in level of importance for SUCCESS IN COLLEGE.

- CAREER DEVELOPMENT (knowledge about world of work; ability to relate personal skills, aptitudes and abilities to career decisions)
- INTEGRATED LEARNING (ability to apply academic knowledge and skills to workplace and other settings)
- BASIC SKILLS (reading, writing, listening, speaking, and performing arithmetical and mathematical functions)

- THINKING SKILLS (problem solving, experimenting, observing, and applying knowledge to new and unfamiliar situations)
- PERSONAL QUALITIES (planning, organizing, and taking independent action; self-management)
- INTERPERSONAL SKILLS (working in a team and cooperating in large/small groups in family, social, and work situations)
- TECHNOLOGY (designing and creating things from available resources to satisfy personal and societal needs and wants)
- MANAGING INFORMATION (accessing and using information obtained from a wide range of sources)
- MANAGING RESOURCES (making the best use of financial and human resources with time and material constraints to successfully carry out a planned activity)
- SYSTEMS (demonstrating an understanding of and ability to work within a variety of systems)

20. Please rate the following academic and technical skills and knowledge in level of importance for

- CAREER DEVELOPMENT (knowledge about world of work; ability to relate personal skills, aptitudes and abilities to career decisions)
- INTEGRATED LEARNING (ability to apply academic knowledge and skills to workplace and other settings)
- BASIC SKILLS (reading, writing, listening, speaking, and performing arithmetical and mathematical functions)
- THINKING SKILLS (problem solving, experimenting, observing, and applying knowledge to new and unfamiliar situations)
- PERSONAL QUALITIES (planning, organizing, and taking independent action; self-management)
- INTERPERSONAL SKILLS (working in a team and cooperating in large/small groups in family, social, and work situations)
- TECHNOLOGY (designing and creating things from available resources to satisfy personal and societal needs and wants)
- MANAGING INFORMATION (accessing and using information obtained from a wide range of sources)
- MANAGING RESOURCES (making the best use of financial and human resources with time and material constraints to successfully carry out a planned activity)
- SYSTEMS (demonstrating an understanding of and ability to work within a variety of systems)

21. Please provide your recommendations for additional academic and technical skills and knowledge that are necessary for college and/or career success.

In other words, what is missing from the list in the previous question?