



# GOWANDA CENTRAL SCHOOL

Engaging students in learning through the development and use of communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking.

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November 15, 2024

Dear Gowanda Community,

In 2019, the NYS Board of Regents (BOR) established a Blue Ribbon Commission on Graduation Measures. To help inform the Commission's work, the BOR and the State Education Department (SED) held regional meetings across the state to gather input from many stakeholders, including parents, educators, administrators, school support staff, representatives of higher education, the business community, students, and the general public.

In 2023, the Blue Ribbon Commission released the following twelve recommendations after extensive research and soliciting input from all stakeholders statewide meetings:

1. Replace the three diploma types with one diploma, with the option to add seals and endorsements.
2. Include civic responsibility (ethics); cultural competence; financial literacy education; fine and performing arts; science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) credit(s); and writing, including writing skills for real-world scenarios in diploma credit requirements.
3. Ensure access to career and technical education (CTE), including internships and work-based learning opportunities for all students across New York State.
4. Move to a model that organizes credit requirements— including content area credit requirements— into larger categories (e.g., mathematics and science courses could be included in the “STEM” category).
5. Reduce and/or modify diploma assessment requirements to allow more assessment options.
6. Create state-developed rubric(s) for any performance-based assessments allowed as an option to satisfy the diploma assessment requirements.
7. Create more specific, tailored graduation requirements to address the unique circumstances of certain groups of students (e.g., non-compulsory age students, newcomer students, refugee students).
8. Provide exemptions from diploma assessment requirements for students with significant cognitive disabilities and major life events and extenuating circumstances (e.g., medical conditions, death of a family member, trauma prior to sitting for a required exam).
9. Pursue regulatory changes to allow the discretion to confer high school degrees posthumously.

10. Require all New York State teacher preparation programs to provide instruction in culturally responsive-sustaining education (CRSE) practices and pedagogy.
11. Require that professional development plans include culturally responsive-sustaining education practices and pedagogy.
12. Review and revise the New York State learning standards.

Through this work, the Commission created the "Portrait of a Graduate," which describes what an NYS college, career, and civic-ready student looks like after graduation. A graduate would be a critical thinker, literate across content areas, and an effective communicator, among several other attributes, because of their collective K-12 education.

In November 2024, SED released the timeline for implementing these new graduation measures. Beginning with the 2024 cohort (current freshmen class), these students have one diploma, advanced designation as a seal of distinction, current credit requirements remain in place, and assessment requirements decoupled by 2027. The 2027 cohort and beyond will experience the most change with one diploma, redefined seals and endorsements, including advanced designation, new credit required, and sunset of current diploma assessment requirements.

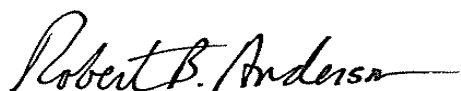
These new requirements provide multiple pathways for ALL students to meet NYS learning standards and graduate high school, meeting all the attributes included in the vision for the "Portrait of a Graduate" and "equipping students for 21-st century success."

Please visit <https://www.nysed.gov/grad-measures> for further details, or the provided link son the GCS website in the Graduation Measures tab.

The "Portrait of a Graduate" represents a profound change in secondary education and there will be more detail and information to follow.

In the meantime, if interested, please visit the suggested links. If there are questions or comments, please do not hesitate to reach out to the building principal, a school counselor, or me.

Sincerely,



Robert B. Anderson, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

