



Deputy Commissioner
Office of P-12 Education

April 14, 2015

TO: BOCES District Superintendents
Superintendents of Public Schools
Principals of Public Schools
Charter School Leaders

FROM: Cosimo Tangorra, Jr.

SUBJECT: Multiple Pathways to Graduation

In January, the Board of Regents approved regulations establishing multiple, comparably rigorous assessment pathways to graduation for all students. The recently approved regulations recognize the importance of engaging students' interests in rigorous and relevant academic programs in the Arts; Languages other than English (LOTE)/Biliteracy; Career and Technical Education (CTE); Humanities; and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) by allowing students to pass an approved pathway assessment to meet graduation requirements.

Under the new "4+1" pathway assessment option, students must take and pass four required Regents Exams or Department-approved alternative assessments (one in each of the following subjects: English, math, science, and social studies) and a comparably rigorous assessment for the fifth required exam to graduate. The fifth assessment required for graduation may include any one of the following assessments:

- Either an additional Regents assessment, or a Department approved alternative, in a different course in Social Studies or in English (Humanities Pathway); or
- One additional Regents Examination in a different course in mathematics or science or a Department-approved alternative (STEM Pathway); or
- A pathway assessment approved by the Commissioner in accordance with §100.2(f)(2) of the Commissioner's regulations (which could include a Biliteracy [LOTE] Pathway); or
- A CTE pathway assessment, approved by the Commissioner in accordance with §100.2(mm), following successful completion of a CTE program approved pursuant to §100.5(d)(6) of the regulations (CTE Pathway); or
- An arts pathway assessment approved by the Commissioner in accordance with §100.2(mm) (Arts Pathway).

The 4+1 pathway option is effective beginning with students who first entered grade 9 in September 2011 and thereafter, or who are otherwise eligible to receive a high school diploma in June 2015 and thereafter.

Credit Requirements for Graduation

The 4+1 pathway option does not change existing graduation course or credit requirements. All New York students must earn a minimum of 22 high school credits in a course of study that includes English Language Arts, Math, Global History and Geography, US History and Government, Science, a Language other than English, the Arts, Physical Education and Health.

In addition, the regulations approved by the Board of Regents include a change to credit requirements in social studies. Students first entering grade 9 in September 2016 and thereafter will be required to earn two units of credit in global history and geography as part of the four units of social studies credit currently required of all students.

Pathways Assessments

In order to ensure that pathway assessments are of sufficient rigor, meet requirements for validity and reliability, and are available to all New York State students, the Department must review and approve assessments before they can be used as approved alternatives or pathway assessments. The Department currently has a number of approved alternative assessments to the Regents Exams in English, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies. A list of those assessments is currently available at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/assessment/hsgen/archive/list.pdf>. The Commissioner approved 14 technical assessments recommended by the Regents Blue Ribbon Technical Assessment Commission which may be found at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/multiple-pathways/>. The Department is engaged in ongoing work to identify additional assessments in each pathway that will meet the criteria established in regulations.

Local Requirements

The pathway regulation does not limit the school district's authority to require students to take Regents Examinations following the completion of a course. This remains a local decision, and districts may still elect to administer Regents Exams upon completion of a course as a local requirement.

Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation

In March, the Board of Regents adopted, by emergency action, new regulations to align the pathways to earning a Regents diploma with the requirements for earning a Regents diploma with an advanced designation. Students wishing to utilize this option must continue to pass eight required assessments to earn the Regents diploma with advanced designation.

Students completing the assessment requirements utilizing a Humanities, CTE, Arts or Biliteracy pathway, in addition to passing the examinations necessary for a Regents diploma, must also pass 2 additional Regents examinations in mathematics for a total of

3 examinations (or the Department approved alternatives) and 1 additional Regents examination or Department approved alternative in science for a total of 2 examinations (1 must be a life science and 1 must be a physical science assessment).

If the student exercises the **STEM pathway utilizing Regents examinations in the sciences**, then the student must also pass one additional Regents examination in science or a department-approved alternative, for a total of three examinations, after different courses in science, provided that the total number of science examinations passed, include at least one in life science and at least one in physical science.

If a student exercises the **STEM pathway utilizing Regents examinations in mathematics**, then the student must also pass 2 additional examinations in mathematics for a total of 4 examinations. The mathematics assessments can be Regents examinations or mathematics assessments from the list of Department approved alternatives after different courses in mathematics.

The STEM pathway advanced diploma math and science assessment requirements are summarized below:

| Required Exams in Math and Science | Regents Diploma | Regents Diploma with STEM Pathway | Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation | Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation following STEM Pathway |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Math | 1 | 1+1 | 3 | 3+1 |
| Science | 1 | 1+1 | 2 | 2+1 |

Next Steps

The Department will publish additional guidance over the coming months at this website <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/multiple-pathways/>. For additional information, please contact the Office of Curriculum at 518.474.5922 or emscgradreq@nysed.gov.