



Making the Diploma Count

What are the Current High School Graduation Requirements in PA?

Since 1999, students in Pennsylvania have been required to demonstrate achievement of the state standards by scoring proficient or above on the 11th grade PSSAs, or a local assessment that is aligned to the state standards to graduate from high school. Other graduation requirements, such as course requirements, grades, and graduation projects are decided by local school districts.

Are PA High School Graduates Ready for College and Career?

In 2006, 45 percent of graduating seniors did not score proficient on the reading and math 11th grade PSSAs, the 12th grade retake, or did not take the PSSAs but graduated based on local assessments. These results are mirrored across Pennsylvania – 461 school districts (in rural, suburban and urban school districts alike) graduated at least 20 percent or more students in 2006 than scored proficient or above on the PSSA.

The Commonwealth is currently not doing enough to ensure that every high school graduate is adequately prepared for postsecondary education or training, 21st century occupations and productive citizenship.

Approximately 66% of Community College of Allegheny County incoming freshmen require some remediation. Furthermore, Harrisburg Area Community College estimated that 50% of their students coming directly from high school needed to take remedial math, 55% needed to take remedial reading, and 33% needed to take remedial writing before they could take credit bearing courses. If community college remediation in Pennsylvania were reduced by just one course per remedial student, the savings would be nearly \$82 million a year.

The State Board of Education is proposing regulations that would revise high school graduation requirements to establish consistent statewide measurement of the minimum knowledge and skills that a public high school diploma signifies as well as a system of academic supports to help students achieve.

All young people in Pennsylvania should have the opportunity and education to build productive and successful lives for themselves and their families. Pennsylvania should hold all its high school students -- regardless of where they live, their race, income level, or future education or work-related aspirations -- to the same standards and assess them through comparable, validated tools.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.papartnerships.org/readyat21/index.asp>