

Spencer County Schools

Proficiency Based Early Graduation Process

Introduction

The Early Graduation statute and regulation are a result of Senate Bill 61 (2013) and are a companion regulation to Senate Bill 97 (2013). To summarize the regulation; beginning in 2014-2015, Early Graduation will be possible for students who intend to move on an accelerated timeline through high school and graduate college ready in three academic years or less. Early Graduation is a deliberate pathway for students that wish to complete high school early, receive a diploma from the district and be eligible for acceptance into a two-or four- year Kentucky SACS accredited, public or non-profit institution without remediation. The regulation provides a financial incentive, known as the Early Graduation Certificate, for the student to support this action.

Academic Requirements for Early Graduation

- Early Graduation Candidates must meet the proficiency benchmarks on Kentucky required end-of-course (EOC) exams. Currently those classes are *ENGLISH II, ALGEBRA II, BIOLOGY, and US HISTORY*.
- Early Graduation Candidates must meet Council of Post-Secondary Education (CPE) defined college readiness benchmarks on a college readiness exam. Current benchmarks for the ACT (English = 18, Reading = 20, Mathematics = 19) as set by CPE in 13 KAR 2:020.

Financial Incentives

A student who meets the Early Graduation requirements in 704 KAR 3:305 shall earn an Early Graduation Certificate and be eligible for a one-time scholarship award to be used at a SACS accredited Kentucky college or university the academic year immediately following early high school graduation.

- The award shall be equal to one-half (1/2) of the state portion of the average statewide per pupil guarantee for one year. This award amount is determined in the biennial budget for each fiscal year. For the academic year 2013-2014, the statewide per pupil guarantee was \$3827 (half of that would be approximately \$1913).
- The Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) will administer the scholarship; funds will be forwarded directly to the institute of higher education.
- Early Graduation Certificate funds shall be available only during the academic year following graduation.

Effective with the Class of 2015, students who are eligible for the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) program and graduate from a Kentucky high school in three years may be eligible for a KEES award that is the equivalent of four years of high school. Students who graduate in two years will be get two years of KEES.

- The KEES award amount is based on the average of GPA awards.
- The Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) should be contacted for additional information regarding the KEES program.

REASONS FOR EXITING EARLY GRADUATION

- **Voluntary academic**
 - Student is meeting blueprint for success but voluntarily chooses to remain in high school longer than three years to complete a career track, certification or accelerated/advanced courses such as AP, IB or dual credit.
- **Voluntary Financial/Scholarships**
 - Student is meeting blueprint for success but voluntarily chooses to remain in high school longer than three years to be eligible for college scholarships and financial benefit.
- **Involuntary academic**
 - Student is not meeting academic benchmarks on End-of-Course exams or proficiency benchmarks on the ACT. Student and family are counseled and advised against continuing on an Early Graduation pathway.
- **Health**
 - Student health issues that prevent student from accomplishing Early Graduation criteria.
- **Athletics**
 - Students choose to stay the full four years in high school to take advantage of programs in sports in high school.

For more information regarding the Early Graduation Process, please contact your school counselor or check out the information at <http://education.ky.gov/educational/AL/earlygrad/Pages/default.aspx>

Communicating the Initiatives and Criteria
Middle and High School Counselors/Administrators will distribute the district letter explaining the criteria, guidelines, requirements, and benefits of the Early Graduation Option.
The district informational letter, process and letter of intent will be posted to the school and district website.
Parents will be informed during Open House and other parent meetings.
All communications will take place by May 1 st .
Criteria for Successful Entrance <i>All candidates will be reviewed on an individual basis by the Early Graduation Committee. However, the criteria below are possible indicators of successful completion of the program.</i>
GPA – Student has demonstrated high academic potential in rigorous courses. Attendance – 95% average attendance rate Leadership – Letter of recommendation from a club sponsor or community member Discipline – students should not have excessive behavior issues. This indicator will be reviewed on an individual basis. Benchmarks – Meets benchmarks on state and district level assessments (KPREP, MAP, etc.) Student Disposition: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The decision to commit to graduating early is based on thoughtful conversations with families, school counselors and students, reviewing all the issues which surround accelerating high school graduation.</i> <i>Students intend to begin and stay on this pathway, beginning in middle school or ninth grade.</i> <i>Students have a clear academic or career goal in mind and therefore a reason to demonstrate proficiency in high school and move on.</i> <i>Student is persistent, self-motivated and can set and achieve goals independently.</i> <i>Student is emotionally and academically mature, can deal with their schedule and classes being “out of step” with same age peers.</i> <i>Student shows indications of being on or surpassing benchmarks for College and Career Readiness goals through standardized test scores. High grades alone do not determine a successful early graduate.</i> <i>Student may be identified as Gifted/Talented; this is also not a sole indicator of readiness.</i> <i>Students have a desire to succeed and “move on when ready.”</i> <i>Students do not have excessive absences, tardiness or truanancies.</i> <i>Students do not have excessive behavior issues. This is a pathway for those students who want to accomplish a goal. Students who cannot reliably accomplish the class and homework without prodding or support are not good candidates for Early Graduation.</i>
Entrance Process
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Upon submission of the “Letter of Intent” and completion of the “Student Success Survey”: middle and/or high school counselors/administrators will meet with potential applicants to explain the Early Graduation Option. Letters of Intent must be submitted before May 15th (Appendix A)

2. A screening committee consisting of middle and/or high school counselors/administrators, will review the Letter of Intent and criteria for successful completion of potential applicants for the Early Graduation Option.
3. An Early Graduation Committee will be established for each student prepared for entry in to the program. The EGC will consist of the student, parent, principal/designee, and counselor. The EGC will conduct an initial meeting to discuss readiness into the program. The committee will review the District Early Graduation "Things to Consider" sheet. (Appendix B) The EGC will decide upon acceptance to the program. All required committee members must sign the letter of intent. Upon acceptance to the program, students will review pathway options. (Appendix C) The superintendent will sign the letter of intent upon recommendation of the committee.
4. The EGC will encourage the student to be in frequent communication with the college/university of choice to ensure acceptance in to the selected program.
5. The signed Letter of Intent will be scanned into the ILP onto the Advising Page and student is flagged in Infinite Campus as being in an alternative program.
6. Schools must enter status as an Early Graduate into Infinite Campus no later than October 1st of the year in which the student makes the declaration as stated in Section 9 of 704 KAR 3:305
7. Students meeting the criteria will follow the Early Graduation Track upon entering 9 th grade. (Appendix C)
8. Students who submit a Letter of Intent but do not exhibit readiness for the program may re-apply the following year as initiated by the student by submitting another letter of intent.
Progress Monitoring and Support for Early Graduate Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The EGC will meet with students enrolled in the Early Graduation Option at least two times a year to review current data and determine student status in the program. The EGC will identify areas of concerns and provide the necessary interventions for students. Notes from regularly scheduled counseling meetings including family and student are recorded and filed in the ILP to ensure progress on Early Graduation pathway.

Blueprint for Intervention	
<p>9. Students who are at risk of not meeting the program criteria will be provided additional counseling from school counselors.</p> <p>10. Students needing additional academic support will be placed in College and Career Readiness Interventions that are appropriate in meeting individual needs. (Notes will be entered in to the ILP)</p> <p>11. Parents will be notified as concerns are identified.</p>	
ACT	
12. The Building Assessment Coordinator will ensure that Early Graduate Candidates have the opportunity to take the ACT.	
Transition Plan for Early Graduates /Students Exiting the Program Before Graduating	
<p>13. Early Graduation Committee meeting will be scheduled for those students who are not meeting the program criteria or who decide to discontinue participation in the Early Graduation Pathway.</p> <p>14. The Early Graduation Committee will review transcripts and determine a pathway to meet high school requirements.</p> <p>15. The Early Graduation Committee will seek to place the student in an appropriate pathway that will ensure readiness for college and/or a career.</p>	
Spencer County Ceremony Options	
16. Early Graduation students will be allowed to participate in activities that are normally afforded to graduating seniors during the year the program requirements are to be completed including the graduation ceremony. This is subject to review by the committee and is pending successful progress toward the required benchmarks.	
Diploma Options	
17. Students will receive a general diploma from the Spencer County School System.	

APPENDIX A: Letter of Intent to Apply for Early Graduation

Early Graduation Information

Letter of Intent to Apply for Early Graduation

Senate Bill 61, passed during the 2013 Kentucky General Assembly, provides a pathway to early graduation for students who intend to complete high school in three academic years or less. Beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year, students who complete the Early Graduation requirements (see below) may receive a diploma from their district. Students who graduate in three years or less are also eligible for an Early Graduation Certificate, which they may use the year immediately following high school graduation when enrolling in an SACS accredited Kentucky two- or four- year institute of higher education.

Clarifying Points:

- The statutory changes and regulation go into effect beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year.
- KRS 158.142 states that a local board of education shall not impose graduation requirements that prohibit a student who is pursuing an early graduation program from finishing high school in less than four (4) years.
- Early Graduation is defined as a student meeting the performance criteria outlined in 704 KAR 3:305 Section 9 (2) and doing so in three years or less from the date of first enrolling in grade nine.
- To meet the criteria, students that intend to graduate early must meet minimum proficiency benchmarks for the four End of Course exams required for state accountability and meet college ready benchmarks for the ACT or other college readiness exam.
- A student who wishes to graduate early must complete a *Letter of Intent to Apply for Early Graduation* within the first 30 days of the academic year in which they want to graduate and the information must be entered into Infinite Campus and the ILP no later than October 1st of the academic year they intend to graduate.
- Students may take their one state supported ACT exam earlier than their junior year, as provided by the regulation.
- Early Graduation students require consistent monitoring and counseling to ensure they are on track to complete the early graduation requirement. The ILP should be completed and regular meetings between the student, family and counselor should monitor and update student progress as required in Section 4 of 704 KAR 3:305.

- The *Letter of Intent* is not binding; students may revert to regular student enrollment with the knowledge they have to meet the District's minimum requirements and that they will not be eligible for the Early Graduation Certificate.\

Incentives:

- 1) A student who meets the Early Graduation requirements in 704 KAR 3:305 shall earn an Early Graduation Certificate to be eligible for a one time scholarship award to be used at a Kentucky two- or four-year public or independent non-profit SAC's accredited college or university the year immediately following high school graduation. The award shall be equal to one-half (1/2) of the SEEK statewide per pupil guarantee for one year.
- 2) Students who graduate from high school in three years shall also receive a Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) award equivalent to completing high school in four years.

Letter of Intent to Apply for Early Graduation
Intended Graduation Year _____

Student name	
SSID#	
Date of Birth	
Parent/Guardian name	
Permanent Mailing Address	
City, State, Zip code	
Parent phone number	
Parent email address	

High School Name:	District:
Principal:	Mailing Address:

Date student entered high school (MM/DD/YEAR)

Date student intends to graduate (MM/DD/YEAR)

Disclosures: (parent/guardian and student initial each statement)

_____ I have read and understood the attached information regarding Early Graduation.

_____ I understand that this Intent to pursue Early Graduation is an accelerated pathway and I intend to meet the academic criteria and timeline of the intent, graduating within three years of entry into high school. By meeting these requirements, I am eligible for the Early Graduation Certificate and a diploma.

_____ I understand that, should I attain Early Graduation and be awarded an Early Graduation Certificate award, I may need to provide additional information to the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) in order to have funds sent to my college or university.

_____ I understand that failure to meet the Early Graduation criteria or timeline will result in having to complete the regular minimum requirements for high school, and forfeiture of the Early Graduation Certificate.

_____ I understand that if I intend to and attain Early Graduation, the Intent is not binding and I may choose stay in high school to pursue available opportunities. I understand however, that by remaining in high school, I forfeit the Early Graduation Certificate.

Signatures: (print name and sign)

Student _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

Principal _____ Date _____

Superintendent _____ Date _____

The student status as an Early Graduate is to be entered into Infinite Campus no later than October 1st of the academic year in which the student makes the declaration, as stated in Section 9 of 704 KAR 3:305. The Signed and completed Intent form is to be uploaded into the student ILP

Date entered into IC _____ Into ILP _____

By (print name and sign)

If this student transfers to another Kentucky high school before completing Early Graduation, the Early Graduation Intent and information must be moved in Infinite Campus and a counselor must be assigned to monitor the student's progress.

Date moved _____

School, District _____

Date entered into IC _____

By (print name and sign) _____

- A copy of this Intent form should be placed in the Student's Cumulative folder and a copy given to the student for their records.

Appendix B:

Issues to Consider Surrounding the Early Graduation Option

All students are unique, so as you think about Early Graduation; there are many factors which could affect your decision. Below are some questions to ask yourself as you begin considering an Early Graduation option.

- Has your child met the benchmarks on state or school assessments? (ex., ACT, End-of-Course, MAP)
- Is your child emotionally mature enough to work independently?
- Is your child socially immature and would mind being in classes with students that are older?
- Is your child one who has a plan for the future?
- Does your child want to stay in high school to complete four years of activities, sports, or competitions?
- Would your child benefit from taking advanced level AP or dual credit courses-gaining college credit while remaining in high school environment?
- Are you ready financially to send a student to college early?
- Are there scholarships, academic opportunities or events in the high school that the student would benefit from by staying four years?
- Does your child have a career track that they can add onto their college readiness by staying four years?
- Does Early Graduation adequately prepare your child for their academic plan?
- Will your child be willing to forego senior traditional activities (i.e., prom, banquets, award ceremonies, trips, and recognitions)?
- Will your child be willing to forego participation in athletic activities?
- Will your child's college/university allow your child to participate in athletic activities?
- Will your child be eligible for all scholarships?

Appendix C:

SCHS Sample Pathways for Students for Proficiency-Based Early Graduation 2-Year Program

9th Grade
English I* or Adv. English I*
Geometry or Advanced Geometry
Biology or Adv. Biology
World Language I or AP World Language
World History or AP Human Geography
Health / PE
Elective**

10th Grade
English II or Adv. English II
Algebra II or Advanced Algebra II
US History or AP US History
Chemistry or Adv. Chemistry or Dual Credit Chemistry
Elective**
Elective**
Elective**

*Or substituted for higher level course

** Elective Classes—students may select a career pathway in any CTE area; additional core or elective classes in the areas of Math, English, Social Studies or Science; or, classes in the visual and performing arts.

ASSESSMENTS

9th Grade	10th Grade
Biology EOC	ACT
AP Exams (Students who take AP classes)	English II EOC
	Algebra II EOC
	US History EOC
	On-Demand Writing
	AP Exams (Students who take AP classes)
	KOSSA (Career Pathway-depends on electives taken)

SCHS Sample Pathways for Students for Proficiency-Based Early Graduation 3-Year Program

9 th Grade
English I* or Adv. English I*
Geometry or Advanced Geometry
Integrated Science or Advanced Integrated Science
World History or AP Human Geography
Health / PE
Elective**
Elective**

10 th Grade
English II or Adv. English II
Algebra II or Advanced Algebra II
Biology or Advanced Biology or AP Biology
AP Government or Poli-Econ
Elective**
Elective**
Elective**

11 th Grade
English III or Adv. English III or AP Language
Pre-Calculus or AP Stats or Dual Credit College Algebra
Chemistry or Dual Credit Chemistry or Physics
US History or AP US History
World Language I or AP World Language
Elective**
Elective**

*Or substituted for higher level course

** Elective Classes—students may select a career pathway in any CTE area; additional core or elective classes in the areas of Math, English, Social Studies or Science; or, classes in the visual and performing arts.

ASSESSMENTS

9 th Grade	10 th Grade	11 th Grade
		ACT
AP Exams (Students who take AP classes)	English II EOC	US History EOC
	On-Demand Writing	Biology EOC
	KOSSA (Career Pathway)	On-Demand Writing
	AP Exams (Students who take AP classes)	KOSSA (Career Pathway)
	Biology EOC	AP Exams (Students who take AP classes)
	Algebra II EOC	STAMP World Language Assessment

Parent Letter

Dear Spencer County Students and Parents,

The Kentucky Board of Education is offering an Early Graduation Option for students beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year. The intent of the Early Graduation Option is to provide students who plan to move on to college with an option to be placed on an accelerated pathway. Students who meet the criteria may graduate in three years or less and receive a high school diploma along with an Early Graduation Certificate, which they may use the year immediately following high school graduation when enrolling in an SACS accredited Kentucky two- or four- year institute of higher education.

What criteria must be met?

- Meet proficiency benchmarks on Kentucky required end-of-course exams. Currently, those classes are: ENGLISH II, ALGEBRA II, BIOLOGY, US HISTORY
- Meet the Council of Post-Secondary Education (CPE) defined college readiness benchmarks on a college readiness exam. Current benchmarks for the ACT (English = 18, Reading = 20, Mathematics = 19)

What are the benefits of the Early Graduation Option?

- Students may still be eligible to receive the KEES award for four years based on the average of GPA awards.
- Students will receive a scholarship from the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA). The funds will be forwarded directly to the institute of higher education the student plans to attend. The amount will be based on the biennial budget for each fiscal year and is estimated to be approximately \$1900.00.
- Students may enroll in a Kentucky two or four year profit or non-profit college a year early(if they meet entry requirements of that institution).

What should I do if I am interested in the Early Graduation Option?

- Attend informational meetings and/or contact the guidance department at Spencer County High School.

Thank you,

Frequently Asked Questions Early Graduation

The Frequently Asked Questions document is to provide clarification regarding the amendment to 704 KAR 3:305 regarding Early Graduation criteria and incentives. The document is grouped by similar questions around a similar topic

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. **When does the regulation go into effect?**
The regulation took effect the academic year 2014-2015.
2. **Why is there an Early Graduation pathway?**
The Early Graduation Certificate (SB 61) was enacted by the 2013 Kentucky General Assembly as a companion piece of legislation to Compulsory Attendance (SB 97). The intent of the statute is to create an accelerated pathway for students to be able to graduate in three years or less from high school, before age 18 and be college ready.
4. **How is Early Graduation different?**
Early Graduation here is referring to the legislative action which was enacted in 204-2015. You must be a 9th-10th or 11th grader. This pathway and the guidance here (including flagging in IC) IS NOT REQUIRED FOR A 12th grader who leaves early in their fourth year.
3. **What if I have moved to Kentucky from another state and want to graduate early (after October 1st)?**
 - a. Students who apply to Early Graduation later than October 1st will not be able to graduate during that academic year, they will be able to graduate the next academic year.
 - b. Ex: A junior moves into state in November 2015, they will NOT be eligible for Early Graduation in spring 2016.
 - c. Ex: A sophomore moves into Kentucky in November 2015, they can enroll in Early Graduation to leave school spring of 2017.
4. **What if I am homeschooled or in private school? Can I graduate early?**
 - a. This regulation establishes minimum requirements for a high school diploma in public schools in Kentucky. This regulation does not apply to current home-schooled or private school students, they are not eligible for the Certificate.
5. **What if I intend to graduate but change my mind and want to stay in high school?**
 - a. The *Letter of Intent* is not binding; a student may choose to stay four years in high school. Once the student exits Early Graduation, the student must be transitioned back to regular minimum graduation requirements and understands that they are no longer eligible for the Early Graduation Certificate. The student should be unflagged in IC – see guidance on data entry.

Questions from Parents/Students

6. **What do I have to do to graduate early? Read all the documents on the website.**
 - a. THE NEXT STEP is having a conference with college admissions to understand what courses will be required for pre-admission for your field of study.
 - b. STEP THREE is a conversation with your high school counselor to work together to build a program of studies that meet your needs.
 - c. Complete the Intent Letter, Online Survey.

- d. Regulation guidance, The *Letter of Intent* and supporting documents can be found on the Kentucky Department of Education website.
<http://education.ky.gov/educational/AL/Pages/Early-Graduation.aspx>
7. **I am in middle school, why should I worry about this now?**
 If you are interested in Early Graduation, thinking ahead to possible high school schedules and making sure that you have or will take the requisite courses to complete Early Graduation as a sophomore or junior would be beneficial. Families of students may need to have discussions prior to high school about student academic and maturity factors as well as financial issues that go with a student entering college early.
8. **I want to get out of high school early, who are potential candidates for Early Graduation?**
 This regulation is targeted for students who have shown high achievement, accelerated levels of academic success and express a desire to complete high school early in three years or less. Districts are recommended to have screening criteria and data to aid students and parents in the decision-making process; however the decision is ultimately up to the student and their family. Students who have been in high school more than three years at the time they apply ARE NOT ELIGIBLE.
9. **My parents don't support me doing in graduating early; can I do it without their signature?**
 The *Letter of Intent* requires student, parent/guardian, principal and superintendent signatures to be considered complete. Early Graduation participants and families are recommended to have an initial meeting with counselors to determine the likelihood of success. After starting the program, students, parents and counselors meet regularly to assess progress. Full use of the ILP is also recommended by the regulation. Difficulty in meeting any of the criteria would be an indication the student is not ready for college level work.
10. **My counselor has discouraged me from trying early graduation, why?**
 - a. Early Graduation is not a "loop hole" or "short cut" to getting a diploma. The four courses required; English II, Algebra II, Biology and US History have been determined as courses that prepare students for college success without remediation. The ACT college readiness exam scores, along with COMPASS and KYOTE, have strong correlations with student success in college.
 - b. Students who wish to pursue Early Graduation who have not shown academic success in prior coursework or do not indicate the ability to self-regulate or study independently may not be good candidates for the program.
 - c. Students who have failed and have been in high school MORE THAN THREE YEARS at the time they apply ARE NOT ELIGIBLE. The legislation states EG must complete the criteria and do so in three years or less.
11. **Do I get a diploma when I do Early Graduation?**
 Yes, Early Graduates receive a diploma from their local board of education. If districts have multiple levels of diplomas (e.g. general, alternative or honors), it would be a local school board decision as to which diploma the student receives. The state does not provide a template.
12. **I am a high school senior, can I be an Early Graduate?**
 No, this regulation outlining the criteria and the financial "Certificate" are for high school freshman, sophomores and juniors only.
13. **I am a high school senior who will complete their credits in December, aren't I "graduating early?"**

Yes, you are leaving earlier than the rest of your cohort group but you are not part of the Early Graduate pathway, open to 9th, 10th and 11th graders only.

14. If I am in KSB, KSD or a special education student, or in alternative placement can I participate in Early Graduation?

- a. Yes, students in those settings or placements can participate in Early Graduation and must meet the same criteria outlined in the regulation.

15. What if I finish Early Graduation and leave in December?

- a. The Early Graduation Certificate funds would not be available until the fall of the year you graduate. You may attend college during the summer and wait for the Certificate to be applied during the fall term. If you graduate before you complete three full years of high school, you may not qualify for the KEES equivalent award. You should contact the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) to see how graduating in December would affect your KEES earnings.

16. What if I intend to graduate early and move to another school in the district before I finish?

You should make sure that your new school receives and enters the *Letter of Intent* into Infinite Campus. Prior to moving schools, conversations should take place notifying the school of your alternative placement and conjointly work out an accelerated pathway for the student in the new school.

17. What if I am doing Early Graduation and I move out of the state?

Early Graduation is a pathway for Kentucky students; it is not applicable in other states.

18. What if I complete Early Graduation, receive my diploma and then change my mind, can I return to high school?

No, once you exit the system with a valid diploma you may not return to high school.

19. How does graduating early affect my KEES award?

Students who graduate at the end of their third year at a Kentucky high school will be eligible for the equivalent of four years' worth of KEES. Students who graduate in two years will get two years of KEES. Additional questions about KEES should be directed to the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority at (800) 928-8926 ext. 67397.

20. What is the Certificate?

- a. The regulation provides a financial incentive for students who both sign *an Intent* and successfully complete the proficiency criteria to graduate early. The term Certificate here means the financial scholarship attached to this regulation.
- b. The "Early Graduation Certificate" or scholarship is awarded by the KHEAA and makes the recipient eligible for a scholarship award equal to one-half (½) of the state portion of the average statewide per pupil guaranteed base funding level. This scholarship is to be used at a Kentucky public two or four year public or non-profit independent colleges and universities.

21. How does the Early Graduation Certificate work?

After completing the Early Graduation pathway, students receive the "Certificate" when they work with both their district, KHEAA and the Kentucky two- or four- year public or non-profit school they are entering. The Certificate funds are awarded directly to the institution for the student.

22. I completed Early Graduation- when do I get the scholarship? Do I have to do anything else?

KHEAA is the agency which handles both the scholarship and KEES money. Early Graduation students MUST contact KHEAA to let them know of any address changes and

let them know where you will be attending. Letters will be sent out in the summer from KHEAA.

23. Can I apply the certificate to out of state schools?

No, The Certificate monies may only be used toward Kentucky public or non-profit independent colleges and universities.

Questions on testing and course credits

24. Can I take high school courses in middle school?

Yes, KRS 158.622 states that each school district shall "Accept for credit toward graduation and completion of high school course requirements an advanced placement, a high school equivalent, or a Kentucky Virtual High School course taken by a student in grades 5, 6, 7, or 8 if that student attains performance levels expected of high school students in that district as determined by achieving a score of "3" or higher on a College Board Advanced Placement examination or a grade of "B" or better in a high school equivalent or a Kentucky Virtual High School course."

Make sure you have communicated with the high school before taking a course in middle school, online or in person, for which you want to earn high school credit.

25. Can I take End-of-Course exams in middle school?

Yes, with the communication and acceptance of the sponsoring high school that the course given was:

- 1) taught by a teacher that was highly qualified and certified to teach high school level courses
- 2) the student had prior approval that any online course was acceptable to the high school for course credit
- 3) The End-of-Course exam is given either at the middle school or high school following the student having successfully taken the full and complete course prior to taking the exam.

26. What about the minimum required credits to graduate?

- a. Early Graduation is an amendment to 704 KAR 3:305, Minimum Requirements for Graduation. **In the amended regulation, Early Graduation is an alternative path to graduation that does not require the 22 minimum credits for graduation. (See Appendix E, Section 6 (1) of the Early Graduation Guidance Document)**
- b. **This means there are NO required number of minimum credits to graduate as part of the Early Graduation pathway- the only requirements are the four courses attached to the EOC exams.**
- c. **What about having to take English 4? (see answer to b. above, it is not required)**

27. Can my district add requirements?

- a. No, according to KRS 158.142, a local board of education shall not impose graduation requirements that prohibit a student who is pursuing an Early Graduation program from finishing high school in less than four years.
- b. Districts can recommend courses that will both strengthen the student's academic content and skills and build on a learning progression to college. This schedule may be different from most students because it is so differentiated. The counselor and student, based on needed pre-admission criteria and career goals WORK TOGETHER on a course load that is both targeted and necessary for student success. Districts, schools and counselors can only recommend, not insist, on a course of study.

28. Can I double up and take two of the same content courses at the same time?

Yes, you will need to plan a schedule with your counselor to ensure the school can accommodate your plans for acceleration. An example you could take Physics and Biology in the same year.

29. What if I took an EOC course (Eng. II, Alg. II, Biology or US History) in another state, do I have to take it again?

No, if the high school you are entering has policies in place on performance credit, they can award credit based on previous course-work.

30. What is performance based criteria?

- a. A high school graduation credit may be awarded in either of two ways: Carnegie Units (defined as at least 120 hours of instructional time in one subject) OR performance-based credits. Students must show proficiency in a subject by demonstrating they know the subject through an End-of-Course exam. Performance based criteria are standards-based and aligned with expectations for all students to be college and career ready.

31. What about taking the College Readiness Exams early?

- a. Students participating in Early Graduation may take their state administered ACT test in their freshman or sophomore years. If students wish to take the ACT independently, the student will be responsible for the cost of the test. It is the student's responsibility to have the scores reported to the high school. According to the regulation, students may take their college readiness exam earlier than they are traditionally administered. This includes COMPASS and KYOTE.

32. What if I can't make benchmark on the ACT?

- a. A key piece to this legislation is the constant and continual monitoring of student progress through counseling and use of the ILP. Students, families and counselors should review academic performance each grading period to make sure the student is on track. **If a student is unable to reach proficiency in either the course or exams that is a strong indicator the student is not ready for college level work.**
- b. Students may re-take the ACT as often as they choose (only one school sponsored administration is provided, additional administrations must be funded by the student).
- c. Students can take the COMPASS or KYOTE college readiness exams and do so earlier than senior year.(see Q.31)

33. I want to see what I might make on the ACT before intending to graduate- can I do this?

- a. We want you to be as prepared and sure of this pathway as possible, taking the ACT early, at **your expense**, is your choice.

34. Can I take other college readiness exams other than the ACT?

- a. The state sponsors one admission of the ACT to every Kentucky student because of the strong correlation between success on the ACT and success in college. While there are other college readiness exams available (KYOTE, COMPASS) the ACT is generally what colleges and universities expect to see for admission as an indication of the high level of knowledge and rigor needed at the college level. A student may take another exam but must make CPE college ready benchmarks.

35. What if I intend to graduate early but didn't meet proficiency in the End-of-Course (EOC)

- a. If an Early Graduate candidate successfully passes a course, but does not meet EOC benchmark, the student may complete an appeal process to the district board on the extenuating circumstances to re-take the EOC exam again. The DAC should keep the rationale for the retake on file. Refer to the District Assessment Coordinator's Guide for more information.

- b. Students may retake End-Of-Course exams but only after retaking the full and complete course itself (credit recovery is not an acceptable replacement) and may take the End-of-Course again (only once per course and only for Early Graduate candidates).
- c. In extraordinary circumstances, the student may appeal to the district superintendent to retake the EOC exam. See the District Assessment Coordinator's Guide for more detail. Without an approved appeal, students may not re-take an EOC exam unless they have taken the full course again. (See b above).
- d. If the student fails to meet benchmark in the spring of their junior year, they have not successfully completed Early Graduation, they must be unflagged and remain in HS until they reach the district minimum requirements.