Graduation Guidelines (GG): Frequently Asked Questions

Contents

The Class of 2020-2021

What flexibility for the class of 2021 do schools, charters, and districts have for Graduation Guidelines?

For 2020-2021, local education providers (LEPs) may graduate students according to district determined graduation requirements, that include the Graduation Guidelines Menu of Options and/or local options, such as courses.

Local education providers can decide if they would like to implement for the class of 2021 or delay full implementation until the class of 2022.

Will we have to change anything in our board policies for graduation requirements?

An LEP may need to work with its local board of education to update the current graduation policy (IKF). Local education providers can decide if they would like to implement for the class of 2021 or delay full implementation until the class of 2022

The Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) is working on guidance for school districts. Please contact Josie Lewis at CASB for more information, jlewis@casb.org

What is the Local Measure (LM) Guideline?

The Local Measure option was provided as flexibility for the class of 2021. The LM guideline means the student met Graduation Guidelines through a local option (i.e., district policy). The LM guideline is only available for the class of 2021 and will most likely be removed in subsequent years.

When will GG start again?

Full implementation of the Graduation Guidelines Menu of Options is expected to continue for the class of 2022.

Do we have to report GG for the class of 2021?

Yes. Reporting Graduation Guidelines is part of the Student Interchange File for the class of 2021 (22-11-204(V) C.R.S.). CDE worked with EDAC and other stakeholders to determine reporting categories for the 2020- 2021 school year.

Will accountability be linked to GG for 2021?

No. Graduation Guidelines data will not be used for any official accountability purposes or decision-making in 2021.

Which assessments and measures from the GG menu are available now?

Please consult the Google Document: Graduation Guidelines Measures Availability, which will be updated as often as information is available.

What is the last date by which a student may complete graduation requirements to be considered a graduate of the class of 2021?

In order to count as a graduate in the class of 2021, students must meet local graduation requirements by August 31, 2021. Students may complete graduation requirements over the summer, if necessary. Consider counting summer courses, online courses, jobs, internships, apprenticeships, earned industry certificates, or other assessments/opportunities.

Can students return for a fifth year if they have not met their graduation requirements by August 31, 2021?

Yes. Students may continue their education for a fifth, sixth or seventh year (or until age 21) if they are not yet ready to graduate.

Can students receive an exception to Graduation Guidelines in 2020-2021?

No. Exceptions to Graduation Guidelines are not permitted for the 2020-2021 school year. Any student who has exit type code '90' should have met local graduation requirements (in the definition for '90' exit type code). Therefor, all students qualify to use Local Measure (LM) as their Guideline measure, negating the need for exceptions.

Policy/Program

What are Graduation Guidelines (GG)?

Colorado Graduation Guidelines provide a road map to help students and their families plan for success after high school. The graduation guidelines took effect with ninth graders in fall 2017. Please see the Graduation Guidelines section of the CDE website.

As required by state statute (in section 22-2-106, C.R.S.), in September 2015, the Colorado State Board of Education adopted a comprehensive set of guidelines to be used by each school district's board of education in establishing requirements for students to receive a high school diploma. The guidelines have two purposes. The first is to articulate Colorado's shared beliefs about the value and meaning of a high school diploma. The second is to outline the minimum components, expectations, and responsibilities of local districts and the state to support students in attaining their high school diploma and in providing evidence to employers, military recruiters, training program and college admission teams that students are ready for the next step after high school.

In September 2015, the State Board of Education stated that the graduation guidelines set a minimum bar for student demonstrations. School districts may raise a cut score on an included assessment and may add graduation requirements in other content areas. Districts may offer some or all of the state menu options. School districts may not lower assessment scores or add measures to the menu.

The Graduation Guidelines Menu of Options was updated to include SAT test scores (starting in March 2016), Next Generation ACCUPLACER Scores (January 2019), New names for the ACT WorkKeys Assessments, a definition of Collaboratively-developed, standards-based performance assessments (July 2019) and with Flexibility for the Class of 2021 (July 2020).

What is the Graduation Guidelines flexibility for the Class of 2021?

In July 2020, the state board voted to provide flexibility for the class of 2021. For 2020-2021, local education providers (LEPs) may graduate students according to district determined graduation requirements, that include the Graduation Guidelines Menu of Options and/or local options, such as courses. And, LEPS can decide if they would like to implement for the class of 2021 or delay full implementation until the class of 2022. Full implementation of the Graduation Guidelines Menu of Options is expected to continue for the class of 2022. Please see Flexibility for the class of 2021 and Frequently Asked Questions.

Who was involved in in creating Graduation Guidelines?

The Graduation Guidelines Council, a representative group of educators and community members established in statute, convened in 2007 and again in June of 2012 to draft and refine requirements for high school graduation. The Colorado State Board of Education adopted a draft menu of college and career ready demonstrations in May 2013.

Then, in fall 2013, CDE convened seven work groups to inform the implementation of graduation guidelines. More than 330 educators, business and industry leaders, parents and students from across the state joined these work groups to identify implementation recommendations, best practices, tools and resources. The Colorado State Board of Education adopted the updated Menu of College and Career Demonstrations in September 2015.

What is the menu of options?

Local school boards establish high school graduation requirements that meet or exceed the Colorado Graduation Guidelines for the graduating class of 2021 or 2022. Local school boards and districts select from this menu to create a list of options that their students must use to show what they know or can do in order to graduate from high school, beginning with the graduating class of 2021 or 2022.

School districts may offer some or all of the state menu options, may raise a cut score on an included assessment and may add graduation requirements in other content areas. School districts may not lower assessment scores or add measures to the menu.

Graduation Guidelines begin with the implementation of: Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAP), 21st Century Essential Skills, and Colorado Academic Standards for all content areas, including a course in Civics.

Why Graduation Guidelines?

The guidelines have two purposes, the first is to articulate Colorado's shared beliefs about the value and meaning of a high school diploma. The second is to outline the minimum components, expectations, and responsibilities of local districts and the state to support students in attaining their high school diploma.

Life beyond high school is different from what it used to be. Most jobs in Colorado now and in the future require training or education beyond high school. Students who graduate and work in Colorado will need in-demand skills that meet business, industry, and higher education standards.

Where can I find more information about Graduation Guidelines?

Please visit the Graduation Guidelines Website and Menu of Options

Local education providers have aligned their graduation requirements with the state's Graduation Guidelines in board policy. See examples here.

- Local school boards have the authority and flexibility to select from the Menu of Options that their students must use to show what they know or can do in order to graduate from high school. LEPs may offer some or all of the state menu options, may raise a cut score on an included assessment, and may add graduation requirements in other areas.
- LEPs decide the number of courses required for graduation, and the method by which these courses are taught or delivered. The only course required in state law for graduation is Civics (22-1-104 (3)(a) C.R.S). LEPs have the ability to determine how this course requirement is met.
- Graduation Guidelines begin with the implementation of Individual and Academic Plans (ICAP), Essential Skills, and Colorado Academic Standards in all content areas, including Civics.

- LEPs also have the authority to provide accommodations to students in meeting the college and career demonstrations necessary to earn a standard high school diploma for: English learners, gifted students, and students with disabilities.
- Consider joining your colleagues for a virtual PWR Symposium to continue building on your implementation strategies. Learn from and engage with your peers in conversations about capstone, work-based learning, concurrent enrollment, CTE, Industry Certificates, and ICAP. Consider working with CDE to host a Symposium.

Graduation Guidelines Manager, Robin Russel is available to assist schools and school districts with implementation, please contact her with questions at russel_r@cde.state.co.us, 720.576.2902

What is the guidance for Graduation Guidelines for students with exceptions? (i.e., EL, GT, Students with Disabilities)

English Learners

Gifted Students

Students with Disabilities

Reporting (Data Pipeline)

When should districts be uploading GG to Data Pipeline?
Districts may report Graduation Guidelines through Data Pipeline as soon as the student meets a measure. In the 2020-2021 school year, the GG file will be open while the End of Year collection is open (please see End of Year timeline). In the subsequent years, the GG file will follow the opening and closing timeline of the other Student Interchange files. This means the file will open in July and close the following December (i.e., for the 2021-2022 school year, the GG file will open July 2021 and close December 2022).

How many records does each student need in GG?
A student should have one Graduation Guidelines record for any GG the student attempts and/or passes. At minimum, a student must have at least one English (Guideline type = 0) and at least one math (Guideline Type = 1) record (with a passing score) in his/her GG file.

How will a district know if a student has met GG at another school/district?
Districts are encouraged to use the Cognos Report: Graduation Guideline Student History Report to search for a student's SASID to see if they have met GG in another district. Alternatively, districts may work together to share GG information.

How are the accommodations fields used (IEP, EL, GT)?
In order to graduate ready, all students - including English learners, gifted students, and students with disabilities - must demonstrate readiness according to the Graduation guidelines Menu of Options in at least one measure in English and one in math.

Students who have a record in the Special Education Interchange should be coded IEP_ACCOMMODATION = 1
Students who have a Language Background other than English should be coded EL_ACCOMMODATION = 1
Students who are identified at Gifted and Talented should be coded with GT_ACCOMMODATION = 1

According to Graduation Provisions for students with an IEP, created by an expert stakeholder group last spring, "an LEP may provide accommodations to enable the student receiving special education services to reach the same standard as students without disabilities."   Practitioners can find more information on the Graduation Guidelines website under "Students with Exceptions." An example of an accommodation is extra time on the SAT.

Can Graduation Guidelines be waived (for a school district)?

The state board policy on requesting waivers from graduation requirements allows individual school districts to request waivers from all or a portion of the Graduation Requirements adopted by the state board. Individual school districts may request waivers from all or a portion of the Colorado Graduation Requirements adopted by the state board, in accordance with C.R.S. § 22-2-117, as long as the replacement plan meets or exceeds "any minimum standards or basic core competencies of skills identified in the comprehensive set of guidelines for this school graduation developed by the state board," inclusive of the Colorado Graduation Guidelines. Please see the waiver guidance here.

What are the reporting expectations for students with anticipated year of graduation (AYG) prior to 2021?

Students with an AYG prior to 2020-2021 are not required to meet Graduation Guidelines. Students with AYG prior to 2021, but who will graduate in school year 2020-2021 should use Local Measure (LM) as their Guideline.
Students with AYG prior to 2021 and who graduate after 2021, may be granted an exception to the GG requirement.

What if a student transfers from out of state in 12th grade and is graduating?

Any student who receives a diploma from a Colorado Local Education Provider (LEP) is required to meet Graduation Guidelines, regardless of his/her state/country of origin.

How are ASCENT students expected to report GG?

Any and all students who use exit type code 90 (graduate with regular diploma) in Student End of Year are required to have met Graduation Guidelines in both English and math. However, according to ASCENT law, students do not have to meet graduation requirements to continue in their ASCENT program for their 5th year. This is a district decision. Further, districts may count ASCENT students in their 4-year graduation rate if they have met local graduation requirements and GG prior to their ASCENT year.

Can you give me an example of what a GG file record might look like for a single student?

Yes! A student's GG file with differ dependent on what measures the student meets. Here are a few examples:
- A student meets both English and math requirements through the Local Measure guideline type (only for the class of 2021)

GUIDELINE_TYPE	GUIDELINE_NAME	GUIDELINE_SCORE
0	LM	1
1	LM	1

- A student meets one English and one math requirement, without using the Local Measure guideline type:

GUIDELINE_TYPE	GUIDELINE_NAME	GUIDELINE_SCORE
0	SAT	480
1	AP	4

- A student attempts, and passes, more than the required one GG in math and one GG in English:

GUIDELINE_TYPE	GUIDELINE_NAME	GUIDELINE_SCORE
0	ACT	21
1	ACT	24
0	CAP	1
1	AP	5

Will students be able to use the Local Measure (LM) Guideline Type after 2020-2021?

No. As it currently (3/1/21) stands, the Local Measure guideline is provided as an option only for the class of 2021. Full implementation of the Graduation Guidelines Menu of Options is expected to continue for the class of 2022.

Do charter and online schools need to adhere to GG?

Yes. Charter schools must meet the local graduation requirements of their authorizers unless they seek waivers of those requirements by their authorizers. Online schools are also held to the same Guidelines as spelled out in the legislation from 2008. If they seek a waiver of the local requirements, charter or online schools would still need to adopt graduation requirements that meet or exceed the state's guidelines.

Will students in Facility Schools adhere to graduation guidelines?

All students in facility schools must meet the requirements and graduate through the Facilities School program at CDE. These Facility Schools Graduation Requirements are aligned with the state's graduation guidelines.

What happens if a student does not meet the requirements?

The Menu of Options provides multiple pathways for students to demonstrate learning. Beginning in ninth grade (and earlier if possible) students and their families leverage ICAP as the foundational tool to explore, experience, engage in, and excel in a pathways to success after high school. Therefore, all students should be able to demonstrate readiness in at least one measure in English and math. In addition to traditional measures, there are myriad performance-based assessments that students can use to demonstrate readiness. Local school districts also have the authority to adapt demonstrations of competency to accommodate for the unique needs of students with disabilities and English learners.

Colorado has been resolute in keeping students in high school who fall short of graduation requirements or who are participating in their high school's post-secondary program to earn college credit. Students can remain enrolled beyond their fourth year of high school to graduate in five, six or seven years after entering high school. Please see Graduation Statistics.

Do students have to meet graduation requirements to move into transition services?

No, students do not have to meet graduation requirements to move into transition services. However, if the student completes graduation requirements and has ongoing transition needs (and will access 18-21 transition services), the district may count them (for state accountability purposes) as a 4-year graduate.

Will the business rules for GG check for '92' exit type code?

No. The business rules are only in place to check for the '90' exit type code. This is because a '92' exit type code is a completer. Only students graduating with a regular diploma are required to meet Graduation Guidelines.

What if a district were to identify needed changes to the GG file during the post collection phase of End of Year? Would we still be able to make these changes to our file?

Yes. If you receive an SE903 error indicating a need to change a student's exit type code to '90', you will be permitted to change this student's Graduation Guidelines file to accommodate the exit type code change.

Can a district use some of the same Guidelines for both the English and math requirement?

Yes! A student may meet their English and math Graduation Guideline through the same measure (in ACT Workkeys, ASVAB, District Capstone, Industry Certificates, and/or Collaboratively developed, standards-based performance assessments) or though different measures.

Is there a spreadsheet template for the Graduation Guidelines file?

A template for the Graduation Guidelines file can be found on the Student Interchange webpage.

If a student meets graduation guidelines via Capstone (or other measures), what score needs to be placed for Guideline Score?

For Capstone, Concurrent Enrollment, Collaboratively developed, standards based performance assessment, the score values are: 0 = nonpassing per district or 1 = passing per district.

Data Use

How is Graduation Guidelines connect to the Student End of Year collection?

The Graduation Guidelines file is used as a validator file in conjunction with the Student End of Year snapshot. The file serves as a validator that ensures students reported with exit type code '90' (graduate with a regular diploma) in Student End of Year also has met Graduation Guidelines (at least one in English and at least one in math).