Secondary Regulations
Guidance
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Introduction – Intent of the Regents Regulations

In January 2003, the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education ("Board" or "Regents") adopted regulations addressing:

- K-12 literacy;
- Restructuring of the learning environment at the middle- and high-school levels; and
- Proficiency-based graduation requirements (PBGRs) at high schools.

The Regents intended that these Regulations would substantively redesign the education offerings in Rhode Island public schools. Since the adoption of these landmark regulations, through an unprecedented level of cooperation among educators, local educational agencies (LEAs) have designed their high schools to meet two key goals of those regulations:

- Each Rhode Island secondary school shall offer all of its students meaningful opportunities to achieve proficiency in six (6) core academic areas: mathematics, English language arts (ELA), social studies, science, technology, and the arts.
- Each Rhode Island secondary school shall provide sufficient student supports and personalization of instruction to ensure meaningful opportunities for students to achieve proficiency.

On March 3, 2011, the Regents adopted revised regulations. These regulations codify and solidify the policies and procedures that have been developed during the last eight years. These regulations continue to reflect key design elements and principles that have been identified since 2003 including: proficiency-based graduation requirements; comprehensive supports to students including literacy, numeracy, and personalization; common planning time and professional development support for teachers; data-driven decision-making processes; and aligned local policy to support implementation of the key elements.

Two key concepts permeate the Regents Regulations: proficiency and personalization. These concepts reflect the beliefs that:

- All students must attain an acceptable level of academic achievement in each of the six core academic areas (integrated with applied learning skills) in order to be successful in college and careers; and
- Effective instructional delivery demands an understanding of the needs of each individual student and supports that will help students attain at least the minimum level of proficiency.

The requirements set forth in the Regents Regulations, and explained in some detail in this guidance, are directly related to defining, measuring, and providing the necessary supports for proficiency and personalization.

Purpose of this Document

The primary purpose of this guidance document is to provide clarification to educators, students, and families regarding the regulatory changes adopted in the 2011 Secondary School Regulations. In particular, this guidance focuses on providing additional detail on graduation requirements specified in the 2011 Regulations that reflect changes or clarification to the 2008 Regulations.

This guidance is one piece of a larger, ongoing effort by RIDE to provide LEAs with support and technical assistance toward meeting the goals of the Regents Regulations. This initial guidance is not an exhaustive or all-purpose document. It does not include detailed information on:

- Recommended methods and approaches to implement the requirements;
- The relationship between and among different programmatic or regulatory initiatives within the state; or
- Descriptions of additional supports and technical assistance that RIDE plans to offer for implementation of these regulations.

RIDE will provide additional information in separate documents or alternative formats, including frameworks for different structures or processes required by these Regulations, as needed, to ensure full implementation.

The sections of the guidance document enclosed in text boxes represent language directly from the regulations. There are six major changes to the 2011 Regulations. The new guidance material for the six areas is designated by the word ***NEW!*** at the end of the section title. Remember, however, that this guidance doesn't replace the need for a thorough reading of the 2011 Regulations.

The six new sections are:

1. Conjunctive student graduation requirements - L-6-3.0
2. Use of state assessments for high school graduation - L-6-3.3
3. Progress plan - L-6-3.3 (c) and L-6-3.8 (c)
4. State-assessment requirement waiver - L-6-3.8 (c)
5. Diploma commendations and certificates - L-6-3.5 (a) & (b)
6. Early warning system L-6-3.8

L-6-2.0 Ensuring Grade Level Literacy and Numeracy for All Rhode Island Secondary School Students

> *"Each local educational agency shall ensure that all its students are proficient in literacy and numeracy."*
> L-6-2.0

The primary mechanisms for ensuring literacy are the use of Personal Literacy Plans (PLPs) and a scaffolded literacy program. Both are described in detail in the state literacy policy (http://www.ride.ri.gov/instruction/plpintro.aspx). The primary mechanism for ensuring numeracy is the use of Response to Intervention (RTI). The following sections, L-6-2.1 and L-6-2.2, describe the key elements of the literacy policy.

L-6-2.1 Assessing reading proficiency levels of secondary-school students

Use of designated state assessment

> *"LEAs shall ensure grade level numeracy for all students. LEAs shall initiate numeracy interventions for every student functioning below expected performance for their grade. Any student failing to attain proficiency shall receive specialized supports."* ***L-6-2.3 (a)***

Districts are responsible for initiating reading interventions for each student who is not reading at grade level as determined by the assessments required under section L-6-2.1 of the regulations. See the 2005 Rhode Island PreK-12 Literacy Policy (http://www.ride.ri.gov/instruction/literacypolicy.aspx) for additional details. Districts may use the state reading assessment as an initial screening instrument to determine if further diagnostic assessment is needed. Students at the achievement levels of *Partially Proficient* and *Substantially Below Proficient* are considered to be reading below grade level. These students will need to be diagnostically assessed, with additional assessment tools, so that the district can acquire greater information about the students, validate the screening results, and analyze the results to determine the specific literacy supports needed to improve reading. Students who do not have state-assessment scores must be assessed using another screening instrument. For RIDE-suggested screening instruments, contact the Office of Instruction, Assessment, and Curriculum.

L-6-2.2 Improving literacy for students reading below grade level

Students reading one to two years below grade level must receive targeted intervention that includes the development, implementation, and progress monitoring of a Personal Literacy Plan (PLP). Students who have substantial reading difficulties (reading more than two years below grade level) must receive intensive literacy instruction from a reading specialist. These students must also have a PLP to monitor their progress (see the 2005 PLP Guidelines at http://www.ride.ri.gov/Instruction/plpintro.aspx, for further explanation).

L-6-2.3 Improving numeracy for all students

Numeracy support can be provided through the Response to Intervention (RTI) process and strategies. RIDE will continue to provide technical assistance to secondary schools in the design and implementation of RTI. Additionally, RIDE will provide further technical assistance for implementing numeracy supports.

L-6-3.0 Rhode Island Graduation Requirements

Conjunctive Student Graduation Requirements *NEW!*

"Commencing with the graduating class of 2014, each LEA shall create a composite measure of each student's overall proficiency in the six core academic areas: English language arts, math, science, social studies, the arts, and technology. These six core content areas shall be aligned to state adopted standards and locally adopted national standards in those content areas for which there are no state standards. This composite measure shall be derived from a conjunctive review of three sources of evidence: (1) individual student results on the state assessment in content areas designated by the Board of Regents; and (2) successful course completion; and (3) successful completion of two performance-based diploma assessments. These requirements are set forth in sections L-6-3.1, L-6-3.2 and L-6-3.3 of these regulations. In order to be eligible for a diploma, students must meet state and local requirements in all three areas." ***L-6-3.0***

To earn a diploma from a Rhode Island high school, each student will have to meet the minimum requirements established in each of the three areas specified in the Regulations:

1. Performance on the state assessment or assessments; *and*
2. Successful completion of state and local course requirements; *and*
3. Successful completion of two performance-based diploma assessments.

These three areas are non-compensatory - meaning that low performance in one of the three areas cannot be offset automatically by high performance in one or both of the other areas. Although performance across the three areas is related, each of the three areas contributes unique and important information for determining a student's overall proficiency for earning a high-school diploma. Successful completion of courses aligned to rigorous, high-quality state and local content standards is the core indicator of student proficiency in each of the six core academic areas. Performance on the state assessments provides another measure of achievement in the critical subjects of reading and mathematics or other content areas as designated by the Board of Regents, helping to certify that each student receiving a diploma throughout the state has acquired comparable necessary literacy and numeracy skills. Successful completion of performance-based diploma assessments, including presentation of a student's portfolio or exhibition work, provides evidence that the student is able to successfully integrate core content knowledge and applied learning skills.

These three areas have remained essentially unchanged since the introduction of proficiency-based graduation requirements in the 2003 Regents Regulations. Although the conjunctive nature of the requirements has evolved since 2003, the importance of each of the areas in determining a student's overall proficiency for graduation has remained consistent over time.

The conjunctive nature of the requirements does not imply that curriculum and instruction should focus on each of the requirements separately or in isolation. Curriculum and instruction aligned with state and local standards that integrates applied learning skills in coursework across all academic areas will prepare students to meet each of these requirements.

L-6-3.1 Coursework requirements

"LEAs shall formally adopt coursework graduation requirements that (1) apply to all students within the LEA and (2) require successful completion of at least twenty academic courses or the equivalent that include demonstrations of proficiency in the six core content areas.
All courses must be of scope and rigor sufficient to allow students to achieve the minimum level of proficiency required by section L-6-3.0 of these regulations." ***L-6.3.1 (a)***

LEAs are responsible for establishing graduation policies and coursework graduation requirements within the parameters set forth in the Regents Regulations and all specific statutory curricular requirements otherwise set forth in the General Laws.

The attainment of proficiency in the core academic areas as defined in the Regents Regulations is a critical graduation requirement for all students. Districts must align their coursework with the state and locally adopted content standards in order to support this requirement. The coursework graduation requirements, however, encompass more than the minimum proficiency requirement. The coursework requirements ensure that all students receive appropriate and sufficient opportunities to meet the academic, career, and personal/social goals of their Individual Learning Plan (ILP) throughout their high-school career.

Coursework aligned to the Alternate Assessment Grade Span Expectations (AAGSEs) does not provide students with the required level of proficiency necessary for graduating with a diploma. Parents and students must be notified at the time of student identification for eligibility for the alternate assessment that courses aligned to the Alternate Assessment Grade Span Expectations (AAGSEs) do not lead to students' meeting the required level of proficiency for graduating with a high-school diploma. RIDE will provide samples of communications (letters, notifications, etc.) that can be used by LEAs to notify families and students.

L-6-3.1 (a) Coursework aligned to student academic and career goals

"The selection and scheduling of courses shall be consistent with the needs of individual students and, to the maximum degree possible, students' individual learning plans (ILPs). LEAs shall provide students with additional opportunities beyond the minimum required in accordance with students' individual learning plans (ILPs)." ***L-6-3.1 (a)***

Many students will meet the minimum proficiency requirements for graduation in English language arts and mathematics by the end of the tenth grade. Districts are responsible for ensuring that these students have access to additional opportunities to further their level of proficiency and to help them meet their postsecondary academic and career goals. Coursework offered in the core academic areas and other areas (e.g., world languages, social sciences, business, CTE courses) should be consistent with the goals of the student's ILP (see section L-6-3.8a). While content such as world languages is not required coursework according to Secondary Regulations, those are courses often required by competitive 4-year colleges and LEAs must provide access to such coursework to support students' postsecondary goals.

L-6-3.1 (b) Alternative definitions of coursework

"Students can meet the requirements set forth in this section through enrollment in a state approved career and technical program, expanded learning opportunities, dual enrollment, on-line learning, and other non-traditional academic and career-readiness programs. Recognition of these learning opportunities as fulfilling the coursework graduation requirements in this section is a local decision and shall be predicated on alignment to state adopted standards and/or other relevant national and/or industry standards." ***L-6-3.1 (b)***

The Regents Regulations require that many learning opportunities that exist outside of the traditional classroom be reviewed and considered for fulfilling the coursework and proficiency-based graduation requirements. These regulations intend to broaden the opportunities for students to meet coursework and proficiency-based requirements for graduation. Students planning advanced study in a particular area can complete coursework requirements through Advanced Placement courses, dual enrollment, or similar options. All students, including those enrolled in state-approved career and technical programs of study with alignment to the required standards and who participate in internships, apprenticeships, and other work- or career-related experiences, can use those opportunities to meet coursework requirements. On-line learning opportunities will greatly expand student access to rigorous programming that will help students when they need additional academic support and provide for enrichment learning opportunities.

LEAs retain the authority to determine whether nontraditional learning experiences meet the breadth, rigor and depth of disciplinary or content standards to satisfy local coursework requirements. However, LEAs may not establish blanket policies that exclude all alternative-learning opportunities as a means for fulfilling the coursework graduation requirements.

L-6-3.2 Performance-based diploma assessments

Applied learning skills

"Students shall successfully complete at least two of the following performance-based diploma assessments: graduation portfolios, exhibitions, comprehensive course assessments, or Certificate of Initial Mastery©. Each student exiting a Rhode Island high school with a diploma shall exhibit proficiency in a comprehensive set of applied learning skills including communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, research, reflection and evaluation, and collaboration. Successful completion of performance-based diploma assessments shall include demonstrations of both applied learning skills and core content proficiency." ***L-6-3.2***

The performance-based diploma assessment requirement focuses attention on the integration of content knowledge and applied learning skills. The comprehensive applied learning skills of communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, research, reflection/evaluation, and collaboration are a central component of the state-adopted content standards; and proficiency in these skills is a critical component of college and career readiness. The applied learning skills have been embedded in the state-adopted content standards, either explicitly, as with reading and writing (i.e., English language arts), or more implicitly in mathematics or science.

Content standards that LEAs adopt in the remaining core academic areas (and other academic areas) must also embed these applied learning skills. Evidence of student proficiency in each of these areas must include demonstrations of appropriate applied learning skills.

In addition, each student's ILP must reflect how the applied learning skills will be developed and exhibited over the course of the student's middle-level and high-school experience. A student's ILP should include opportunities and supports that allow for the student to develop and demonstrate applied learning skills in an area of specialized interest of the student's choosing related to his or her academic, career, and personal/social goals. Most students will be able to demonstrate the applied learning skills through their performance-based diploma assessment work and through career and technical education programs of study that include internships and other skill-based applied learning opportunities.

Distinguishing Between LEA Requirements and Student Graduation Requirements

The Regents Regulations identify specific types of performance-based assessments as elements of a required local assessment system established by the LEA: graduation portfolios, exhibitions, comprehensive course assessments, or Certificates of Initial Mastery ©. The Regents Regulations also require that students successfully complete at least two performance-based diploma assessments to meet student graduation requirements. These requirements emphasize the importance of applied learning through performance-based evidence of student proficiency and the need for multiple and varying sources of evidence.

The regulations do not suggest that two single administrations of a performance-based assessment are sufficient to determine student proficiency in each of six core academic areas. Rather, the regulations identify the types of performance-based assessments that a local assessment system must include. For example, as part of the effort to gather sufficient evidence to determine student proficiency within a core academic area such as mathematics, a local assessment system may include comprehensive course assessments in each of its mathematics courses. A student would participate in those assessments as a routine part of successfully completing each course. In such a case, a student will complete several comprehensive course assessments across four years.

The performance-based assessments listed differ in size and scope. A comprehensive course assessment in mathematics, for example, is likely to provide evidence of student proficiency on selected content standards within mathematics and perhaps a limited number of content standards within English language arts. A well-designed graduation portfolio, however, is likely to be much broader in scope. It will contain multiple sources of evidence accumulated over time and is likely to include evidence from other performance-based assessments and other graduation requirements. For example, the graduation-portfolio entries used to evaluate the level of student proficiency in mathematics might include components such as successful completion of coursework, in-school and out-of-school projects, and results from other performance-based assessments, such as comprehensive course assessments.

L-6-3.2 Student Presentation of Portfolio or Exhibition Work

"Students shall be required to present their portfolio or exhibition work to a review panel that will evaluate the student's presentation..." L-6-3.2

Since the adoption of the 2003 Regents Regulations, many LEAs have instituted a "senior project" or exhibition graduation requirement. The senior project is a means for many students to meet the requirement for student presentation. It may also be used as a local graduation requirement, as an opportunity for a student to demonstrate applied learning skills, or as a source of evidence of student proficiency within a content area.

For most students, however, the senior year is not an appropriate time for collecting evidence that the student has attained the minimum level of proficiency in one (or more) of the six core academic areas. Most students will have attained and exceeded the minimum level of proficiency required for graduation, based on the grade 9-10 content standards, well before their senior year. For these students, the senior year provides on-going opportunities to meet the goals of their ILP in preparation for their academic and career postsecondary experiences. Therefore, it is expected that the content of many presentations will exceed the minimum level of proficiency required for graduation.

The significance of the presentation is the opportunity for students to demonstrate a learning stretch while using a combination of the applied learning skills, including research, over an extended period of time in their area of specialized interest. To the maximum degree possible, the topic of the presentation will be chosen with input from the student and will be related to the academic, career, and personal/social goals as reflected in her or his ILP.

Timing and Multiple Opportunities for Presentations

The content knowledge and applied learning skills demonstrated through the presentation as well as the skills to deliver the presentation effectively are developed over time. The student's ILP should show evidence that these skills were developed throughout the student's middle-school and high-school years, including how opportunities to conduct research and make presentations were integrated across years.

Note that this graduation requirement calls for a single presentation of a student's portfolio or exhibition work to a review panel. Students who are completing both a portfolio and an exhibition as part of their ILP are not required to make multiple presentations to a review panel to fulfill this requirement.

In order for students to successfully complete this graduation requirement, it is essential that LEAs provide sufficient learning opportunities and supports for all students. It is also essential that students who do not meet the requirement on their initial attempt be provided additional opportunities to fulfill this presentation requirement. LEAs must consider the need for appropriate support and additional opportunities in their scheduling of student presentations.

L-6-3.3. Use of state assessments for graduation *NEW!*

L-6-3.3 (a) Content Areas and minimum required level of achievement

" Commencing with the class of 2014, students shall be required to reach a minimum achievement level on the state assessment or assessments in content areas designated by the Regents. The Board of Regents shall (1) designate the content areas in which the state assessment serves as a graduation requirement and (2) establish the minimum student achievement levels on the state assessment necessary for graduation. The Regents will determine the minimum level of required achievement; however, LEAs may set higher levels of student achievement as a requirement to receive a diploma." ***L-6-3.3 (a)***

Beginning with the class of 2014, the Regents have designated the grade 11 New England Compact Assessment Program (NECAP) Reading and Mathematics tests as the state assessments included under this requirement. The Regents have also designated *Partially Proficient* on each of those assessments as the minimum level of student achievement required for graduation. Commencing with the class of 2014, state assessment results will be included on each student's permanent high-school transcript.

LEAs may set a higher level of achievement on the state assessment as a requirement for a diploma. In doing so, however, LEAs must consider the need for students to have adequate learning opportunities to acquire the required content knowledge and skills. LEAs must also consider the need to provide additional opportunities for students who do not meet the requirement on the initial administration of the state assessment.

LEAs that wish to include performance on state assessments not designated by the Regents as a state requirement (i.e., science), must also consider the need to provide students with multiple opportunities to meet the requirement.

Multiple Opportunities

Professional standards and legal precedent have established that when a state assessment is used as part of a conjunctive system of graduation requirements, it is necessary to provide students with multiple opportunities to meet that requirement. The Regents Regulations outline a sequential series of opportunities (see Appendix A) that includes a retake of the state assessment as well as other external, standardized measures of student achievement. In addition to specific additional opportunities for students to demonstrate achievement, the regulations also include specific requirements (e.g., Progress Plans) to support student attainment of the required content knowledge and skills between test administrations.

Progress Plan NEW!

"Students failing to reach the required level of achievement on the state assessment as established by section L-6-3.3 of these regulations shall be provided a progress plan. Progress plans must include the types and duration of academic and educational supports and academic performance targets necessary for graduation." ***L-6-3.8 (c)***

The LEA will establish a Progress Plan for each student who does not meet the minimum level of required achievement on the initial administration of the state assessment in grade 11. The Progress Plan should be specific to each student's needs and be consistent with and reflect updates on the student's ILP. Districts may choose to use the ILP for coordinating/developing the Progress Plan. The Progress Plan must be communicated to the student and his or her family and the student and his or her family must be made aware of the student's responsibility for meeting the goals of the plan.

In the event that a student applies for an appeal of a graduation decision, the successful participation in and completion of the Progress Plan will be considered as a piece of evidence in evaluating that appeal.

See L-6-3.8 (c) for additional details. RIDE will develop and share sample Progress Plans as part of ongoing technical assistance to LEAs.

L-6.3.3 (b) Retaking the State Assessment

"If a student does not meet the level of minimum achievement on a state assessment designated by the Board of Regents, the student shall be required to retake the relevant portion of the state assessment." ***L-6-3.3 (b)***

Students who do not meet the minimum level of required achievement on the initial administration of the state assessment in grade 11 will be required to retake the state assessment in grade 12.

Students must take only the particular test(s) in which they did not meet the minimum level of achievement. For example, a student who meets the requirement on the Reading test, but does not meet the requirement on the Mathematics test, must retake only the Mathematics test. The retake will occur during the regularly scheduled administration of the state assessment (NECAP in October). In cases where a student is retaking an assessment to meet graduation requirements, costs will be the responsibility of the LEA . LEAs have the authority to charge for a retake if done for the purposes of improving scores to obtain a Regents Commendation.

Testing Alternatives

Students who do not meet the state assessment requirement through the initial administration or retake may submit evidence that they have met or exceeded the minimum level of required achievement on the state-assessment through another external, standardized assessment. A list of Regents-approved testing alternatives for the Class of 2014 and the minimum score required on each of those assessments will be issued prior to the beginning of the 2012-13 school year. A preliminary list of approved testing alternatives to the state assessment in reading and mathematics is presented in Table 1.0. The intent of the testing alternatives is to allow students to provide evidence from an external, standardized assessment that they have met or exceeded the minimum level of required achievement on the state assessment. It is not assumed that the approved assessments provide information or scores that are directly interchangeable with the state assessments. A key criterion in

the selection of approved testing alternatives will be the extent to which the assessment enables the student to provide evidence of college-and-career readiness.

Table 1.0 List of Approved Testing Alternatives

Preliminary List of Approved Testing Alternatives*	
Reading	**Mathematics**
SAT – Critical Reading	SAT – Mathematics
SAT Subject Test Literature	SAT Subject Tests Math Level 1 Math Level 2
Advanced Placement English Literature English Language	Advanced Placement Calculus AB Calculus BC
Accuplacer Reading Comprehension	Accuplacer College Level Math Test
Access for ELLs	ADP Algebra End-of-course tests Algebra I Algebra II
This is a preliminary list and is subject to change prior to the beginning of the 2012-13 school year. Tests listed may be removed due to limited availability. Additional tests may be added. The final list will include the minimum required score on each test necessary to fulfill the state-assessment graduation requirement.	

Sequencing of Testing Alternatives L-6-3.3 (b)

*"Through an additional administration or administrations of the state assessment, students can meet the requirements set forth in this section by either reaching the Regents-defined minimum level of achievement or by demonstrating progress toward proficiency. The Board of Regents shall establish the means of calculation and expression of the minimum requirements for student-level improvement necessary to achieve progress toward proficiency."**L-6-3.3 (b)***

Although students may complete one or more of the approved alternative tests prior to retaking the state assessment, scores from those assessments may not be considered until the student has participated in a second administration of the state assessment.

The primary reasons for this requirement are threefold. First, the state assessments are custom-designed to be aligned with the state content standards in reading and mathematics and should be consistent with the curriculum and instruction offered by the LEA and experienced by the student. Second, the state assessments also offer a single metric that is directly comparable for all students within the state. Therefore, it is expected that students demonstrate a good faith effort in both the initial and retake administrations of the state assessment prior to the consideration of alternative tests to meet this requirement. Finally, it is RIDE's expectation that all students will be held to the common and high expectations established by the standards adopted by the state. Requiring that schools continue to push students toward this level of academic rigor up to

and beyond the 11th grade is essential to this expectation. Consequently, all students must be supported to help ensure their successful engagement in the NECAP (or other state assessments) through their senior year.

Progress Toward Proficiency NEW!

Students who do not reach partial proficiency on the 11th-grade administration of the state assessment may fulfill the state-assessment requirement for graduation on subsequent administrations of the state assessment in one of two ways:

- meeting that minimum level of required achievement designated by the Board of Regents ; or
- meeting the standard for Progress Toward Proficiency.

Progress Toward Proficiency is defined as meaningful, quantifiable improvement of academic skills in those areas in which a student has academic gaps, as evidenced by state assessments (i.e., content areas in which a student has not met the minimum level of required achievement). The Board of Regents has established that meaningful, quantifiable progress is demonstrated by improvement that is statistically significant between the first and subsequent administrations of the state assessment. Therefore, a student who earns a scaled score on subsequent administrations of the state assessment that reaches or exceeds the threshold for statistical significance based on his or her score on the initial administration will meet the state-assessment requirement for graduation. Tables 2.0 and 3.0 contain the scores needed to meet the Progress Toward Proficiency standard on the NECAP Mathematics and Reading tests, respectively.

Table 2.0

Minimum Score Needed on Subsequent NECAP Mathematics Test
to meet the standard for
Progress Toward Proficiency

Initial Score	Required Score	Initial Score	Required Score	Initial Score	Required Score
1100	1118	1112	1125	1124	1130
1101	1118	1113	1126	1125	11330
1102	1118	1114	1126	1126	1131
1103	1119	1115	1127	1127	1132
1104	1120	1116	1127	1128	1133
1105	1120	1117	1127	1129	Partially Prof.
1106	1121	1118	1128	1130	Partially Prof.
1107	1122	1119	1128	1131	Partially Prof.
1108	1123	1120	1128	1132	Partially Prof.
1109	1123	1121	1129	1133	Partially Prof.
1110	1124	1122	1129		
1111	1125	1123	1129		

Table 3.0

Minimum Score Needed on Subsequent NECAP Reading Tests
to meet the standard for
Progress Toward Proficiency

Initial Score	Required Score	Initial Score	Required Score	Initial Score	Required Score
1100	1115	1112	1120	1124	Partially Prof.
1101	1115	1113	1121	1125	Partially Prof.
1102	1116	1114	1122	1126	Partially Prof.
1103	1116	1115	1122	1127	Partially Prof.
1104	1117	1116	1124	1128	Partially Prof.
1105	1117	1117	1124	1129	Partially Prof.
1106	1117	1118	1125		
1107	1118	1119	1125		
1108	1118	1120	1126		
1109	1118	1121	1127		
1110	1119	1122	1128		
1111	1120	1123	1129		

As described in the section "Sequencing of Testing Alternatives", it is expected that students demonstrate a good faith effort in both the initial and the second administration.

Rhode Island Alternate Assessment (RIAA)

The RIAA is not designed to be a measure of the minimum student achievement levels on the state assessment necessary for graduating with a high-school diploma. The RIAA is based on Alternate Assessment Grade Span Expectations (AAGSEs), which are an extension of the state content standards.

The RIAA cannot be used to meet the state-assessment requirement for earning a diploma. Upon determination of eligibility for RIAA, parents and students must be notified that the RIAA cannot be used to meet the state-assessment requirement for earning a diploma. RIDE will provide samples of communications (letters, notifications, etc.) that can be used by LEAs to notify families and students.

L-6-3.4. Appeals process for Graduation Decisions

"Students and families shall have the right to appeal graduation decisions through locally managed appeals policies and processes. Locally managed appeals processes shall consider all valid sources of evidence that demonstrate and document student proficiency at a level commensurate with the requirements set forth in section L-6-3.0 of these regulations." ***L-6-3.4***

The Regents Regulations do not shift responsibility for certifying individual students' eligibility for receiving a high-school diploma from the LEA to the state. Accordingly, the first appeal of a graduation decision by students and families should be made to the LEA. Consistent with past practice and policy; nothing in the Regents Regulations overrides current policies and procedures enabling individual students to appeal local graduation decisions to the Commissioner. An appeal to the LEA may address any aspect of the state graduation requirements or local graduation requirements that affected the graduation decision. Local appeals processes will be monitored through the Commissioner's Review process. If an appeal is not successful at the local level, appeals may be heard at the state level.

Appeals must not be viewed as a means of removing or reducing the proficiency-based requirements for graduation. The basis for making and approving appeals to graduation decisions must meet the standard of review and be performance-based. Appeals must include additional or alternative evidence that documents and demonstrates that the student possesses a level of proficiency that meets or exceeds the minimum level of proficiency required for graduation by the state or LEA (whichever is higher).

L-6-3.3 (b) State Assessment Requirement Waiver NEW!

"Waiver eligibility will be considered only for those students for whom: (1) there is a preponderance of evidence of academic content mastery consistent with L-6-3.0 of these regulations and (2) the student has completed the sequence of testing requirements set forth in this section." ***L-6-3.3 (b)***

A waiver of the state-assessment portion of the graduation requirement as specified in section L-6-3.3 is a special case of a proficiency-based appeal. The waiver may be granted in *extremely rare* cases where it is clearly established through performance on the state-assessment and other standardized assessments that such tests are not an accurate reflection of the proficiency of an individual student. One piece of evidence submitted for a state-assessment requirement waiver should be documentation of participation in the student's Progress Plan. Like other appeals, the waiver does not remove or reduce the requirement that the student demonstrate the minimum level of required achievement. The waiver, if granted, affects only the manner in which the student demonstrates the minimum level of required proficiency to meet the state-assessment requirement.

A waiver must not be confused with an exemption from a specific administration of the state assessment (http://www.ride.ri.gov/Assessment/necap_SASC.aspx). The waiver is not an option for those students who have not completed the assessment sequence described in the Regulations (see the flow chart in Appendix A).

L-6-3.5 (a) Diploma commendations *NEW!*

" Commencing with the graduating class of 2014, LEAs are authorized to recognize students who achieve above the minimum achievement level required for graduation with a Regents commendation. The Board of Regents shall establish the minimum criteria necessary to earn a Regents commendation..." ***L-6-3.5 (a)***

The Board of Regents included the provision of commendations in the revised regulations in order to recognize students who achieved at higher than required levels and to motivate and reward students for hard work and high levels of achievement. To receive a Regents Commendation, students must perform at the Proficient level

or Proficient with Distinction level on the state-assessments in reading and mathematics and they must complete all local graduation requirements.

LEAs may set additional or higher academic requirements for students to earn a Regents Commendation. Students shall be afforded the opportunity to retake the state assessment in order to qualify for a Regents Commendation.

The state will provide Regents Commendation seals for districts to affix to the diplomas of students earning commendations.

L-6-3.5 (b) Certificates NEW!

"LEAs are authorized to award certificates of academic and technical skill achievement and work readiness and life skills to any student who has satisfactorily completed specific course work or other standards-based activities that indicate a recognized level of knowledge and/or skills." ***L-6-3.5 (b)***

Certificates are: (a) credentials that can be earned by any student who demonstrates academic and career skills that are measured against a recognized and acceptable set of standards, (b) industry-recognized, and (c) portable. Awarding of a certificate signifies that a student has attained a measurable set of specific skills and must not merely reflect participation or attendance. Certificates are a powerful supplement to a diploma and can signal to business and institutes of higher education that a student has attained a recognized set of advanced skills. Earning certificates may also increase the employment opportunities for students through the certification of their mastery of a defined set of skills.

LEAs must establish clear policies regarding the issuing of certificates including (a) the areas in which certificates may be issued (b), the level of knowledge and skills required in those areas in order to obtain a specific certificate, (c) the evidence necessary to certify that the student has met the required level of knowledge and skills, and (d) the procedures and policies for earning a certificate. This information must be communicated to students and families in a timely and effective manner.

Certificates should not be limited to students in particular pathways or programs of study. Students can earn certificates prior to earning their diploma. However, certificates are not equivalent to or a substitute for a diploma and do not signify graduation from high school.

L-6-3.6 Regents-approved diploma system

Commissioner's Review

"The Commissioner shall review all LEA high school diploma systems to ensure that they are in compliance with all elements of these regulations. The Commissioner shall establish the protocols and the criteria for diploma system review and accountability." ***L-6-3.6***

Since the adoption of the Regents 2003 Regulations, the Commissioner has developed and RIDE has implemented criteria and a system of review to ensure that LEAs design high-school diploma systems that comply with the regulations. As LEAs have been designing and developing their graduation requirements and related support systems, the review criteria have appropriately focused on design and procedural issues. As most LEAs shift from the initial-implementation phase to the full-implementation phase of their systems, the focus of the review criteria will shift correspondingly. As LEAs continue to implement and improve their secondary schools and make graduation decisions, they will be expected to provide evidence based on student secondary- and postsecondary-outcomes data to validate the effectiveness of their schools in supporting students meeting graduation requirements.

As part of the Commissioner's Review process, LEAs will be expected to provide evidence of the established components of the Regulations and the newly adopted processes, such as changes to appeals processes, protocols for commendations and certificates, Progress Plans, assessment protocols, and use of the test waiver flexibility.

The Commissioner's Review will reflect the growing maturity of the diploma system and will begin to collect and examine outcome data that demonstrates the level of effectiveness of implemented strategies and structures. The Commissioner's Review process will also support a system of progressive levels of interventions and incentives. Reviews will be conducted when LEAs signal a readiness for such a review or when there are indications that an LEA is struggling, as indicated by low levels of implementation or poor or stagnant student-outcome data.

RIDE will provide separate detailed guidance regarding the protocol and criteria for Commissioner's Review. Commissioner's Review will consist of a progressive system of incentives and differentiated interventions based on the level of implementation and effectiveness of the diploma systems at the LEA level.

L-6-3.7. Local educational agency notification to students, families, and community members of the requirements for graduation

"LEAs shall provide full and effective notice of the state and local graduation requirements to administrators, teachers, students, families, and members of the community. This information must be provided to all members of each class upon their entry to sixth grade and again upon their entry to ninth grade (or at the time of enrollment into the LEA)." **L-6-3.7 (a)**

Timely and effective communication

Active participation by the student, family, and educators in the student's education, including the design and ongoing management of the student's ILP, requires timely and effective communication of all policies related to graduation requirements (e.g., transfer and appeals). By the time the student is in sixth grade, all parties involved in the student's education should be aware of the proficiency-based graduation requirements. The student's ILP should indicate the learning opportunities that best support him or her in meeting graduation requirements and in meeting his or her postsecondary academic and career goals.

LEAs and schools are responsible for providing regular communication to families and students regarding student academic progress and the supports available and provided to students to help them meet graduation requirements and reach their academic, career and personal/social goals.

L-6-3.8. Supports to students

"Every student enrolled in Rhode Island public schools has the right to an appropriate and individualized opportunity to achieve proficiency as measured in accordance with section L-6-3.0 of these regulations. For many students, that opportunity will require additional research-based supports from the LEA." ***L-6-3.8***

LEAs must monitor student progress and identify students needing support through middle-level and high school. School-wide, targeted, and intensive research-based interventions must be available for students to meet coursework, performance-based diploma assessments, and state assessment requirements. The following include strategies that LEAs are required to implement as part of a comprehensive student support system.

L-6-4.3 *Individual Learning Plan (ILP)*

The ILP is a dynamic process that will be actively used by educators, students, and families to guide and monitor student progress along individual pathways toward proficiency for graduation and postsecondary work or schooling. The development and maintenance of the ILP will be a collaborative effort that includes the student and student's family as well as local educators.

See section L-6-4.3 in this document and the ILP Framework Document at http://www.ride.ri.gov/HighSchoolReform/ for additional details.

L-6-3.8 (b) Early warning systems NEW!

"LEAs shall utilize a state-developed early warning system to identify students at risk for academic failure and dropout. Identification of students shall occur no later than the sixth grade year (or at the time of enrollment for students enrolling into the LEA after the sixth grade year)." **L-6-3.8 (b)**

LEAs must implement a process for identifying and analyzing specific student performance and behavior data that are indicators of students who are falling off track for graduating on time and who are at risk of dropping out. The early warning system indicators used must be recognized in research for their effectiveness. LEAs are responsible for monitoring and analyzing these indicators for students no later than entry into sixth grade and must continue to do so as students progress through grade 12. As students are identified as falling off track, appropriate supports and interventions must be provided and must be communicated to families and students.

RIDE is developing and will make available an early-warning-indicator system that will support educators in monitoring student-performance and behavior data on a regular basis.

L-6-3.8 (c) Supports for meeting graduation requirements

> *"LEAs shall be responsible for providing additional academic and instructional support and research-based interventions for all students not on track to meet the graduation requirements established by section L-6-3.1, L-6-3.2, and L-6-3.3 of these regulations."* ***L-6.3.8 (c)***

L-6-3.8 (c) Progress Plans NEW!

For each student who does not meet the required minimum level of achievement on the state assessments (L-6-3.3), a student Progress Plan must be developed. The Progress Plan must define the specific supports, including the types and duration that have been identified for each student to help him or her meet the required achievement level on the state assessments. The Progress Plan must be communicated to the student and his or her family, and the student and his or her family must be made aware of the student's responsibility for meeting the goals of the plan.

The Progress Plan must be consistent with other required student supports and must coordinate with the student's ILP. The ILP may be used to document the Progress Plan and student progress in meeting the plan. The Progress Plan must include: (1) specific information on the types and duration of academic supports that will be provided, (2) the specific achievement level necessary for meeting the assessment requirement for graduation, (3) the schedule or plan to provide regular updates of student progress in meeting the steps of the Progress Plan, and (4) include information on how families can be involved in supporting their son or daughter in successfully meeting the goals of the Progress Plan.

LEAs may include other goals or requirements for the student as part of the Progress Plan that are determined to be necessary for the student to successfully complete the plan and meet the required achievement level on the state assessments; examples might include attendance, behavior, or GPA. RIDE will provide sample Progress Plan templates for adoption or revision by LEAs.

L-6-4.0. Middle Level and High School Restructuring

L-6-4.1 Requirement for personalized learning environments

> *"All middle level schools and high schools shall implement strategies for creating personalized learning environments, including the provision of a structure by which every student is assigned a responsible adult, in addition to a school counselor, who is knowledgeable about that student's academic, career, and social/personal goals."* ***L-6-4.1***

L-6-4.2 Middle-level advisory

"Student advisory structures at the middle level shall be an integral component of the middle level program in each LEA, regardless of the additional personalization structures that are employed. The strategies shall reflect evidence-based appropriate middle level activities and curriculum to effectively utilize the advisory structure to provide students with support from adults other than school counselors." ***L-6-4.2***

RIDE will develop further guidance for middle level advisory and will provide examples of effective personalization strategies in high schools around Rhode Island as part of ongoing technical assistance.

"LEAs are responsible for developing a student ILP process beginning no later than the sixth grade to help students identify and meet their academic, career, and personal/social goals." ***L-6-4.3 (a)***

L-6-4.3 Individual Learning Plan (ILP)

RIDE has developed a framework for the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) that provides detailed information and models for implementation of an LEA ILP process. A few of the key components of the ILP process are included in this guidance document. Please refer to the ILP framework and models, http://www.ride.ri.gov/HighSchoolReform/, for further details.

LEAs are responsible for developing an ILP process, beginning no later than the student's entry into the sixth grade, which supports students in meeting their academic, career, and personal/social goals. The ILP process shall provide regular and ongoing opportunities for students to revisit their ILP with the guidance of responsible adults, including families. The ILP will be used in the scheduling process and in the identification of supports and learning opportunities, such as dual enrollment, on-line learning, alternative pathways, career and technical education, transition placements or employment training provided to help students reach their goals. The ILP is the vehicle for coordinating student supports such as an Individual Educational Program (IEP), personal literacy plan (PLP), section 504 Plan, the state-assessment Progress P lan (L-6- 3.3), as well as other supports and services a student may require. RIDE does not intend for LEAs to develop and maintain all of these documents as separate and isolated records of different aspects of student progress. LEAs are encouraged to streamline the documentation and monitoring process and avoid getting buried in redundant reporting. However, the ILP does not replace the need for Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and 504s, as required by federal regulations.

In order to ensure the use of the ILP in coordinating the use of other appropriate supports, access to courses, and additional learning opportunities necessary to support students in meeting their goals, ILP reviews must occur, at a minimum, twice a year, and preferably prior to the start of a semester. Additionally, ILPs should be used to support key transition periods, including middle level to high school and high school to postsecondary college or career placement.

The requirements set forth in section L-6-3.8 and in this section shall apply equally to students enrolled in state-approved career and technical programs. The ILP process does not end when a student is enrolled in a program housed outside of a central, comprehensive high school. The LEA must have a policy in place to ensure that the student's ILP continues to be monitored, evaluated, and adjusted.

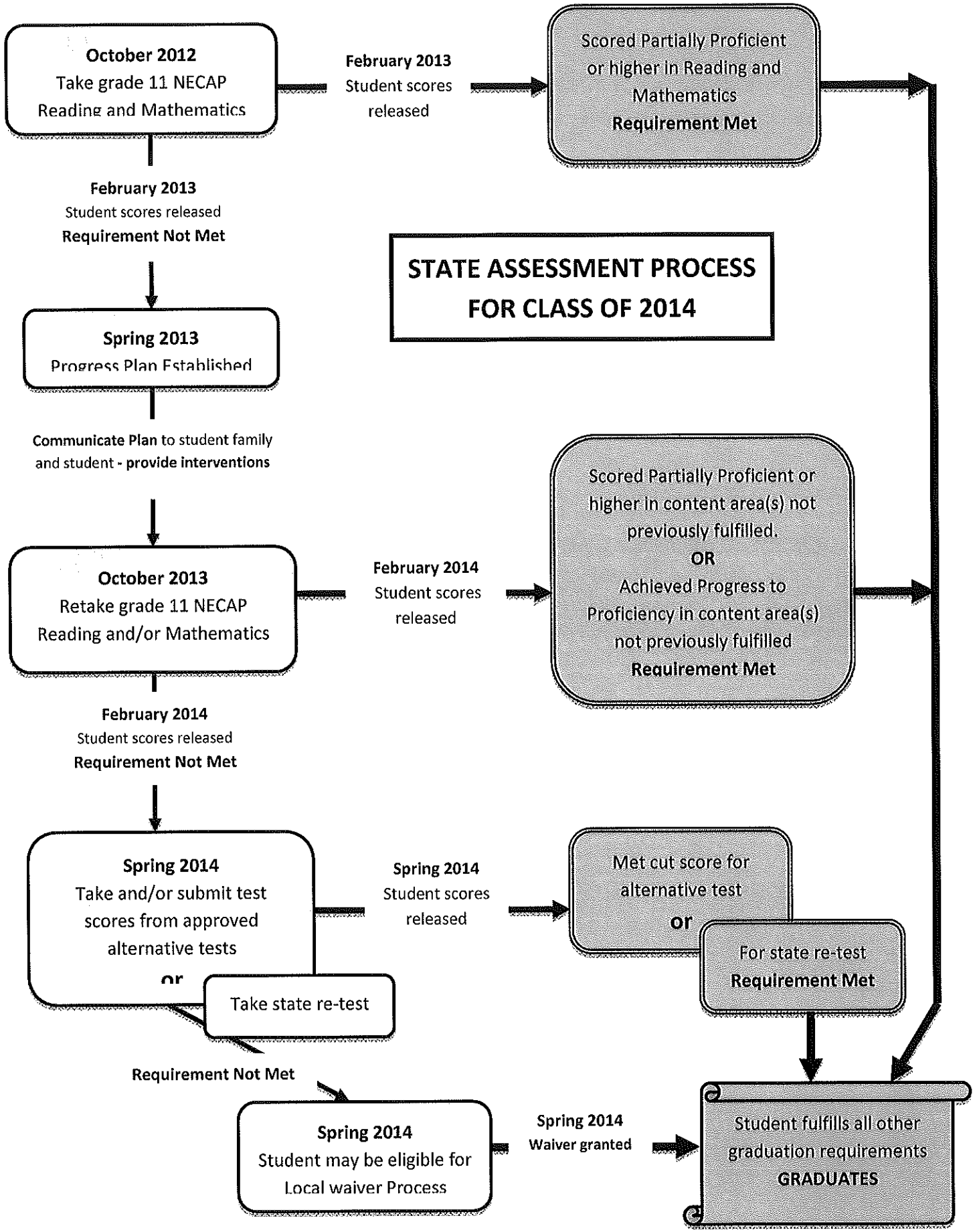
L-6-4.4. Professional development

"All certified educators in middle level and high schools shall participate in at least fifteen (15) hours of ongoing professional development annually, focused on the priority areas of literacy, numeracy, graduation by proficiency, and personalization. Determination of the focus of professional development activities must be supported by best practices and student outcome data." ***L-6.4.4***

Both scheduled group and embedded professional development opportunities must be aligned to school wide needs identified through local and state student data. Group professional-development time should not be regularly scheduled into common planning time.

L-6-4.5. Common planning time

"Common planning time shall be used by teams of teachers, administrators, and other educators for the substantive planning of instruction, looking at student work, addressing student needs, and group professional development. ***L-6-4.5****"*

Common planning time should provide opportunities for educators to work in discipline and interdisciplinary groups to ensure consistency of expectations across the grades, content areas, and schools and to ensure effective means to support students and to ensure that students are meeting expectations.

Appendix A: State Testing Sequence