

FAQs - Students and Families

Secondary Regulations Revisions 2011

This document is intended to answer some of the common questions about the proposed revisions to the secondary regulations.

Under these regulations, what do students in the class of 2012 have to do to graduate?

There are no new graduation requirements. Students will have to meet all of the requirements from the 2008 regulations. They will have to get a score of partially proficient on the NECAP tests, proficient work in their courses, and proficient demonstration on their performance-based assessments (portfolios and exhibitions).

What happens if a student is not partially proficient on the NECAP?

Schools will be required to work with students and families to develop an academic plan to help students learn the material they missed on the NECAP. Students will then have an opportunity for more instruction before retaking the NECAP test in their senior year. When they take the test a second time, they must meet the partially proficient level or show growth from the first time that they took the test.

Who determines how much growth a student must make on the NECAP?

RIDE will determine a reasonable and meaningful amount of growth for each student to make on the NECAP. Students, schools, and families will be notified of the amount of growth that students must make on NECAP.

What happens if a student doesn't show growth on the NECAP after they take it in their senior year?

Students must meet all of the graduation requirements to earn a diploma. Students who cannot do so after four years of high school will be provided additional opportunities and time to demonstrate their readiness for graduation. As students continue to work toward a diploma, students are entitled to full academic support from their school.

Are there other tests that students can take if they are not proficient on the NECAP?

The NECAP is our state assessment and students are expected to make every attempt to meet the required level of proficiency on that test. Once a student has received additional instruction, followed his/her growth plan, and retaken the NECAP, an alternate standardized test may be utilized to show readiness for graduation. RIDE will identify a list of acceptable alternate standardized tests.

What are tiered diplomas and how does a student earn them?

*Beginning in 2012, the regulations propose offering diplomas that recognize students achieving at high levels. Achievement is measure by performance on coursework, portfolios and exhibitions, and the state assessments. **Any** student achieving at high levels in all areas of the graduation requirements may be awarded a diploma that recognizes that high achievement. It is the expectation of these regulations that **all** students will be encouraged to reach their highest levels of achievement.*

Can a district hold students to higher expectations than set by the state?

Yes, RIDE is establishing a minimum expectation for proficiency on NECAP, but districts can set higher local expectations.

Will students be tracked or targeted to get the basic diploma or certificates?

RIDE has worked closely with districts to remove tracking practices from schools and have rigorous graduation requirements for all students, and educators must not predetermine what level of achievement a student can or should attain. Districts and schools are expected to provide the appropriate supports to help all students reach their highest level of achievement.

Will English-language learners be able to earn a diploma?

***ALL** students are eligible for a diploma. It is the responsibility of each district and school to ensure that ELLs have appropriate supports and ample opportunities to learn and to earn a diploma. Some students may require additional time or opportunities to continue working toward earning a diploma. Districts are responsible for providing those supports as long as the student is in school.*

Will students with disabilities be able to earn a diploma?

***ALL** students are eligible for a diploma. Students with disabilities are required to meet the same expectations for graduation but must receive appropriate accommodations identified through the IEP process. Students with disabilities who have not earned a high school diploma in four years of schooling remain eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) until they achieve the diploma or turn age 21.*

What is a certificate and who is eligible for certificates?

Certificates are documents and/or credentials, in addition to a high-school diploma, that will indicate that a student has attained specific skills needed for the workplace and for postsecondary education. Any student can earn certificates while enrolled in high school. Certificates are not replacements for diplomas

Is a certificate just another form of a diploma?

*A certificate is **NOT** a high-school diploma and is not intended to be a substitute for a diploma. All students can earn certificates whether or not they receive a diploma. No student will be awarded a certificate in lieu of a high school diploma.*

How will districts be held accountable for providing the best system for all kids?

The 2011 secondary regulations changes do not release districts from their responsibility to implement a valid diploma system. The proposed changes provide the Rhode Island Department of Education with greater authority to intervene to support districts to continue to improve their diploma systems.

**REGULATIONS
of the
BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION**

**K-12 LITERACY, RESTRUCTURING OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AT THE
MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL LEVELS, AND PROFICIENCY BASED GRADUATION
REQUIREMENTS (PBGR) AT HIGH SCHOOLS**

Promulgated September 3, 2008

PREAMBLE

~~The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education (“Board” or “Regents”), in concert with the Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (“RIDE”) and state-level partners, convened two High School Summits (2000, 2002) representing a broad array of stakeholders to consider the current state of affairs and future directions for the state’s high schools. A Middle Level Summit was convened in May 2004 with similar objectives. These summits resulted in a number of agency findings:~~

- ~~1. There is substantial underachievement in Rhode Island middle level schools and high schools as measured by the challenging academic standards that the state has adopted.~~
- ~~2. A lack of adequate academic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics, with many students achieving below grade level, makes access to and success in middle level and high school curricula aligned to Rhode Island’s challenging academic standards extremely difficult for many students.~~
- ~~3. There is a decline in state assessment results for students as they progress from elementary through high school, and in particular, during the middle level period. This decline in performance over time is of great concern.~~
- ~~4. Many high schools, and to a lesser extent middle level schools, have inequitable opportunities to learn for students of varying proficiency levels, resulting in considerable differences in what students know and are able to do by the time they graduate.~~
- ~~5. There is a wide disparity among Rhode Island high schools in terms of the preparation that students receive for further learning, the world of work, and service to their local community and state.~~
- ~~6. Far too many students pass through Rhode Island middle level schools and high schools without being known well by at least one adult within each school, resulting in a lack of awareness and understanding on the part of the school staff about the specific challenges and needs of individual students.~~
- ~~7. Middle level schools and high schools in general have not changed sufficiently to enable ALL students to meet the demands of the modern world.~~

8. ~~Comprehensive leadership and collaboration among all stakeholders is required in order to move all Rhode Island schools to support high levels of both student achievement and personal growth.~~

~~In response to the findings set forth above, the Board of Regents created the Committee for Academic and Student Programs to address these pressing issues. The Committee held well-attended forums with high school and middle level principals, superintendents, teachers, and other stakeholders to collect ideas and obtain reactions to its deliberations. The Board of Regents also established a State Literacy Policy relating to curriculum and literacy standards. After considered feedback obtained from various sources, the Board of Regents does now hereby promulgate these regulations pursuant to their authority under R.I.G.L. 16-60-4 on behalf of students in Rhode Island schools.~~

~~It is the express intent of the Board of Regents that the Regulations set forth below will result in substantive redesign of education offerings in Rhode Island's public schools at the middle and high school levels. Specifically, it is the intent of the Board that each Rhode Island secondary school offer every one of its students a meaningful opportunity to achieve proficiency in six (6) core academic areas that supports student success in reaching post-secondary academic and career goals. Additionally, LEAs must ensure that sufficient student supports and personalization of instruction be offered to ensure that said opportunity to achieve proficiency is meaningful and realizable. Should a school or local educational agency fail to fully implement these regulations, the Commissioner shall use the full extent of authorities available to that office as set forth in Title 16 of the General Laws to ensure that students in Rhode Island schools realize the full benefits of these regulations.~~

TITLE L – SECONDARY DESIGN
CHAPTER 6

TOPIC

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L-6-1.0. DEFINITIONS

As used in these regulations, the following words and terms have the following meaning, unless the context indicates another or different meaning or intent:

(a) **Certificates - Documents and/or credentials, in addition to a high school diploma, that provide a clear and accessible path for individuals seeking to advance their education and prepare for satisfying and productive careers. Certificates will indicate that an individual has specific skills needed for the workplace and for postsecondary education.**

(b) **Certificate of Initial Mastery© (CIM) – A CIM represents demonstrated knowledge and skills agreed upon by educators, families, business, community, and higher education representatives. Attaining CIM involves a combination of traditional tests, performance measures, collections of student work over time, and projects or exhibitions.**

(c) **Commissioner – the commissioner of elementary and secondary education.**

(d) **Common Core Standards —Standards adopted by Rhode Island that are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers, and provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn.**

(e) **Common Planning Time – weekly scheduled opportunities provided to all teachers to work in disciplinary or interdisciplinary teams for the purpose of improving student achievement.**

(f) **Conjunctive requirements – Rhode Island’s graduation requirements that include each of the following:**

1. **Individual student results on state assessments; and**
2. **Successful course completion; and**
3. **Successful completion of performance-based diploma assessments.**

(g) **Core Academic Areas – English Language Arts, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, and technology.**

(h) **Course – A set of learning experiences defined by recognized standards for content specific knowledge and skills and the associated level of intensity and rigor that provides students with opportunities to learn; and demonstrate proficiency in the skills and knowledge defined by their knowledge and skills in the specified content area. in the skills and knowledge defined by content and applied learning skills.**

(i) **Diploma system – the comprehensive set of structures, processes, and policies required in all secondary schools to ensure access to rigorous programming and appropriate supports that enable all students to be successful in college, careers, and life.**

(j) **Guaranteed and viable curriculum - See Basic Educational Program (G-13-1.1).**

(k) Individual Learning Plan (ILP) – A planning and monitoring tool that helps to customize and direct students’ goals and development in three domains: academic, career, and personal/social.

(l) Literacy – The ability to read, write, speak, and listen in order to communicate with others effectively, as well as the ability to think and respond critically and to process complex information across content areas.

(m) Local educational agency – The term “local educational agency” means a public board of education/school committee, or other public authority legally constituted within the State for either administrative control or direction of one or more Rhode Island public elementary schools or secondary schools.

(n) Numeracy – The ability to use and communicate about numbers and measures with a range of mathematical techniques in order to solve quantitative or spatial problems in a range of real-world contexts.

(o) Opportunities to learn – Experiences that schools and teachers must provide in programs, resources, materials, and instruction that enable all students to learn and demonstrate the knowledge and skills set out in ~~the grade-level expectations (GLEs) and grade-span expectations (GSEs)~~ **state-adopted standards** ~~applied learning standards~~ and other **relevant content or skill-based** ~~area~~ standards.

(p) Performance-based diploma assessments – Comprehensive Course Assessments, Exhibitions, and Graduation Portfolios are **elements of a required system of** assessments ~~practices that schools are required to use as part of their assessment system for their proficiency based graduation requirements.~~ **include in-depth, extended and self-directed activities. Examples include:**

(1) Comprehensive course assessment – Summative assessments designed to ascertain what students know and are able to do relative to a course of study. At least fifty percent of this assessment must be performance-based and evaluate a student’s application of the knowledge and skills learned in the course.

(2) Exhibition – Demonstration of learning that is evidenced in both products and oral presentations. An exhibition is an independent, in-depth, extended project derived from student choice and requiring the simultaneous demonstration of the deep content knowledge and applied learning skills expected of a proficient high school graduate.

(3) Graduation Portfolio – Collection of work that documents a student’s education performance over time that demonstrates the deep content knowledge and applied learning skills expected of a proficient high school graduate. A portfolio typically includes a range of performance-based entries selected by the local education agency and student and further includes reflections, summary statements, and a final presentation describing how the portfolio was assembled and what was learned in the compilation process.

(q) Personalization – Every middle level and high school student is assigned a responsible adult, in addition to a school counselor, **who meets regularly with their assigned students either in formal or informal structures and is knowledgeable about that student’s social/emotional, academic, and career goals and supports his or her progress towards graduation.**

(r) Personal literacy plan (PLP) – An **individualized record** of action describing **instructional strategies and supports** used to accelerate a student’s learning in order to move toward grade level reading proficiency.

(s) Proficiency – A measure of a student’s knowledge and skill demonstrated in a consistent manner across multiple disciplines in various settings over time. The specific knowledge and skills of the demonstrated proficiencies are determined by the skills and knowledge benchmarked against specific expectations such as **state adopted standards** ~~grade span expectations (GSEs),~~ other content standards, and/or **career readiness** ~~and applied learning~~ skills.

(t) Reading below grade level – A student is considered reading below grade level when he/she cannot fully comprehend text because of an inability to decode fluently and automatically; and/or lacks sufficient vocabulary knowledge; and/or lacks sufficient ability to construct meaning when reading material appropriate for content learning at grade level.

(u) Scaffolded literacy ~~system program~~ – In middle level schools and high schools there are three levels, or “scaffolds,” of support for improving all students’ reading. The three levels are 1) a school-wide discipline-specific program for all students, 2) targeted literacy supports for students reading more than one and up to two years below grade level, and 3) intensive literacy intervention for students reading more than two years below grade level.

(v) Student Advisory – A supportive and stable student peer group that meets regularly with an adult advisor who is responsible for creating and nurturing a caring environment for academic **and career guidance** and support.

L-6-2.0 ENSURING GRADE LEVEL LITERACY AND NUMERACY FOR ALL RHODE ISLAND STUDENTS.

Each local educational agency shall ensure that all its students are proficient in literacy and numeracy by providing access to ~~aligned~~ a **guaranteed and viable curriculum coursework**, monitoring ~~their~~ **each student’s progress toward becoming literate and numerate**, and providing supports to ensure that all students become proficient. The Commissioner shall ensure that each local educational agency has mechanisms in place to develop students’ proficiency in reading and mathematics.

L-6-2.1 Assessing reading proficiency levels of students at all levels.

(a) Each local educational agency in Rhode Island shall **evaluate** ~~report to RIDE on an annual basis, at a time and in a manner set by the Commissioner,~~ the reading levels of all its students not assessed by the Commissioner’s designated state assessments. All Rhode Island local educational agencies, in compliance with the Rhode Island PreK-12 Literacy Policy, shall develop a screening/review process acceptable to the Commissioner. The screening process, using state and

local assessments, will be used to determine which students will need additional diagnostic assessments and support.

(b) Local educational agencies shall diagnostically assess all students who have been identified through the screening process to determine the instructional strategies and interventions necessary to read at grade level. Local educational agencies shall report ~~on the number of~~ students reading below grade level ~~each year~~ at a time and in a manner established by the Commissioner. The local educational agency shall be responsible for costs associated with test procurement, administration, and interpretation. The Commissioner may authorize the use of suitable state or federal funds for such purposes. Based on the results of reading assessments at all grade levels, the Commissioner may exercise the authorities provided under Title 16 to intervene in a school or local educational agency to ensure that the literacy needs of all students, as indicated by these assessments, are effectively addressed.

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

(a) Local educational agencies shall have the obligation to initiate reading interventions for each student who is not reading at grade level based on the assessments required under section ~~L-6-2.1~~ of these regulations. Any student who continues to fall below grade level in reading and/or fails to attain proficiency in subsequent years on the state assessments designated by the Commissioner shall continue to receive specialized assistance.

(b) Ensuring grade level literacy is the responsibility of all local educational agencies. At the elementary school level, all students reading below grade level will receive reading supports, including Personal Literacy Plans (PLPs) that document intervention support in accordance with R.I.G.L. 16-7.1-2. At the middle and high school levels, reading instruction shall include a scaffolded approach of school-wide, targeted and intensive supports including Personal Literacy Plans (PLPs) that documents intervention ~~and~~ support for students reading ~~at least one year~~ below grade level.

(c) In a manner, format, and schedule to be prescribed by the Commissioner, all local educational agencies shall provide evidence of the effectiveness of the specific reading strategies and programs that are in place in middle level schools and high schools to ensure that all students who are reading below grade level will attain, and maintain, at least grade-level abilities in reading. All Rhode Island local educational agencies shall have mechanisms in place that: 1) identify and support students reading below grade level; 2) support the implementation of literacy programming at all levels to address the student needs identified in section 2.1 of these regulations; and 3) ensure that schools at all levels work collaboratively to successfully transition those students into new schools within and across local educational agencies.

L-6-2.3 Improving numeracy for all students.

In a manner, format, and schedule to be prescribed by the Commissioner, all local educational agencies shall provide evidence of the effectiveness of specific mathematics strategies and programs that they have in place to ensure all students who are not demonstrating proficiency on grade level/span expectations will attain, and maintain, performance that allows them to engage in grade appropriate curriculum. All Rhode Island local educational agencies shall have mechanisms in place that: 1) identify and support students who are not making progress in

mathematics as measured by local and state assessment data; 2) provide universal student access to ~~coursework aligned~~ **a guaranteed and viable curriculum aligned** to state **adopted** mathematics ~~grade level/span expectations~~ **standards**; and 3) ensure that schools at all levels work collaboratively to successfully transition those students into new schools within and across local educational agencies.

~~L-6-2.4 State Panel for Instruction.~~

~~The Commissioner will maintain and periodically revise the Rhode Island PreK-12 Literacy Policy, subject to the approval of the Board of Regents. The State Panel for Instruction shall provide advice to the Board of Regents regarding this Policy, including the creation, dissemination, and regular updating of pertinent resource materials for Rhode Island public schools in the area of literacy. For purposes of implementing these regulations, the composition of the State Panel for Instruction shall reflect the involvement and collaboration of pre-K, elementary, middle level, high school and higher education in order to benefit both pre-service and practicing teachers.~~

L-6-3.0 RHODE ISLAND DIPLOMA SYSTEM.

The Rhode Island Diploma System is designed to support students in becoming proficient life-long learners in order to successfully pursue post-secondary academic and career goals. Students will substantiate their proficiency by producing evidence of meeting the content standards and applied learning skills in the six core academic areas, in accordance with local diploma requirements and each student's individual learning plan (ILP). Local educational agencies (LEAs) shall provide students with multiple opportunities and appropriate supports to ensure students' progress toward meeting their post-secondary academic and career goals.

L-6-3.1. Coursework graduation requirements.

(a) Local educational agencies (LEAs) shall revise, and school committees shall approve and submit to the Commissioner, at a time and in a manner so designated, local educational agency graduation requirements that: (1) include demonstrations of proficiency in all core areas (ELA, math, science, social studies, the arts and technology) as represented by the ELA, math, science, and arts standards and skills adopted by the Board of Regents, as well as locally adopted standards for the other core areas; (2) apply to all students within the local educational agency; and, (3) include successful completion of at least twenty academic ~~credits~~ **courses** (or the equivalent) with fourteen of the ~~credits~~ **courses** represented by four ~~academic credits~~ **courses** of English Language Arts, four ~~academic~~ **courses** of mathematics (three ~~mathematics credits~~ **courses** and one math-related ~~credits~~ **course**, three ~~academic credits~~ **courses** of science and three ~~academic credits~~ **courses** of history/social studies. **Designation as a content-area course, e.g. "mathematics" or "science", shall be an LEA decision based upon alignment to relevant state adopted standards and other recognized content standards in those content areas for which there are not state-adopted standards.** The additional six required ~~academic-credits~~ **courses** are presumed to include, but not be limited to, **courses** in world languages, the arts, and technology pursuant to local educational agency policies. **All courses must be of scope and rigor** sufficient to allow students to demonstrate the range of proficiency required by section 3.0 of these regulations. Student selection of courses and scheduling of those courses, ~~beyond the fourteen required credits set forth herein,~~ shall be made consistent with the student's individual learning plan (ILP) **and individual learning needs.** ~~The twenty required credits courses represent a~~

~~minimum, not a maximum, and it is expected that local educational agencies will adopt additional credits requirements as part of their graduation requirements. Similarly, it is expected that Local educational agencies (LEAs) will shall provide students with additional opportunities beyond the 9-10 grade span expectations (GSEs) minimum required expectations as established by state adopted standards in accordance with their students' individual learning plans (ILPs). Local educational agency diploma requirements must be developed in light of all specific statutory curricular requirements otherwise set forth in the satisfy the all curricular requirements set forth in General Laws such as specific requirements for Rhode Island history, health, and physical education and applicable Board of Regents Regulations. the Basic Education Plan.~~

~~(b) The minimum credit graduation requirements mandated by this section shall apply to all students graduating in Rhode Island, beginning with the class of 2008. Demonstrations of student proficiency will involve multiple measures of performance for all students and be consistent with the state's Common Core of Learning; grade span expectations mathematics, English language arts, science, the arts; all other standards adopted by the Board of Regents; and locally adopted national local educational agency standards; and accepted national standards in all other curricular areas. Local educational agencies shall, at a time and in a manner so designated, provide a regular report to the Commissioner on the status of local educational agency credit requirements for graduation consistent with these regulations. Said reporting shall include the methods and means by which they will inform students, families, and community as to such minimum credit graduation requirements and student progress towards meeting said requirements.~~

~~(c) Students can meet the credit requirements set forth in this section while enrolled in state-approved career and technical programs. Credits awarded to students enrolled in State-approved career and technical programs of study will be predicated on state approved course alignment with the appropriate grade span expectations, content standards and skills, and industry competencies. The credit graduation requirements set forth herein shall include provisions for student selection, declaration, and full participation in sequences of courses commensurate with state approved programs of study in career and technical education.~~

(b) Students can meet the requirements set forth in this section while enrolled 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 requirements in this section is predicated on alignment to state adopted standards and/or other relevant national and/or industry standards.

L-6-3.2. Performance-based diploma assessments.

Each student exiting a Rhode Island high school with a diploma shall exhibit proficiency in the academic core ~~curriculum~~ **as** described in **section L-6-3.1**. This level of proficiency must be demonstrated through multiple sources of evidence gathered over time in a valid and reliable local assessment system, ~~through~~ including a combination of at least two of the following performance-based assessments: graduation portfolios, exhibitions, ~~or~~ comprehensive course assessments, **or the**, ~~or similar performance-based assessments, or some combination thereof, such as a Certificate of Initial Mastery[®]~~. In a manner to be prescribed by the Commissioner, all public middle level schools and high schools shall provide evidence of the manner in which they

incorporate applied learning skills including communication, problem solving, critical thinking, research, reflection/evaluation, **and collaboration** across all content areas, as well as in a variety of academic, community and career-related contexts for all students. Each Rhode Island school committee shall formally adopt proficiency-based graduation requirements consistent with this section in local educational agency policy and submit evidence of their formal adoption as part of the Commissioner's review set forth in section 3-4 **L-6-3.5** of these regulations.

L-6-3.3. Use of proficiency measures for high school graduation.

Commencing with the graduating class of 2012, each local educational agency shall create a composite measure of each student's overall proficiency for graduation in the six core academic areas. This composite measure **shall be derived from a conjunctive review of three sources of evidence**: ~~will be developed using~~ (a) individual student results on state assessments in mathematics and English language arts, and, when so designated by the Board of Regents, **science additional content areas**; and (b) ~~combined with measures of~~ successful course completion; and (c) at least two additional performance-based diploma assessments, as set forth in sections **L-6-3.1** and **L-6-3.2** of these regulations. **In order to be eligible for a diploma, students must meet state and local requirements in all three areas.**

Commencing with the class of 2012, students shall be required to reach a ~~the~~ **minimum achievement level of proficiency on the state assessments in reading and mathematics, and when so designated by the Regents, additional content areas to earn a diploma.** ~~In areas where the Board of Regents has not approved a state assessment for the purpose of determining student proficiency for graduation, the local educational agency shall use successful course completion and at least two additional performance based diploma assessments to determine student proficiency for graduation in those areas of study. While state assessments shall not be the sole grounds to prohibit graduation from high school, local educational agencies shall use individual student results on Board of Regents' designated statewide assessments as one third (33 1/3%) of the components of their total assessment of student proficiency for graduation in said designated areas of study. The Board of Regents shall determine the minimum achievement level on the designated statewide assessments for the purposes of this section. If a student does not meet this minimum level of proficiency necessary in an area of study~~ **subject to the state assessment**, ~~additional evidence of proficiency will be required in a manner and format to be prescribed by the Commissioner,~~ **the student shall be required to retake the state assessment and demonstrate progress toward proficiency in a manner and format to be prescribed by the Board of Regents.** **Students reaching the minimum level of performance on the state assessment set forth in these regulations must also fulfill coursework and diploma assessments requirements to earn a diploma.** In **content** areas in which the Board of Regents has not approved a state assessment for the purpose of determining student proficiency for graduation, the local educational agency shall use successful course completion, **assessed against state adopted standards** and ~~at least two additional~~ **student performance on** performance-based diploma assessments to determine student ~~proficiency~~ eligibility for graduation. ~~in those areas of study. While the Regents will determine the minimum level of required proficiency, LEAs may set higher levels of expectations for proficiency as a requirement to receive a diploma. Commencing with the graduating class of 2012, State assessment results shall also be included on each student's permanent high school transcript. in each academic year following the year in which the District in which such student~~

~~is enrolled has secured approval from the Commissioner of its High School Diploma System pursuant to Section 3.4 of these Regulations.~~

L-6-3.4. Rhode Island system of differentiated diplomas

(a) ~~Commencing with the graduating class of 2013, LEAs are authorized to recognize students who achieve above the minimum achievement level of proficiency through state assessments, course work and performance-based assessments by awarding differentiated diplomas. The Board of Regents shall establish the number of differentiated diplomas and, through the Commissioner's Review process, determine~~ confirm that LEAs are using both locally generated student performance data and state assessment results ~~in combination~~ to make decisions about student eligibility for differentiated diplomas in a manner consistent with the intent of these regulations.

All students will have the right to retake the state assessment at the first reasonable opportunity following initial administration and at other available administrations as necessary to meet graduation requirements.

All diplomas issued in Rhode Island will certify that the student receiving the diploma has presented evidence of successful completion of the proficiency-based graduation requirements set forth in sections L-6-3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 of these regulations.

(b) ~~Regents' approved diplomas will certify that the student receiving the diploma has presented evidence of successful completion of the proficiency based graduation requirements as adopted by the local educational agency in adherence to the requirements set forth in sections 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 of these regulations.~~ LEAs are authorized to award certificates of academic achievement and work readiness skills ~~including stackable certificates~~ to students who have satisfactorily completed specific course work or other standards-based activities that indicate a recognized level of knowledge, skills, and/or work readiness skills. Certificates ~~signify~~ will be validated through the Commissioner's Review process as signifying readiness for employment or further academic opportunities and may be included as part of a student's transition plan.

(c) Students and families shall have the right to appeal graduation decisions as described in local educational agency policies. **Locally managed appeals processes**, ~~which~~ must recognize ~~avenues for alternate methods for students measuring to demonstrate their student's overall proficiency in the requisite six core academic areas as required to demonstrate eligibility to graduate.~~ valid and reliable sources of evidence that demonstrate and document student proficiency in the six required content areas in a manner and at a level commensurate with the requirements set forth in section **L-6-3.3** of these regulations

L-6-3.4. 5. Regents' approved diploma system.

The Commissioner shall review all local educational agency high school diploma systems to ensure that they are in compliance with these regulations. The Commissioner shall set the schedule and protocols for **diploma system review and accountability.** ~~to ensure that local educational agencies' Secondary diploma systems continue to be in~~ **The Commissioner shall maintain a detailed record of local educational agency implementation status and report that status regularly.** ~~compliance with applicable Regents' Regulations beginning in January 2008. In~~

~~order to grant the Regents' Rhode Island approved diploma, a~~ Local educational agency~~ies~~ must demonstrate, through the Commissioner's review and approval process, that all students have been provided **with a guaranteed and viable curriculum approved curriculum in all content areas, as well as** the appropriate supports and opportunities to learn in a **system in which all of the elements of these regulations are fully implemented.** ~~The local educational agency approved core academic curriculum shall be aligned, at a minimum, with the state adopted standards grade 9-10 grade span expectations (GSEs) and other appropriate standards and be otherwise compliant with these regulations.~~ **Should the Commissioner find, through the review process, that an LEA has failed to comply fully with these regulations, the Commissioner will utilize the full authority granted to the office, up to and including rescinding the diploma-granting authority of local educational agencies.**

~~(b) Between June of 2008 and June of 2012, preliminarily approved local educational agencies and local educational agencies in an approval withheld status will continue to be authorized to grant local educational agency/school diplomas based on local criteria. Local educational agencies with full Board of Regents' approval pursuant to this section may begin awarding a Regents' approved diploma commencing with the graduating class of 2010. Commencing with the graduating class of 2012, local educational agencies without full approval will no longer be authorized to grant diplomas; all diplomas granted within the State of Rhode Island's public schools must then be Regents' approved diplomas~~

L-6-3.6 Local educational agency notification to **students, families, and community members of the requirements for graduation.**

~~(a) In order to be authorized approved system and to grant a Regents' diploma, H~~Local educational agencies must demonstrate through the Commissioner's review and approval process set forth in Section 3.54 of these Regulations that full and effective notice of the Rhode Island Diploma System requirements set forth in these Regulations, as well as the proficiency-based graduation requirements adopted by the local educational agency, has been provided 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 local educational agency) ~~for students who transfer during middle or high school~~. Furthermore, full and effective notice of the minimum achievement level on designated statewide assessments for graduation purposes, as described in section 3.3 of these Regulations, must be provided to students and their families no later than October 1 in the year in which said students enter the ninth grade (or at the time of enrollment into the local educational agency) ~~for students who transfer during middle or high school~~. Pursuant to these regulations, the local educational agency shall provide evidence of the notification that the parents/guardians have been provided access to their child's individual learning plan(s) and/or personal literacy plan(s).

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 eighth grade year (or at the time of enrollment for students enrolling into the local educational agency after the eighth grade year). LEAs shall communicate regularly with the families of students identified

through the early warning system, including providing them with information about the support provided to and progress being made by the student.

(b) In the event that a student is in jeopardy of not earning a diploma, the local educational agency must maintain a record of multiple and timely individual notices to a student and his/her family. ~~In addition, evidence of timely individual notices to a student and his/her family, in regard to a demonstrated lack of proficiency sufficient to endanger the award of a diploma must be documented in the education record of any student to whom the local educational agency is subsequently denying a diploma.~~ Local education agencies must provide, at a minimum, (a) timely and clear notification to students and families; and (b) an invitation to students and families to a meeting to discuss the student's academic program, support, and intervention; and (c) regular updates of student performance and progress. All such communications must be provided in a format accessible to parents and students and provide students with adequate time to receive appropriate supports and educational opportunities to meet graduation expectations. Local educational agency failure to provide student and family notifications in the manner set forth in these regulations may be addressed through locally-managed appeals processes but shall not be presumed to result in the awarding of a diploma.

All programs, services, supports, and accommodations shall be construed as affirmative obligations of the LEA and can be enforced via Chapter 16-39 of Rhode Island General Law.

L-6-3.76 Supports and accommodations to students.

Every student enrolled in Rhode Island public schools has the right to an **appropriate and individualized and optimized** opportunity to achieve proficiency **for graduation**, as measured in accordance with section 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 of these regulations. ~~in a manner that is conducive to the future success of that student in the world of work or further education beyond the secondary level.~~ For many students, that **optimized** opportunity will require additional supports from the local educational agency. **Such supports must be research-based and appropriate to the needs of each student.**

The range of necessary support mechanisms must **include:**

- (a) Beginning no later than entry into sixth grade, each student shall have an individual learning plan (ILP). The ILP shall emanate from the student's academic, career and personal/social goals. The ILP shall document the student's **college and career** interests and needs, supports, course selection, ~~and opportunities~~, and **career awareness and exploration activities** to form a structured program of study that culminates in ~~proficiency for graduation~~ **and prepares students for success in college, careers, and life**. The ILP shall further include college-level work, transition placements, or employment after high school as dictated by the needs and interests of the individual student. The ILP shall coordinate with, and/or incorporate Individual Educational Programs (IEPs), Section 504 Plans, Personal Literacy Plans (PLPs), **Response To Intervention (RTI)**, and English language learner services, as well as any additional supports ~~(such as Response To Intervention)~~ students may need to receive to become proficient.

~~(b) Students who, at the time of their entry into the ninth grade, are not on course track to achieve the proficiency based graduation requirements established by section 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 of these regulations, shall be provided, in addition to course work, the requisite supports designed to offer meaningful opportunities, including alternate pathways, to complete the proficiency requirements for their diplomas. These supports shall be documented in the student's individual learning plan (ILP). Local educational agencies, for the purposes of compliance with this section, shall develop alternative educational and training programs and/or partnerships appropriate to these students' needs, life goals, and abilities.~~

(e**b**) In order to receive a Regents' diploma, students with disabilities and students who are English language learners are also expected to present evidence of successful completion of proficiency-based graduation requirements adopted by the local educational agency and approved by the Commissioner. Students with disabilities have the right under federal law to continue working toward successful completion of the proficiency-based graduation requirements until the age of 21. Students with disabilities and identified English language learners (who have been served by Rhode Island public schools for less than three full years) may participate in an age-appropriate commencement ceremony, based upon local educational agency policy, whether or not they are receiving a diploma at that time.

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 more 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. These personalization strategies must ensure a collective responsibility for individual students, resulting in more students achieving the Regents' standards for academic proficiency. ~~They~~ **se strategies** shall include approaches such as student advisories, schools within schools, academies, and or interdisciplinary grade level teams organized around a common group of students, etc. **Evaluation** ~~idence~~ of the effectiveness of such strategies **shall be conducted** in a manner, format, and schedule to be determined by the Commissioner. ~~shall address the means by which these personalization approaches and structures will be implemented. Additionally, all school improvement plans and local educational agency strategic plans shall address strategies for responding to, planning for, and recording of, every student's academic, career, and personal/social goals, beginning no later than sixth grade.~~

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 Rhode Island local educational agency, regardless of what additional personalization structures are employed. For purposes of these regulations, advisories shall be defined as structures for students to meet throughout the academic year with at least one assigned adult, in an environment with sufficient time and opportunity to support student achievement in the academic, career, personal/social domains.

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

(a) Local educational agencies are responsible for developing an ILP process, beginning no later than 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 **review and** revisit their **ILP goals** with the guidance of responsible adults, including parents or legal guardians. In order to ensure the use of the ILP in coordinating appropriate supports, access to courses, and additional learning opportunities necessary to support students in meeting their goals, ILP reviews must occur ~~at a minimum, prior to the start of each semester.~~ Additionally, individual learning plans (ILPs) should be used to support **not less than bi-annually and during** key transition periods including middle to high school and high school to post-secondary placement. In a manner, format, and schedule to be prescribed by the Commissioner, each local educational agency (LEA) shall provide evidence of the effectiveness of their ILP process. ~~These requirements set forth in section 3.6 and in this section shall apply equally to students enrolled in state approved career and technical coursework and other academic programs supported by the student's LEA.~~

(b) **In the event that a student is in jeopardy of not earning a diploma through failure to meet the requirements set forth in section 6-3.0 of these Regulations, the ILP shall be used to establish and monitor a growth plan and to ensure adequate student supports are made available to the student.**

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 – as informed by each school's student achievement data and guided by best practice in curriculum, instruction and assessment.

L-6-4.5. Common Planning Time.

Common planning time shall be used by ~~interdisciplinary and content specific~~ teams of teachers, administrators, and other education professionals for substantive planning of instruction, looking at student work, addressing student needs, ~~(especially those with the greatest needs)~~, and providing opportunities for group professional development. ~~Effective immediately, all Rhode Island middle level schools and high schools shall require weekly common planning time of a minimum of 30 minutes per session. However, local educational agencies shall not reduce the number of sessions or amount of time allotted to common planning time currently practiced.~~ By the **school** year 2012, common planning time must **provide for increase to at least one hour per week** ~~two weekly sessions~~ at the high school level and at least **two hours per week** ~~four weekly sessions~~ at the middle level. Pursuant to the requirements of this section, local educational agencies shall provide evidence of the manner in which these requirements shall be implemented, as well as the means by which administrators and teachers will receive professional development in the effective use of common planning time. This common planning time must be in addition to individual faculty planning time and the ~~fifteen (15) hours of~~ professional development **requirements** set forth in these regulations.