



# CRANSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS



## HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND DIPLOMA SYSTEM HANDBOOK

# Message from the Principals

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students:

The communities within the Cranston High Schools seek to instill high expectations for all students in their academic, civic, and social endeavors and to provide them with opportunities to succeed in both higher education and the global marketplace. We remain committed to establishing clear, rigorous, and demanding standards and expectations that encompass all the necessary skills, which all students must demonstrate in order to succeed as responsible citizens of the 21st Century. Once established, these standards and expectations define the levels of achievement that we have for all of our students, and assist us in identifying effective learning strategies for delivering instruction and assessing students' performance.

In order to accomplish our Mission, the school communities have identified learning expectations for all students. These academic, civic, and social expectations specify what students must know and be able to do upon graduation. Our educational program is designed to engage students in active, collaborative learning that emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills, literacy (reading and mathematics), and technology skills as applied to real world concepts and practices. Further, we believe that an educational program that is academically challenging and student-centered will provide our young adults with a strong foundation for future successes.

The following pages outline the requirements for graduation from the High Schools in Cranston. Please take time to review this document carefully. If you have any questions, please contact your child's guidance counselor. The related school documents are on the Cranston School Department website.

We want all of our students to have valuable learning experiences in our high schools. As a result, we want students to be successful, productive members of society.

Respectfully,

Mr. Thomas Barbieri, Principal, Cranston High School West

Mr. Dennis Curran, Director, CPS/NEL Construction & Career Academy

Mr. Sean Kelly, Principal, Cranston High School East

# Cranston High Schools' *Diploma System*

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) has developed requirements to ensure that all students across the state will successfully complete a rigorous high school program that makes them college and career ready. A Cranston High School diploma is the official recognition that a student has met the State's and Cranston's graduation requirements and has demonstrated the necessary proficiencies to graduate. Proficiencies in academic areas will be based on the adopted state and national standards, in conjunction with the Applied Learning Standards as set by the Rhode Island Board of Education. Proficient performances for graduation are necessary in each of the six core academic areas: English Language Arts, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts and technology. A community service requirement must also be fulfilled. The strategies for assessing applied learning skills are in building the Cranston Graduation Portfolio and successfully completing Comprehensive Course Assessments (CCA's). These requirements for a Cranston High School Diploma are consistent with Rhode Island Board Of Education regulations.

## Requirements for a Cranston High School Diploma:

1. Successful completion of the *minimum* required coursework
2. Successful completion of Comprehensive Course Assessments
3. Successful completion of a Graduation Portfolio
4. Achievement on the reading and mathematics state assessments to the level required by the State of RI
5. Successful completion of community service requirements

In addition, RIDE has developed transcripts focusing on skills in the following areas:

- ✓ Work Readiness
- ✓ Self-Determination
- ✓ Citizenship and Community

Cranston will use these transcripts to progress monitoring student skills, level of attainment and support in each of these areas. These transcripts will be designed to provide critical information to adult service providers and families for determining appropriate supports as student exits high school.

## Description of Requirements

### 1) Coursework /Credit Requirements

Students must complete a *minimum* of 24 course credits including:

- ✓ English 4.0
- ✓ Mathematics 4 .0 (One of these courses may be an Applied Math course)
- ✓ Sciences 3.0
- ✓ Social Studies 3.0 (U.S. History is required)
- ✓ Fine Arts 0.5
- ✓ Computer Literacy/Technology 0.5
- ✓ Physical Education 1.0 (0.25 per year for 4 years)
- ✓ Health 1.0 (0.25 per year for 4 years)
- ✓ Electives 7.0

**Total: 24.0 Credits**

## **Final Exams & Comprehensive Course Assessments (CCAs):**

A Final Exam and/or a CCA is given at the end of every course. A CCA is a culminating applied learning performance given at or near the end of a course. The CCA will be comprised of both objective and performance-based assessments. These are student proficiency measures in the course.

The Final Exam and/or CCA is counted as 15% of a student's average for the course.

Seniors may be exempt from taking the performance-based portion of the CCA in their courses.

## **2) Graduation Portfolio & Presentation**

The Graduation Portfolio is a collection of student work or artifacts that demonstrates each student's readiness to graduate and counts toward the accrual of course work and course credits toward graduation. All students are given assignments called Common Tasks in every course that can be used in their portfolios. The Graduation Portfolio must show proficiency in CPS Academic Expectations. Students must have evidence of 14 artifacts under the communications expectation and 6 artifacts under the problem solving expectations.

In preparation for completing the Graduation Portfolio, students must progressively accumulate artifacts beginning in grade 9. Students and families will be informed of student progress each marking period.

The Graduation Portfolio Presentation takes place in the spring of grade 12. All students are provided supports and organizational tools to prepare them for a successful presentation. Students present their portfolios to a panel. During the presentation, students must address why the artifacts reflect their best work, how the body of work is connected to their personal goals and their readiness to graduate. Students must present specific artifacts that reflect how their learning has progressed over time to becoming proficient.

The Cranston Public School System is dedicated to supporting the success of every student. Students are provided opportunities to redo or make up work required for completing their portfolios. However, it is each student's responsibility to prioritize and put forth every effort to successfully completing what is expected of him or her for graduating.

## **3) State Assessments**

- All students must achieve the minimum level of achievement (i.e. 2 or better) on the mathematics and reading NECAP/state assessment to graduate.
- Students who do not meet a minimum level on these the state assessments will be required to take course work to support their passing the mathematics and/or reading NECAP/state assessment in their senior year.
- All students who do not meet minimum requirements will be provided a Progress Plan. The Progress Plan will define deficiencies and describe the additional supports needed to support student's ability to pass. Student's parent/guardian must sign the Progress Plan.
- Students who do not meet the minimum requirement in their senior year will continue taking additional course work to support their passing the mathematics and/or reading NECAP/ state assessment toward the end of their senior year.

## **State Assessment Requirement Waiver**

If a student is unable to demonstrate graduation readiness after completing each retest of the state assessment, the student may then apply to his/her principal and the superintendent of schools for a waiver of the state assessment portion of the graduation requirements. See CPS Policy #5128.

***NOTE: Waivers will be granted only in rare cases.***

### **4) Community Service**

All students must complete 20 hours of community service before graduating. This will be reported as part of the graduation portfolio presentation.

### **5) ILP (Individual Learning Plan)**

Each student will create and maintain an ILP that is aligned to academic, career, personal and social goals.

## **RI ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT (RIAA) CREDENTIALS**

The Rhode Island Alternate Assessment (RIAA) is the state assessment for a small number of students who cannot participate in large-scale assessments even with accommodations. 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. As a result of this change, students who participate in the RIAA will not be in a position to earn the RI diploma. However, RIDE, in partnership with adult service agencies, developed a certificate options for students to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement (based on achievement on the RIAA and other PBGR Requirements).

Requirements for a Cranston Certificate of Academic Achievement:

1. Successful completion of the minimum required coursework for Cranston Public Schools
2. Successful completion of Comprehensive Course Assessments based on AAGSE's
3. Successful completion of a Graduation Portfolio
4. Participation in RI Alternative Assessment (RIAA)

## Appeals Process – Policy #5145 (a)

The Cranston Public School Non-Graduation Determination Appeals Process is based in Due Process, and is detailed in Cranston Public Schools Policy No. 5145 (a): “Commencing with the Class of 2008, the following protocol will be utilized for any student/parent when notified of a non-graduation status:”

Step 1	Level 1 – School Level	Student/Parent/Guardian shall be informed of the reasons for non-graduation status. An appeal in writing may be made to the Proficiency Based Graduation Review Team (PBGR Team).
Step 2	Level 2 – School Level	Student/Parent/Guardian meets with the school’s principal for a hearing.
Step 3	Level 3 – Central Office	Student/Parent/Guardian meets with the superintendent of schools or a designee for a hearing.
Step 4	Level 4 – School Committee	Student/Parent/Guardian meets with the School Committee for a hearing.
Step 5	Level 5 – Commissioner’s Office	Student/Parent/Guardian meet(s) with the R.I. Commissioner of Education, or a designee, for a hearing.

This handbook was developed through the work of the Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements (PBGR) Committee, in collaboration with administrators, program supervisors, department heads, and teachers. It is with sincere appreciation that we thank all who thoughtfully contributed to this important document.

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2013-2014**

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