



New York State  
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT  
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity

# Pathways to a New York State Diploma

July 15, 2019



# Introduction

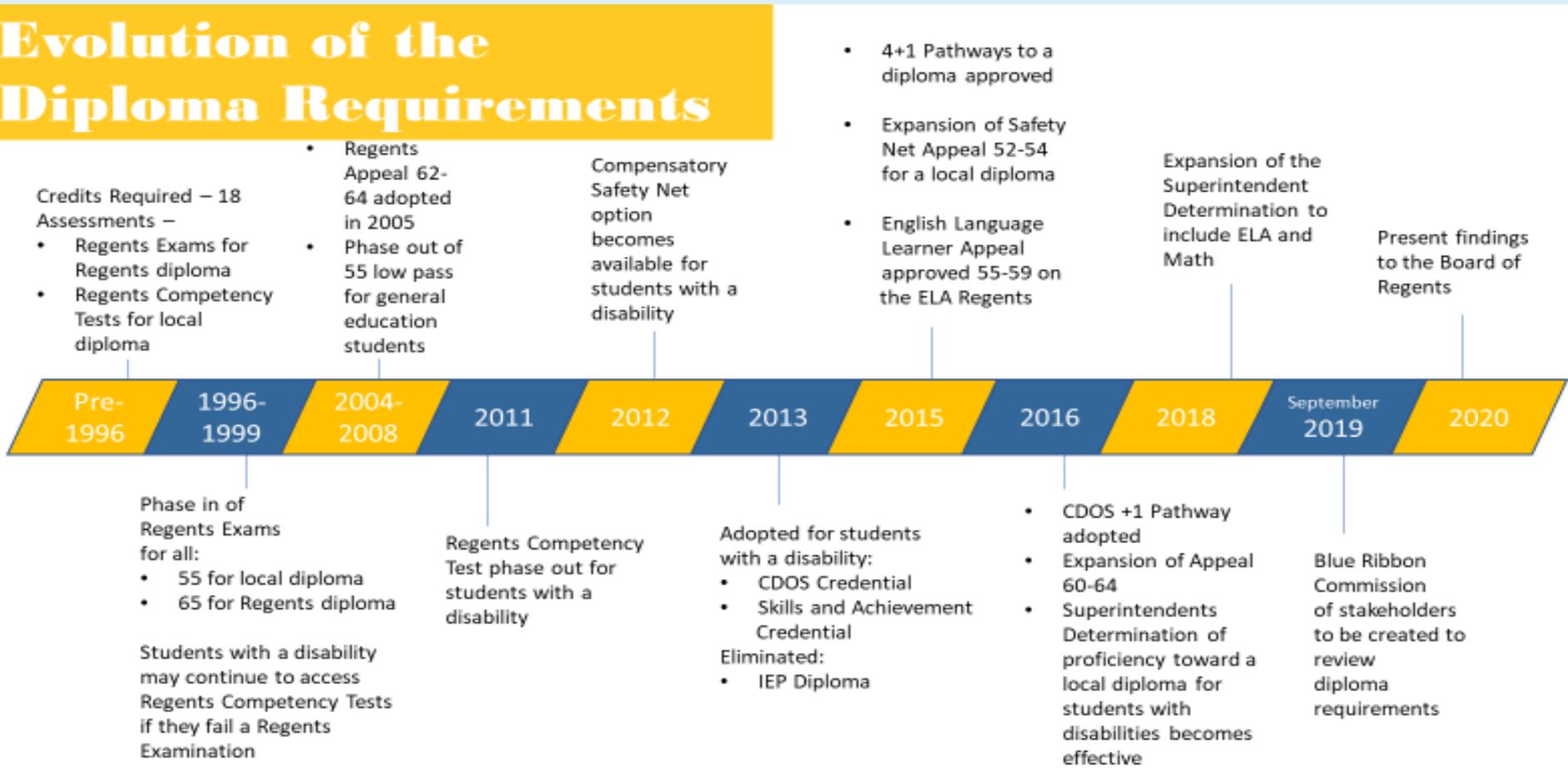
- Chancellor Rosa noted in February 2019 NYSSBA On Board Commentary *“It's time that we rethink the high school diploma”* that:

- *“The latest graduation rate figures are similar to the results we have seen in each of the last several years. The graduation rate continues to slowly edge up, but stubborn gaps in achievement persist - gaps that separate students of color, students with disabilities, English language learners, and low-income students from their peers who are white and attend school in low-need districts.”*
- *“While it was encouraging to see signs that we are moving in the right direction...the rate of improvement is far too slow by any objective measure. Simply put, the system is not working for everyone, and too many students - particularly our most vulnerable students - are leaving high school without a diploma.”*

- Goal: Define what a New York State high school diploma means and what it ought to signify

# Background

## Evolution of the Diploma Requirements



# Background:

## Current Graduation Credit Requirements: 22 Units

	Local Diploma, Regents Diploma, Regents Diploma with Advanced Designation
Content Area	Minimum Number of Credits
English	4
Social Studies	
Distributed as Follows:	
U.S. History (1)	
Participation in Government (1/2)	
Economics (1/2)	4
Other (2)	
(students entering grade 9 in 2016 must earn 2 credits in Global History and Geography)	
Science	
Distributed as Follows:	
Life Science (1)	3
Physical Science (1)	
Life Science or Physical Science (1)	
Mathematics	3
Languages Other than English (LOTE)	1*
Visual Art, Music, Dance, and/or Theater	1
Physical Education	2
Health	0.5
Electives	3.5
Total	22

# What Do Other States Require?

- 60% of states do not require an exit exam to graduate high school.<sup>1</sup>
- Of 20 states with high school graduation exit exams, more than half require 3 or fewer exams.<sup>1</sup>
- Some of New York's Neighboring States:
  - [Massachusetts](#) requires 3 exit exams (ELA, Math, and Science)
  - [New Jersey](#) requires an ELA and Mathematics High School exam
  - [Pennsylvania](#) does not currently require exit exams

<sup>1</sup> [TAMSA](#), 2014-15

# State Expectations for Graduation Matter (2018)<sup>1</sup>

- States offer more than 100 different high school graduation options for students.
- Although often billed as a single, statewide diploma, many states still have different sets of expectations for students to complete high school, depending on the option students choose or on the options made available to them.
- Half of states offer at least two graduation options for students, with a few offering students five or more options.
- States may offer discrete diplomas or the state may present its options as endorsements, designations or different curriculum requirements on top of a single diploma.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.achieve.org/graduation-requirements-matter>

# Establish a Blue Ribbon Commission on NY State's Diploma

- Create a working stakeholder group with overlap to commission membership including: current or recent parents, students, educators, researchers, advocates, higher education and business leaders.
  - Big 5, NYSCOSS, NYSSBA, NYSUT, PTA, SAANYS, UFT and others
- The purpose of the commission is to make recommendations to:
  - revise current diploma requirements;
  - ensure all students have access to multiple graduation pathways; and
  - include a recommended transition plan timeline that allows time to prepare for and implement the changes.

# Big Questions

- In February 2019, the Chancellor asked Regents Johnson and Mead, Co-chairs of the Regents Research Workgroup, to look at revising New York's graduation requirements with a focus on research, practice and policy.
- Their work will include, but not be limited to, addressing key questions, such as:
  - What do we want our children to know and to be able to do before they graduate?
  - How do we want them to demonstrate such knowledge and skills?
  - To what degree does requiring passage of Regents exams improve student achievement, graduation rates and college readiness?
  - What other measures of achievement (e.g., capstone projects, alternative assessments or engagement in civic and community activities) could serve as indicators of high school completion?

# Implementation

- Extensive outreach to all areas of the state and all stakeholder groups.
  - Judicial District hearings
  - Use of BOCES to support the engagement and outreach efforts
  - Surveys
- Research
- After Regents deliberations and policy decisions
  - Begin process of regulation and guidance changes
  - Begin test development/revision process if new assessment(s) or modifications to existing assessments are needed
  - Develop a timeline and transition plan
  - Training and support to the field to implement
  - Draft timeline of the Blue Ribbon Commission's work

# Draft Timeline of the Blue Ribbon Commission's Work

- **September 2019** – Establish the commission's membership and draft meeting schedule.
- **October 2019** – 1<sup>st</sup> meeting - The commission sets its vision.
- **December 2019** – 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting –The commission identifies priority areas, “Big Questions” and recommendation framework. Assign sub-groups for priority areas.
- **January – March 2020** – Sub-groups meet.
- **April 2020** – Sub-groups report to the commission on proposed recommendations.
- **Summer 2020** – The commission finalizes recommendations and report is prepared with a focus on the impact to current requirements.
- **Fall 2020** – The commission's final report is presented to the Board of Regents for its consideration.