

PATHWAYS TO A NEW YORK STATE DIPLOMA

Board of Regents
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I. Introduction

Chancellor Rosa noted in February 2019 NYSSBA On Board Commentary *It's time that we rethink the high school diploma* she spoke about the fact 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” and, 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.

II. Background

- Evolution timeline through 2020
- The current diploma requirements for all students to achieve a diploma in NYS
- In February 2019, the Chancellor asked Regent’s Johnson and Regent 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 for a diploma 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?

III. Process

- Landscape analysis: comparative of other states (Example: NY is one of eleven states that have exit exams.)
- Establish a Blue Ribbon Commission: New York State's Diploma
 - ✓ Create a working stakeholder group that includes current or recent parents, students, educators, researchers, advocates, higher education and business leaders.
- Purpose of the commission: make recommendations to either maintain or revise current diploma requirements to ensure that all students have access to adequate graduation pathways
 - ✓ Make up of the Blue Ribbon Commission
 - ✓ What are the big questions?
 - ✓ Ensure that all stakeholder groups are represented.

IV. 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
 - ✓ Training and support to the field to implement