**Southwestern High School**

**Early Graduation Process**

**Introduction**

The Early Graduation statute and regulation are a result of Senate Bill 61 (2013) and are a companion regulation to Senate Bill 97 (2013). To summarize the regulation; beginning in 2014-2015, Early Graduation will be possible for students who intend to move on an accelerated timeline through high school and graduate college ready in three academic years or less. Early Graduation is a deliberate pathway for students that wish to complete high school early, receive a diploma from the district and be eligible for acceptance into a two-or four- year Kentucky SACS accredited, public or non-profit institution without remediation. The regulation provides a financial incentive, known as the Early Graduation Certificate, for the student to support this action.

**Requirements**

* Early Graduation Candidates must meet the proficiency benchmarks on Kentucky required end-of-course exams. Currently those classes are ENGLISH II, ALGEBRA II, BIOLOGY, and US HISTORY.
* Early Graduation Candidates must meet Council of Post-Secondary Education (CPE) defined college readiness benchmarks on a college readiness exam. Current benchmarks for the ACT (English = 18, Mathematics = 19, and Reading = 20) as set by CPE in 13 KAR 2:020.

**Incentives**

A student who meets the Early Graduation requirements in 704 KAR 3:305 shall earn an Early Graduation Certificate and be eligible for a one-time scholarship award to be used at a SACS accredited Kentucky college or university the academic year immediately following early high school graduation.

* The award shall be equal to one-half (1/2) of the state portion of the average statewide per pupil guarantee for one year. This award amount is determined in the biennial budget for each fiscal year. For the academic year 2013-2014, the statewide per pupil guarantee was $3827 (half of that would be approximately $1913).
* The Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) will administer the scholarship; funds will be forwarded directly to the institute of higher education.
* Early Graduation Certificate funds shall be available only during the academic year following graduation.

Effective with the Class of 2015, students who are eligible for the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) program and graduate from a Kentucky high school in three years may be eligible for a KEES award that is the equivalent of four years of high school.

* The KEES award amount is based on the average of GPA awards.
* The Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) should be contacted for additional information regarding the KEES program.

**REASONS FOR EXITING EARLY GRADUATION**

* **Voluntary Academic** 
  + Student is meeting blueprint for success, but voluntarily chooses to remain in high school longer than three years to complete a career track, certification or accelerated/advanced courses such as AP or dual credit.
* **Voluntary Financial/Scholarships**
  + Student is meeting blueprint for success, but voluntarily chooses to remain in high school longer than three years to be eligible for college scholarships and financial benefit.
* **Involuntary Academic** 
  + Student is not meeting academic benchmarks on End-of-Course exams or proficiency benchmarks on the ACT. Student and family are counseled and advised against continuing on an Early Graduation pathway.
* **Health** 
  + Student health issues that prevent student from completing Early Graduation criteria.
* **Athletics**
  + Students choose to stay the full four years in high school to take advantage of programs in sports in high school.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Communicating the Initiatives and Criteria | |
| 1. Middle and High School Counselors will distribute the district brochure explaining the criteria, guidelines, requirements, and the pros/cons of the Early Graduation Option with the Student Information Packets at the beginning of each school year. | |
| 1. The district informational letter and letter of intent will be posted to the school and district website. | |
| Criteria for Successful Entrance  *\*All candidates will be reviewed on an individual basis by the Early Graduation Committee. \*However, the criteria below are indicators for successful completion of the program.* | |
| * GPA – Student has demonstrated high academic potential in rigorous courses. * Attendance – 95% average attendance rate. * Discipline – students should not have excessive behavior issues. This indicator will be reviewed on an individual basis. * Benchmarks – Meets state benchmarks on state level assessments.   EXPLORE: English (13), Math (17), Reading (15)  PLAN: English (15), Math (19), Reading (17)  ACT: English (18), Math (19), Reading (20)   * Student Disposition:  1. *The decision to commit to graduating early is based on thoughtful conversations with families, school counselors and students, reviewing all the issues which surround accelerating high school graduation.* 2. *Students intend to begin and stay on this pathway, upon submission of the letter of intent.* 3. Students have a clear academic or career goal in mind and therefore a reason to demonstrate proficiency in high school and graduate early. 4. *Student is persistent, self-motivated and can set and achieve goals independently.* 5. *Student is emotionally and academically mature, can deal with schedule and classes being “out of step” with same age peers.* 6. *Student shows indications of meeting or surpassing benchmarks for College and Career Readiness goals through standardized test scores. High grades alone do not indicate a successful early graduate.* 7. *Student may be identified as Gifted/Talented; this is also not a sole indicator of readiness.* 8. *Students have a desire to succeed and “move on when ready.”* 9. *Students do not have excessive absences, tardiness, or truancies.* 10. *Students do not have excessive behavior issues. This will be evaluated on an individual basis.* | |
| Entrance Process | |
| 1. Upon submission of the Letter of Intent a high school counselor will meet with potential applicants to explain the Early Graduation Option. (Appendix A) | |
| 1. A screening committee, consisting of high school counselors and administrators, will review the Letter of Intent and criteria for successful completion of potential applicants for the Early Graduation Option. | |
| 1. An Early Graduation Committee will be established for each student prepared for entry into the program. The EGC will consist of the student, parent, principal/designee, and counselor. The EGC will conduct an initial meeting to discuss readiness into the program. The committee will review the *District Early Graduation Things to Consider* form. (Appendix B) The EGC will decide upon acceptance to the program. All required committee members must sign the letter of intent. Upon acceptance to the program, students will review pathway options. (Appendix C) | |
| 1. The EGC will encourage the student to be in frequent communication with the college/university of choice to ensure acceptance into the selected program. | |
| 1. The signed Letter of Intent will be scanned into the ILP onto the Advising Page and student is flagged in Infinite Campus as being in an alternative program. | |
| 1. Schools must enter status as an Early Graduate into Infinite Campus no later than October 1st of the year in which the student makes the declaration as stated in Section 9 of 704 KAR 3:305 | |
| 1. Students meeting the criteria will follow the Early Graduation Track developed by EGC. (Appendix C) | |
| 1. Students who submit a Letter of Intent but do not exhibit readiness for the program may re-apply the following year as initiated by the student by submitting another letter of intent. | |
| Progress Monitoring and Support for Early Graduate Students | |
| The EGC will meet with students enrolled in the Early Graduation Option at least three times a year to review current data and determine student status in the program. The EGC will identify areas of concerns and provide the necessary interventions for students. Notes from regularly scheduled counseling meetings including family and student are recorded and filed in the ILP to ensure progress on Early Graduation pathway. | |
| Blueprint for Intervention |
| 1. Students who are at risk of not meeting the program criteria will be provided additional counseling from school counselors. 2. Students needing additional academic support will be placed in College and Career Readiness Interventions that are appropriate in meeting individual needs. (Notes will be entered in to the ILP) 3. Parents will be invited to meetings and notified as concerns are identified. |
| ACT |
| The Building Assessment Coordinator will ensure that Early Graduate Candidates have  the opportunity to take the ACT. |
| Transition Plan for Students Exiting the Early Graduation Program before Completion |
| 1. Early Graduation Committee meeting will be scheduled for those students who are not meeting the program criteria or who decide to discontinue participation in the Early Graduation Pathway. 2. The Early Graduation Committee will review transcripts and determine a pathway to meet high school requirements. 3. The Early Graduation Committee will place the student in an appropriate pathway to ensure college and/or career readiness and that minimum graduation requirements are met. |
| Graduation Ceremony Options |
| Early Graduation students will participate in the graduation ceremony during the  year program requirements are complete. |
| Diploma Options |
| Students will receive a diploma from the Pulaski County School District. |

**APPENDIX A: *Letter of Intent* to Apply for Early Graduation**

**Early Graduation Information**

***Letter of Intent to Apply for Early Graduation***

Senate Bill 61, passed during the 2013 Kentucky General Assembly, provides a pathway to early graduation for students who intend to complete high school in three academic years or less. Beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year, students who complete the Early Graduation requirements (see below) may receive a diploma from the district. Students who graduate in three years or less are also eligible for an Early Graduation Certificate, which they may use the year immediately following high school graduation when enrolling in an SACS accredited Kentucky two- or four- year institute of higher education.

**Clarifying Points:**

* The statutory changes and regulation go into effect beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year.
* KRS 158.142 states that a local board of education shall not impose graduation requirements that prohibit a student who is pursuing an early graduation program from finishing high school in less than four (4) years.
* Early Graduation is defined as a student meeting the performance criteria outlined in 704 KAR 3:305 Section 9 (2) and doing so in three years or less from the date of first enrolling in grade nine.
* To meet the criteria, students that intend to graduate early must meet minimum proficiency benchmarks for the four End-of-Course exams required for state accountability and meet college ready benchmarks for the ACT or other college readiness exams.
* A student who wishes to graduate early must complete a *Letter of Intent to Apply for Early Graduation* within the first 30 days of the academic year in which they want to graduate and the information must be entered into Infinite Campus and the ILP no later than October 1st of the academic year they intend to graduate.
* Students may take their one state supported ACT exam earlier than their junior year, as provided by the regulation.
* Early Graduation students require consistent monitoring and counseling to ensure they are on track to complete the early graduation requirement. The ILP should be completed and regular meetings between the student, family and counselor should monitor and update student progress as required in Section 4 of 704 KAR 3:305.
* The *Letter of Intent* is not binding; students may revert to regular student enrollment with the knowledge they have to meet the District’s minimum requirements and that they will not be eligible for the Early Graduation Certificate.

**Incentives:**

1. A student who meets the Early Graduation requirements in 704 KAR 3:305 shall earn an Early Graduation Certificate to be eligible for a one time scholarship award to be used at a Kentucky two- or four-year public or independent non-profit SAC’s accredited college or university the year immediately following high school graduation. The award shall be equal to one-half (1/2) of the SEEK statewide per pupil guarantee for one year.
2. Students who graduate from high school in three years shall also receive a Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) award equivalent to completing high school in four years.

*Letter of Intent to Apply for Early Graduation*

Intended Graduation Year \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Student name |  |
| SSID# |  |
| Date of Birth |  |
| Parent/Guardian name |  |
| Permanent Mailing Address |  |
| City, State, Zip code |  |
| Parent phone number |  |
| Parent email address |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| High School Name: | District: |
|  |  |
| Principal: | Mailing Address: |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Date student entered high school (MM/DD/YEAR) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date student intends to graduate (MM/DD/YEAR) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Disclosures:** (parent/guardian and student initial each statement)

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I have read and understand the attached information regarding early graduation.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that this intent to pursue early graduation is an accelerated pathway and I intend to meet the academic criteria and timeline of the intent, graduating within three years of entry into high school. By meeting these requirements, I am eligible for the Early Graduation Certificate and a diploma.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_I understand that, should I attain early graduation and be awarded an Early Graduation Certificate award, I may need to provide additional information to the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) in order to have funds sent to my college or university.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that failure to meet the early graduation criteria or timeline will result in having to complete the regular minimum requirements for high school, and forfeiture of the Early Graduation Certificate.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that if I intend to and attain early graduation, the Intent is not binding and I may choose stay in high school to pursue available opportunities. I understand however, that by remaining in high school, I forfeit the Early Graduation Certificate.

Signatures: (print name and sign)

Student (print) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(signature) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian (print) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(signature) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Principal/Designee (print) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(signature) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The student status as an *Early Graduate* is to be entered into Infinite Campus no later than October 1st of the academic year in which the student makes the declaration, as stated in Section 9 of 704 KAR 3:305. The signed and completed Letter of Intent is to be uploaded into the student ILP.

Date entered into IC\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ into ILP\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

By (print name and sign) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

If this student transfers to another Kentucky high school before completing early graduation, the Early Graduation Letter of Intent and information must be moved in Infinite Campus and a counselor must be assigned to monitor the student’s progress.

Date moved\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

School, District\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date entered into IC\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

By (print name and sign) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

* A copy of this Intent form should be placed in the Student’s Cumulative folder and a copy given to the student for their records.

**Appendix B:**

**Issues to Consider Surrounding the Early Graduation Option**

All students are unique, so as you think about early graduation; there are many factors which could affect your decision. Below are some questions to ask yourself as you begin considering an early graduation option.

* Has your child met the benchmarks on state or school assessments? (ex. EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT, End-of-Course, MAP)
* Is your child emotionally mature enough to work independently?
* Is your child socially immature and would mind being in classes with students that are older?
* Is your child one who has a plan for the future?
* Does your child want to stay in high school to complete four years of activities, sports, or competitions?
* Would your child benefit from taking advanced level AP or dual credit courses-gaining college credit while remaining in high school environment?
* Are you ready financially to send a student to college early?
* Are there scholarships, academic opportunities or events in the high school that the student would benefit from by staying four years?
* Does your child have a career track that he/she can add onto his/her college readiness by staying four years?
* Does Early Graduation adequately prepare your child for his/her academic plan?
* Will your child be willing to forego senior traditional activities (i.e., prom, banquets, award ceremonies, trips, and recognitions)?b
* Will your child be willing to forego participation in athletic activities, clubs, and extra-curricular activities?
* Will your child’s college/university allow your child to participate in athletic activities?
* Will your child be eligible for all scholarships?

**Appendix C:**

**Sample Pathways for Students for Early Graduation—2 Year Program**

**Pre-AP or Regular Classes**

**9th Grade**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **TRIMESTER 1** | **TRIMESTER 2** | **TRIMESTER 3** |
| Spanish 1A | Spanish 1B | Honors World Civ. |
| Honors Geometry | Honors Geometry | Honors Data & Measurement |
| Honors Biology A | Honors Biology B | Health |
| Honors English 1A | Honors English 1A | Honors Economics |
| Composition | Honors English 2A | Honors English 2B |

**10th Grade**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **TRIMESTER 1** | **TRIMESTER 2** | **TRIMESTER 3** |
| Government | U.S. History A | U.S. History B |
| Honors Algebra 2A | Honors Algebra 2B | Adv. Topics Math |
| English 3A or AP Language A | English 3B or AP Language B | English Rhetoric |
| Spanish 2A | Spanish 2B | Physical Education |
| Honors Chemistry A or Physics A | Honors Chemistry B or Physics B | \*Elective |

**ASSESSMENTS**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **9th Grade** | | | **10th Grade** | | |
| Biology EOC | | | PLAN & ACT | | |
| AP Exams (Students who take AP classes) | | | Algebra 2 EOC | | |
| English 2 EOC | | | US History EOC | | |
|  | | | On-Demand Writing | | |
|  | | | AP Exams (Students who take AP classes) | | |
|  | | | KOSSA (Career Pathway-depends on electives taken) | | |
| **College Course** | **ACT Subject Test Area** | **ACT EXPLORE**  **Benchmark**  **Grade 8** | **ACT EXPLORE**  **Benchmark**  **Grade 9** | **ACT PLAN**  **Benchmark**  **Grade 10** | **ACT/CPE Benchmark** |
| English Composition | English | 13 | 14 | 15 | 18 |
| College Algebra | Math | 17 | 18 | 19 | 19 |
| Social Sciences | Reading | 16 | 17 | 18 | 20 |
| Biology | Science | 18 | 19 | 20 | 23 |

**\*Elective Classes—students may either select a career pathway in JROTC, Agriculture, Business, Engineering, BioMed, Marketing, or Family & Consumer Science. They can also choose to take extra core or elective classes in the areas of Math, English, Social Studies or Science. They can take classes in Art, Band, or Choir.**

**Sample Pathways for Students for Early Graduation—3 Year Program**

**Honors or Regular Classes**

**9th Grade**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Trimester 1** | **Trimester 2** | **Trimester 3** |
| Honors English 1A | Honors English 1B | Physical Education |
| Honors Geometry A | Honors Geometry B | Honors Data & Measurement |
| Honors Biology A | Honors Biology B | Health |
| Honors World Civ. | Geography | Honors Economics |
| Spanish 1A | Spanish 1B | \*Elective |

**10th Grade**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Trimester 1** | **Trimester 2** | **Trimester 3** |
| Honors English 2A | Honors English 2B | Composition |
| Honors Alg. 2A | Honors Alg. 2B | \*Elective |
| Honors Chemistry A or Physics A | Honors Chemistry B or Physics B | \*Elective |
| AP Government A | AP Government B | Special Topics in SS |
| Spanish 2A | Spanish 2B | \*Elective |

**11th Grade**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Trimester 1** | **Trimester 2** | **Trimester 3** |
| Honors English Rhetoric | English 3 A or AP Language A | English 3 B or AP Language B |
| Honors Oral & Written | English 4A or AP Literature A | English 4B or AP Literature B |
| Pre-Calculus A | Pre-Calculus B | \*Elective |
| Science A or AP Science | Science B or AP Science | \*Elective or AP Science |
| US History or AP US | US History or AP US | US History or AP US |

**ASSESSMENTS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 9th Grade | 10th Grade | **11th Grade** |
| Biology EOC | PLAN | ACT |
|  | English 2 EOC | US History EOC |
|  | Algebra 2 EOC | On-Demand Writing |
|  | On-Demand Writing | KOSSA (Career Pathway) |
|  | AP Exams (Students who take AP classes) | AP Exams (Students who take AP classes) |

**\*Elective Classes—students may either select a career pathway in JROTC, Agriculture, Business, BioMed, Engineering, Marketing, or Family & Consumer Science. They can also choose to take extra core or elective classes in the areas of Math, English, Social Studies or Science. They can take classes in Art, Band, or Choir.**

Parent Letter

Dear Pulaski County Students and Parents,

The Kentucky Board of Education is offering an Early Graduation Option for students beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year. The intent of the Early Graduation Option is to provide students who plan to move on to college with an option to be placed on an accelerated pathway. Students who meet the criteria may graduate in three years or less and receive a high school diploma along with an Early Graduation Certificate, which they may use the year immediately following high school graduation when enrolling in an SACS accredited Kentucky two- or four- year institute of higher education.

**What criteria must be met?**

* Meet proficiency benchmarks on Kentucky required end-of-course exams. Currently, those classes are: English II, Algebra II, Biology, and US History.
* Meet the Council of Post-Secondary Education (CPE) defined college readiness benchmarks on a college readiness exam. Current benchmarks for the ACT (English = 18, Mathematics = 19, and Reading = 20)

**What are the benefits of the Early Graduation Option?**

* Students may still be eligible to receive the KEES award for four years based on the average of GPA awards.
* Students will receive a scholarship from the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA). The funds will be forwarded directly to the institute of higher education the student plans to attend. The amount will be based on the biennial budget for each fiscal year and is estimated to be approximately $1913.00.
* Students may enroll in a Kentucky two or four year profit or non-profit college a year early (if they meet entry requirements of that institution).

**What should I do if I am interested in the Early Graduation Option?**

* Contact a Guidance Counselor at your high school within the first 30 days of the academic year in which you want to graduate.

Thank you,