

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DATE: March 14, 2006

TO: **BOARD OF EDUCATION**

FROM: Dr. Joe A. Hairston, Superintendent

SUBJECT: **POLICY 5250 – GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

ORIGINATOR: Dr. Christine Johns, Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction

RESOURCE PERSON(S): Pat Baltzley, Director, Mathematics PreK-12

RECOMMENDATION

That the Board of Education approves the revised Policy 5250. The revised Policy 5250 and the newly created Rule 5250 governs graduation requirements and needs to be updated and revised to align to the state requirements for graduation. This is the first reading.

Attachment I – Policy Analysis
Attachment II – Revised Policy 5250

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF BALTIMORE COUNTY
Policy Analysis for Proposed Revised Policy 5250:
Graduation Requirements

Statement of Issues Addressed By the Proposed Policy

Due to recent changes in Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) that have directly impacted graduation requirements and the way credits are earned, it is necessary to update and revise Policy 5250, the Board policy that governs graduation requirements, to align to the state requirements. A workgroup was directed to review this policy and, at its recommendation, Policy 5250 was divided into the revised Policy and a new Rule. Revision to Policy 5250 includes a statement of Baltimore County's commitment to graduating responsible, productive citizens while the creation of Rule 5250 outlines the requirements for graduation from Baltimore County Public Schools aligned with the Maryland State Graduation Requirements.

This policy has not been revised since October 14, 1997 and recent changes in regulations underscore the urgency for the system to revise Policy 5250; these changes need to be in place for the graduating class of 2006. Enacting these necessary revisions to Policy 5250 is necessary to ensure public clarity and compliance with state graduation requirements.

Cost Analysis and Fiscal Impact on School System

There is no new fiscal impact on the system as a result of the revised policy and new rule.

Relationship to Other Board of Education Policies

A related policy is: 5200 Promotion and Retention

Legal Requirement

The legal references included in this policy and rule provide a state basis for graduation requirements:

Annotated Code of Maryland, Education Article, §7-205 (Promotion and Graduation of Students)

Code of Maryland Regulations

13A.03.02.02 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland -- Definitions)

13A.03.02.03 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland -- Enrollment)

13A.03.02.04 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland -- Credit Requirements)

13A.03.02.05 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland -- Other Provisions For Earning Credit)

13A.03.02.06 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland -- Student Service)

13A.03.02.07 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland -- State Assessments)

13A.03.02.08 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland – Diplomas And Certificates)

13A.03.02.10 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland – Alternatives To 4-Year Enrollment Requirement)

13A.03.02.11 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland – Alternatives For Structuring Programs)

Similar Policies Adopted by Other School Systems

The Howard County Board of Education, Policy 2121: Graduation Requirements was reviewed and analyzed.

Draft of Proposed Policy and Rule (see attached)

Other Alternatives Considered by Staff

It is recommended that Policy 5250 be revised and its Rule 5250 be created to bring Baltimore County Public Schools into compliance with state graduation requirements.

STUDENTS: [Reporting to Parents] GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Graduation

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT THE GRADUATES OF BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ATTITUDES TO REACH THEIR POTENTIAL AS RESPONSIBLE, PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS. THE BOARD RECOGNIZES THAT FULFILLING THIS COMMITMENT REQUIRES HIGH ACADEMIC STANDARDS; RIGOROUS, RELEVANT CURRICULA; EFFECTIVE, ENGAGING INSTRUCTION; AND FLEXIBILITY IN PROGRAMMING AND SUPPORT TO MEET THE DIVERSE NEEDS, APTITUDES, AND INTERESTS OF ALL STUDENTS. THE MISSION OF A HIGH SCHOOL IN BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS IS TO BUILD UPON THE STUDENTS' PRIOR EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE AND TO HELP STUDENTS GROW ACADEMICALLY, ETHICALLY, AND SOCIALLY. WITHIN THE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM, STUDENTS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO A WIDE VARIETY OF COURSE OFFERINGS AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES THAT WILL INSTILL IN THEM THE CONFIDENCE AND COMPETENCE TO SUCCEED AND PROVIDE THEM WITH PATHWAYS TO REACH THEIR MAXIMUM POTENTIAL AS LIFE-LONG LEARNERS AND PRODUCTIVE CITIZENS IN A GLOBAL MARKETPLACE.

[1. General Requirements

The Baltimore County Public Schools award high school diplomas and high school certificates. To earn a high school diploma from Baltimore County Public Schools, students must satisfactorily complete all state and county graduation requirements. Students with disabilities who cannot meet the requirements for a diploma may earn a high school certificate by meeting state and county requirements.

The Baltimore County Public Schools offer instructional programs that will permit high school students to complete their requirements for graduation in a manner that best suits their individual needs. It is the responsibility of the local school principal and the professional staff to plan with the students and their parents/guardians programs that have reasonable and feasible goals for satisfying state and county requirements.

2. Credit Requirements for Graduation and Single Diploma

A single diploma is authorized by the State for all graduates. For the Class of 1997 and beyond, the minimum number of credits required for high school graduation shall be twenty-one (21), of which seventeen (17) must be in the approved core of general

education courses and four (4) in an approved program sequence which prepares students for post-secondary education and/or entrance into the workforce.

Graduation credit requirements for students, Class of 1997 and beyond, shall be:

<u>AREA</u>	<u>UNITS OF CREDITS</u>
English (organized instruction in listening and speaking, reading and literature, and written composition and use of language)	4
Fine Arts (visual arts, music, theater, and/ or dance)	1
Mathematics (including 1 credit in fundamental or advanced algebraic concepts and topics and 1 credit in fundamental or advanced geometric concepts and topics; other mathematics may be substituted for identified high school special education students)	3
Physical Education	1
Health Education	0.5
Science (earth, life, and /or physical sciences in which laboratory experiences are an integral component)	3
Social Studies (including 1 credit in United States history; 1 credit in world history; 1 credit in local, state, and national government; and .5 credit in economics)	3.5
Technology Education (1 credit that includes the application of knowledge, tools, and skills to solve practical problems and extend human capabilities)	1

In addition to meeting these specific credit requirements, a student shall complete at least one of the following program sequences:

4 credits in a state-approved sequence of courses in a career and technology program

or

2 credits in advanced technology courses and 2 credits in electives

or

2 credits in foreign language and 2 credits in electives.

Total number of credits = 21 + passing of Maryland competency tests

3. Competency Prerequisites for Graduation

To be eligible for graduation, all students must demonstrate the competencies listed in the State Board of Education approved Declared Competencies Index.

4. Student Services Learning Requirements for Graduation

To be eligible for graduation, all students must complete seventy-five (75) hours of approved student service learning.

5. High School Credit for Middle School Courses

Beginning with the 1997-98 school year, high school credit may be earned for middle school courses which meet the same curricular indicators established for high school courses by the Baltimore County Public Schools.

To be awarded high school credit for these courses, middle school students must complete the following requirements:

Pass the same end-of-course examination given to high school students in the same course and

Earn a passing final grade calculated according to the formula used by high schools in Baltimore County.

Taking the final examination is optional for middle school students. If students pass the course but choose not to sit for or do not pass the examination, they may take the net level course in high school, but they will not be awarded high school credit for the middle school course.

Middle school grades in these courses will not be included on transcripts. Credits only will be recorded on transcripts. There will be no effect on the high school grade point average (GPA) or quality point average (QPA).

6. Graduation Exercises

The professional staff shall arrange each spring for appropriate awards and recognition programs and graduation exercises. There shall be no formal graduation exercises for elementary or middle schools.

Legal References: *Annotated Code of Maryland*, Education Article, § 7-205 (Promotion and Graduation of Students)

Code of Maryland Regulations

13A.03.02 (Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland)

13A.03.01.03 (Competency Prerequisites for Graduation)]

Policy

Board of Education of Baltimore County

Adopted: 6/12/75

Revised: 11/9/78

Revised: 7/12/84

Revised: 7/9/87

Revised: 10/14/97

REVISED:

[] indicate that the bracketed item will be deleted.
ALL CAPS indicates that the item is new material.