

# **WATERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

## *High School Graduation Requirements:*

- . Courses*
- . Performance Standards*

*\* Revisions as of 6/7/02*

## **Graduation Requirements**

### **I. Introduction**

To graduate from the Watertown Public Schools, a student must have earned a minimum of 22 credits and must have met the credit distribution requirement. Students must also meet performance standards in writing, mathematics, technology, and citizenship/community interaction. The district's performance standard in writing shall take effect for the class of 2003. The class of 2004 must also meet the district's performance standard in mathematics. Beginning with the class of 2005, each student must meet the district's performance standard in technology. In 2006, students must meet the district's performance standard in citizenship/community interaction.

### **II. Credit Distribution Requirement**

The following courses must be passed:

- A. English – 4 credits (English 1, 2, 3, 4)
- B. Mathematics – 3 credits + 0.5 computers
- C. Social Studies – 3 credits, including 2.0 in United States History and .5 in Civics
- D. Science – 2 credits (one in biology)
- E. Physical Education – 1.0 credit
- F. Health – 1.0 credit
- G. Business, Technology Education, Family and Consumer Science, Art, Music, or Vocational Education – 1.0 Credit
- H. Writing Performance Standard
- I. Math Performance Standard
- J. Technology Performance Standard
- K. Citizenship/Community Interaction Performance Standard

#### **General Exemptions**

*Transfers:* If a student transfers into the Watertown Public Schools after completing at least three years in a high school in another district, he/she may be exempted from Watertown's performance standards requirements for graduation. If a student arrives prior to his/her senior year, they must meet all of Watertown High School's requirements. However, if a sending school documents that a student has achieved the performance standard at the school from which he/she has withdrawn, the student may be exempted from that performance standard(s) in Watertown.

*Special Education/Special Needs:* Students with special needs may be exempt from district performance standards for graduation as described in this policy if so indicated in their Individual Education Plan.

## **Graduation Requirements (continued)**

### **III. District's Performance Standards**

#### **A. Writing Performance Standard**

##### Writing:

Students shall, prior to the completion of their senior year, assemble a portfolio of writing samples comprised of one piece from each academic year and a fifth piece to be composed as their senior midterm exam. Each piece of writing shall meet the basic composition standards set forth by the English Department.

##### Implementation:

Beginning in the freshman year, students will be fully informed of the requirements for the portfolio and its use as a standard for graduation.

During each academic year, students will be provided the opportunity to complete a required piece of writing for the portfolio (see below) as part of regular class work. This opportunity should be made available no later than the fourth week of the third marking period. Students will be provided with assessment criteria at the time the piece is assigned.

Students who do not meet the department's standard for writing on any one assignment will be allowed to edit and revise the piece until it meets the standard. Remediation will take place during regular class periods if possible, or at a time deemed practical by the classroom teacher (i.e., after school). Any grades subsequent to the initial evaluation will be for the purpose of meeting the graduation requirement. Any impact on the marking period grade will be at the discretion of the individual classroom teacher.

As students complete each year's assignment, the classroom teacher will file the work by grade in the English Department office. At this time, parents and guardians will be notified if their child has failed to meet the standard on their initial attempt.

At the end of the year, classroom teachers will compile a list of students who have failed to meet the standard for that year. A second letter will be sent to the parent or guardian of any student who still has not met the standard. The teacher assigned during the next academic year will remind the students of their obligation to meet the previous year's standard.

During spring in-service, the English Department will meet to review the portfolio of each graduating senior. A list of those who have met the requirements, and of those who have failed to meet the requirements, with deficiencies listed for each, will be forwarded to the administration. Remediation will continue for students who have failed to meet the requirements.

## **Graduation Requirements - Writing (continued)**

### Objectives:

1. During the freshman year, the student will be provided the opportunity to complete a three-part essay of at least four paragraphs as part of regular class work. The student will continue to edit and revise this essay until it meets the basic standards set forth for student writing.
2. During the sophomore year, the student will be provided the opportunity to complete a three-part essay of at least four paragraphs on a literature-based topic as part of regular class work. The student will continue to edit and revise this essay until it meets the basic standards set forth for student writing.
3. During the junior year, the student will be provided the opportunity to complete a comparison/contrast essay of at least five paragraphs as part of regular class work. The student will continue to edit and revise this essay until it meets the basic standards set forth for student writing.
4. During the senior year, the student will be provided the opportunity to complete a persuasive essay of at least five paragraphs as part of regular class work. The student will continue to edit and revise this essay until it meets the basic standards set forth for student writing.
5. During the senior year, the student will complete a three-part expository essay of at least five paragraphs as their midterm examination. The topic for this essay will change each year and be administered by the English Department. The student will continue to edit and revise this essay until it meets the basic standards set forth for student writing.

### Assessment:

1. Ongoing assessment using standard rubrics for:
  - a. The three-part essay
  - b. The three-part essay which analyzes literature
  - c. The comparison/contrast essay
  - d. The persuasive essay
2. Final assessment of portfolio during senior year

## **Graduation Requirements – Writing (continued)**

### Transfer Students:

Senior transfer students, arriving prior to the end of Marking Term 1, must write a persuasive essay and take the midterm to meet the Watertown High School Writing Standard.

Seniors who arrive after the midterm must write the persuasive essay to meet the Watertown High School Writing Standard.

Transfer students who arrive prior to their senior year must write the essays explained in Objectives 1, 2, and 3 (p.3), in order to meet the Watertown High School Writing Performance Standard.

### Exemptions:

Students will be exempt from the writing performance standard if they have:

1. Achieved at least a goal level score in Total Writing on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test and/or
2. Achieved a score equivalent to the state average on the SAT II in writing.

### Phase-in of Standards:

1. CLASS of 2003: Where the above assignments do not exist, students may substitute other three-part essays in their portfolio or essays written over the course of their junior and senior year, for a total of five essays, including the senior midterm exam.
2. CLASS of 2004: If a full three-part essay does not exist from freshman year, two essays from sophomore year may be included.
3. CLASS of 2005: Full standard.
  - a. The English Department will draft and use assessment criteria (checklists, rubrics, etc.)
  - b. In the morning of the second exam day (the day that includes only an afternoon exam for most students), all seniors will be administered the midterm component of the portfolio at one time.
  - c. The English Department strongly encourages all departments to set high standards and provide opportunities for student writing.
  - d. Upon request, the English Department will provide copies of materials, rubrics, etc., and/or offer in-service training to better acquaint departments with standards and expectations for student writing.

## Graduation Requirements - Mathematics

### B. Mathematics Performance Standard

#### Mathematics:

Within the content of the course in which the student is enrolled, he/she will satisfactorily complete real world application problems which require demonstration of basic math operations, including fractions and decimals. The student will be provided with any required formulas. The student shall also explain/justify in writing how he/she arrived at each answer.

#### Implementation:

Students will have several opportunities to complete the performance standard in mathematics, beginning at the end of their junior year and continuing into the senior year.

#### Objective:

The student will satisfactorily (80% level or above) complete real world application problems which require demonstration of basic math operations including fractions and decimals. The student will be provided with any required formulas. The student shall also explain/justify in writing how he/she arrived at each answer. (See Attachment A.)

#### Assessment:

Beginning at the end of their junior year, students will satisfactorily complete several CAPT-like, real world application problems and will also explain/justify in writing how he/she arrived at each answer. (See Attachment A.)

#### Exemptions:

Students will be exempt from the mathematics standard if they have:

1. Achieved a score equivalent to the state average on the SAT II in mathematics and/or
2. Achieved a score equivalent to the state average on the mathematics section of the SAT and/or
3. Achieved a score at or above the goal in Total Mathematics on the Connecticut Academic Performance Test.

## **Graduation Requirements - Technology**

### C. Technology Performance Standard

The goal of this standard is to have a student design a solution to an authentic/complex problem, utilizing technology. The student must select the appropriate technology and use the technology to solve the problem.

Projects will meet the following criteria:

1. The project or problem is substantial.
2. The project allows for a student to demonstrate his/her competence with technology.
3. Students will submit a proposal in writing including:
  - a. Definition of project or problem(s) or method for solving the problem.
  - b. A statement of how technology will be used independently on the task.
  - c. Description of what will be submitted upon completion of project.
4. Upon acceptance of the proposal, due date and evaluation criteria will be provided to the student.
5. Student project proposals must be approved by a teacher and his/her department coordinator and/or by two staff members, one of whom has proficient computer/technology skills.

In implementing the technology standard in any academic or elective areas, teachers will maintain a level of challenge and rigor to ensure our graduates leave the Watertown Public Schools with technology skills they will need in the future.

The curricula of the following courses meet the requirements of the Watertown High School Technology Performance Standard. If students pass one of the following courses, they may achieve the technology performance standard.

1. Advanced Computers
2. Advanced World Languages (Spanish, French, Latin)
3. C++
4. CAD II, III
5. DECA II
6. Economics
7. Electronics II, III
8. Graphic Arts II, III
9. Independent Study
10. Interdepartmental Publishing
11. Metals II, III
12. Photography
13. Statistics

## **Graduation Requirements – Citizenship/Community Interaction**

### D. Citizenship/Community Interaction

A School/Community Interaction Committee will design and provide opportunities for students to work in the Watertown/surrounding community. A total of twenty hours will be required over four years. (The intent of this program is to complete five hours each year.) In order to plan and match students to the needs of various volunteer groups, Watertown High School administrators and staff will contact the appropriate local agencies.

## **Graduation Requirements - Notifications**

### E. Notifications

#### Teachers:

At the beginning of the school year, the Guidance Department will provide to teachers a list of all seniors who have not met the performance standard in each of the four areas or been exempted through standardized test scores. Teachers will be notified of CAPT exemptions upon their receipt in October.

#### Parents/Guardians and Students:

At the beginning of the school year, each junior and senior shall be notified by his/her guidance counselor of his/her status relative to meeting the performance standards for graduation.

Each September, parents of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders will be notified of their child's status relative to meeting the performance standards for graduation.

Watertown High School will notify parents by certified mail that their child has not met one or more performance standard at the end of the junior year.

Continuing current practice, parents of 10<sup>th</sup> graders are notified of their child's CAPT results in the fall of their junior year.

Students in grades 7, 8, and 9 will be given practice assessments for the writing, mathematics, and technology performance standards.

#### Notification of Successful Completion:

At the end of each marking term, if a performance standard has been met, it will be noted on a student's transcript. Students will be so notified by their guidance counselors.