

KENTUCKY EDGUIDES | CORE PROGRAMS 2.4

High Schools

Nearly all Kentucky high schools serve grades 9-12: just a few start with earlier grades. The exact choice is up to the local board of education.

HOW IS HIGH SCHOOL LIKELY TO DIFFER FROM MIDDLE SCHOOL?

The biggest change is that students choose their classes from a school’s master schedule, working to earn the credits they need for graduation and implement their Individual Learning Plans (ILP). State regulation requires 22 credits:

SUBJECTS	MINIMUM CREDITS
Language Arts	4
Mathematics	3
Science	3
Social Studies	3
Arts & Humanities	1
Health	1/2
Physical Education	1/2
Electives Linked to Career Interests and ILP	4
Other Electives	3
Total	22

Local school districts can require additional credits beyond the minimum of 22, and students who want to go on to a Kentucky public university will need 2 credits of world language. In addition, though students only need 3 math credits, they are required to take a math course in every year of high school. In Kentucky’s seven districts of innovation, there may be alternate ways for students to earn these required credits.

Some other elements of high school are quite similar to middle school, including:

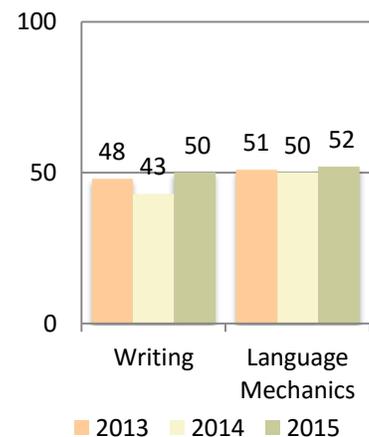
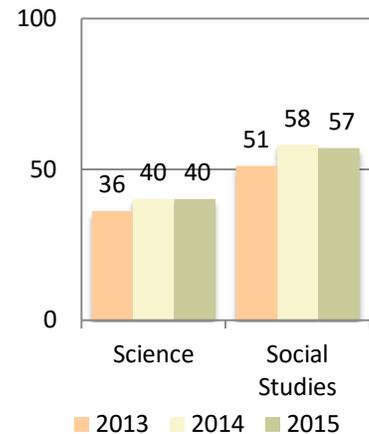
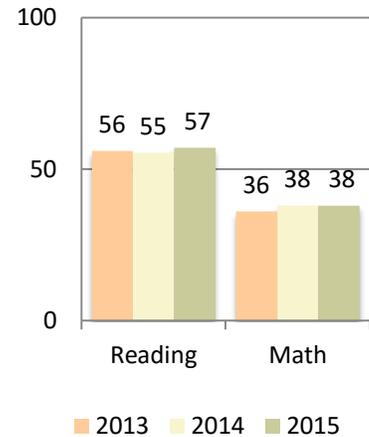
- ⑤ Keeping and updating an Individual Learning Plan (ILP)
- ⑤ Special education services for students with disabilities based on each student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP)
- ⑤ Support for gifted and talented students based on each student’s Gifted Student Service Plan (GSSP)
- ⑤ Extended School Services (ESS) for struggling students
- ⑤ Accelerated learning for students who score below needed benchmarks on the ACT. (Kentucky is expected to adopt a grade 10 readiness for use in future years, and that test will also be used to identify students for accelerated learning, replacing the Plan test last given in 2014-15.)

HOW CAN STUDENTS EARN HIGH SCHOOL CREDITS?

Increasingly, students have choices about how they will earn those needed credits:

SEEING RESULTS

These graphs show the percent of high school students scoring proficient or higher on K-PREP assessments:



For example:

⑤ Most high schools still define a credit by the time spent in class: passing a course that takes 120 hours of class-time counts as one “Carnegie Unit” and earns one credit. However, some high schools are now implementing performance-based credits, in which students earn credits based on mastery of the content and skills defined in the course standards, not just seat time or time in the classroom.

⑤ Some credits that count for high school can also count for college. State law requires that every district offer at least four such courses. Those may be Advanced Placement courses with a year-end test to show college-level understanding. They may also be courses taken at nearby colleges or given at the high school by teachers who meet college-level requirements.

⑤ Digital learning is another option. Students can take courses taught solely by on-line teachers or hybrid courses that combine on-line work with face-to-face teaching. The Kentucky Virtual Campus for K-12 Students (www.kyvc4k12.org) allows students to register for courses offered by Kentucky Educational Television, JCPSeSchool, or the Barren Academy of Virtual and Expanded Learning (BAVEL).

⑤ Technical centers offer high school courses for their district or a multi-district area (see the Career Technical Students EdGuide for more information).

⑤ The Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science in Kentucky offers a residential program where students spend their junior and senior years at Western Kentucky University taking college classes in math, science, and other subjects, with more information at wku.edu/academy.

⑤ The Craft Academy for Excellence in Science and Mathematics will open in August 2015, with more information at www.moreheadstate.edu/craft-academy.

LEARNING MORE

Learn more about Individual Learning Plans by visiting education.ky.gov and searching for “ILP.”

Added information on how Kentucky schools serve students can be found in other Kentucky EdGuides offered at www.prichardcommittee.org, including those on:

- Students Who Need Added Support
- Students with Disabilities
- Students Ready for Added Challenge
- Poverty and Nonacademic Barriers to Learning
- Digital learning and School Technology
- Student Conduct and Discipline
- School Safety

ARE STUDENTS REQUIRED TO FINISH HIGH SCHOOL?

No, though a high school diploma is an important step for success in careers and other adult activities. Kentucky law requires all students to stay in school until age 16, but most school boards require students to stay until age 18. Starting with the 2017-18 school year, attendance until age 18 will be required statewide.

CAN STUDENTS GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL EARLY?

Yes, students can graduate early if they earn proficient scores on the four K-PREP end-of-course tests and Kentucky college-readiness benchmark scores on the ACT. Students who choose this option receive a one-time scholarship for part of their college costs and can receive KEES funding equivalent to what they would have earned over four years of high school. For more information, ask questions at your local high school or go to www.education.ky.gov and search for “early graduation.”

HOW ARE KENTUCKY HIGH SCHOOLS FUNDED?

Kentucky has no funds designated specifically for high schools, but the statewide SEEK fund combines state and local dollars to cover the major costs, and the work of high schools is also supported by targeted state and federal funding:

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see the EdGuides on State Funding and on the SEEK Formula for more information. In 2013, Kentucky schools had an average of \$9,266 in state and local revenue per student, clearly below the national average of \$11,254.

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