

**PINELLAS COUNTY SCHOOLS** **MEMO**

December, 2006

TO: All Holders of the Policy Manual of the Pinellas County School Board

FROM: Allen Mortimer, Director of Planning and Policy

SUBJECT: **SUPPLEMENT NO. 38 TO THE POLICY MANUAL OF JUNE 30, 1998**

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Please update your Policy Manual as follows:

**REMOVE PAGE(S)**

1 - 5 thru 1 - 8  
4 - 59 thru 4 - 62  
5 - 39 thru 5 - 60

**INSERT PAGE(S)**

1 - 5 thru 1 - 8  
4 - 59 thru 4 - 62  
5 - 39 thru 5 - 60

**1.07 FAMILY AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT**

This amendment will allow Title I schools to purchase food items for parent training.

**4.18 STUDENT HONORS**

This amendment clarifies weighted and unweighted grade point average requirements in National Junior Honor Society for middle school students and National Honor Society for high school students.

**5.13 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: HIGH SCHOOL**

This amendment will allow students to progress through high school at their own pace; eliminates the restriction on how many credits a high school student may earn in a school year; clarifies full time enrollment requirements in high school, and allows dual enrollment high school students to take courses on the St. Petersburg College campus.

**1.07 FAMILY AND SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT****(1) Parent/Family Involvement (See also 1.06 BELIEFS ABOUT PARENT/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT)**

(a) The Pinellas County School Board recognizes that a child's education is a responsibility shared by the school and family. To support the school district's strategic direction of highest student achievement for all students and to educate all students effectively, the schools and parents must work together as knowledgeable partners. The District shall foster and support active parent involvement by using the components listed below including, but not limited to, the following implementation strategies:

(b) Although parents are diverse in culture, language and needs, they share the school's commitment to the educational success of their children. Pinellas County Schools, in collaboration with parents, shall establish programs and practices that enhance parent involvement and reflect the specific needs of students and their families.

(c) To this end, the Pinellas County School Board supports the development, implementation and regular evaluation of a parent involvement program in each school to involve parents at all grade levels in a variety of roles. The parent involvement programs will be comprehensive and collaborative in nature. The program will adhere to the following components of successful parent involvement programs:

1. Communication between home and school is regular, two-way and meaningful.
2. Responsible parenting is promoted and supported.
3. Parents play an integral role in assisting student learning.
4. Parents are welcome in the school, and their support and assistance are sought.
5. Parents are full partners in the educational decisions that affect children and families.
6. Community resources are made available to strengthen school programs, family practices and student learning.

(d) The Pinellas County School Board supports professional development opportunities for staff members to enhance understanding of effective parent involvement strategies. The Board also recognizes the importance of administrative leadership in setting expectations and creating a climate conducive to parental participation. Engaging parents is essential to improved student achievement.

(e) School personnel will treat parents and students with respect and courtesy. Parents are expected to treat school personnel courteously and respectfully, and instill this kind of behavior in their children.

(f) Professional development opportunities will be made available to administrators, teachers and staff to promote family friendly schools and enhance family and community partnerships.

(g) For the purposes of this policy, the term "parent" refers to any adult – mother, father, older sibling, aunt, uncle, grandparent, guardian, mentor – who plays a significant role in the care of a student or students enrolled in Pinellas County Schools.

(h) When the term "school" is used in this policy, it is used in the broadest possible sense. It refers not only to the customary kindergarten through grade 12 programs, but also to the early childhood, adult education, and charter school programs.

(i) When federal guidelines permit such use, federal funds may be used to purchase food items when used to support parent training and meetings.

(2) **Statutory Requirement.** As required by the Florida's Family and School Partnership for Student Achievement Act each school board must adopt policies that strengthen family involvement in education. These policies must be developed with input from teachers, administrators, families, students, and key community based organizations and businesses. The policies must address the following four areas:

**(a) Opportunities for parental involvement in the development, implementation, and evaluation of family involvement programs. The district will:**

1. Encourage parents to become active participants of the School Advisory Councils (SAC), PTA, support organizations and school-based committees. At the District level, parent involvement

opportunities will include various District planning committees, District Monitoring and Advisory Committee (DMAC), Title I District Advisory Council, countywide SAC organization and Pinellas County Council of PTAs. In these roles, parents will be able to participate in meetings and resolve problems.

2. Use a variety of communication tools on a regular basis to facilitate two-way interaction between the home and the school. The use of best practices for parent/teacher conferences will be expected (by accentuating the positive with opportunities for improvement) and school personnel will use flexible and creative methods to accommodate the schedules of parents. Immediate contact between parent and teacher should occur when concerns arise.

3. Encourage communications with parents regarding positive student behavior and achievement.

4. Provide staff training on effective communication techniques, parent/teacher conferences, and the importance of regular two-way communication between the school and the family.

5. Make a reasonable effort to reach out to all parents, not just those who attend parent meetings.

6. Make a reasonable effort to assist parents in understanding the needs and rights of their exceptional children.

7. Direct schools to offer support to parents regarding educational issues. Parent Advocates will serve as liaisons between families and schools, train parents in effective communication skills and provide support to parents responding to educational issues.

8. Distribute a student expectations guide to parents at the beginning of the school year outlining grade level expectations and suggestions of how parents can foster learning at home.

9. Make available information and provide opportunities to guide parents on ways to assist with homework, give feedback to teachers, and how parents can help their children improve skills and perform well on assessments.

10. Publish a parent guide annually and make it available to parents providing information needed to make decisions about their child's education and how to assist in their child's progress.

11. Make a reasonable effort to communicate with parents in their primary language or in the language in which they feel comfortable.

**(b) Opportunities for parents to participate on school advisory councils and in school volunteer programs and other activities.** The Community Involvement Program will administer a program to utilize parent volunteers at the school and district level, provide ample training on volunteer procedures and school protocol, tutor and mentor training and encourage parent participation in school and related activities. School staff has a responsibility to involve parents in the school's decision-making efforts. Likewise, parents have a responsibility to contact the school and seek out ways in which they might participate in and influence decisions that will affect the children. Furthermore, the district will:

1. Provide parents with current information regarding changes in school policies, discipline, assessment tools, and student and school performance data. The district will encourage parents to participate as partners when setting school goals, developing or evaluating programs and policies, or responding to performance data.

2. Encourage and support the formation of PTAs or other parent groups in order to identify and respond to issues of interest to parents.

3. Direct each school to work with parents and school staff to develop a unique plan to incorporate parent/family involvement in the individual School Improvement Plans.

4. Encourage parents to be involved in the development, implementation and annual evaluation of the parent involvement program as outlined in the School Improvement Plan, and to be included as members of School Improvement Teams.

5. Encourage parents to visit their schools for beginning of the year events such as "Back-to-School Night," "Open House" and new student orientations. These events will be used to disseminate information on school policies, discipline procedures, assessment tools and school goals.

6. Encourage parents to attend additional activities (such as parent workshops and training) throughout the year.

7. Direct schools to make the school building a welcoming place, clearly accessible to parents.

**(c) Links with community services. The district will:**

1. Afford opportunities for school personnel, students and parents to learn about different cultures, cultural practices and cultural preferences so that understanding and communication can be promoted.

2. Provide the Family/Multicultural Center to serve as a resource center providing parents information and training opportunities to learn about parenting skills, health, safety, nutrition, home environments that support education and other topics of child and adolescent development.

3. Distribute information to students and parents regarding cultural, recreational, academic, health, social and other resources that serve families within the community.

4. Seek the active participation of area businesses, agencies and faith-based organizations to encourage community support of our schools, through financial, goods and services, and volunteer contributions.

5. Encourage members of the community to participate in the volunteer programs at their local school.

6. Develop partnerships with local organizations, such as the Juvenile Welfare Board, the Pinellas Education Foundation, community agencies, local city and county governments, and faith-based organizations to advance student learning and assist schools and families. Student participation in community service will be encouraged.

7. Seek and foster partnerships with outside business, community and faith-based organizations, such as the Pinellas Education Foundation, to sponsor student incentive programs such as Doorways and S.A.V.E.

**(d) Parental choices and responsibilities. The district will:**

1. Provide Family Education and Information Centers to serve as information centers offering parents the opportunity to register children for school, learn about the many programs and school choices available in the district, including countywide magnet and fundamental programs, academies, ESE, ESOL programs, Title I and other academic support programs.

2. Expect parents to recognize that their right to access does not transcend the rights of students and teachers to an orderly instructional environment.

3. Encourage parents to become involved in the education of their children.

**(3) No Child Left Behind (NCLB)**

(a) The district will implement the strategies outlined in this policy to integrate parent involvement into school improvement plans. Additional strategies to include direct consultation with parents and the inclusion of these parents as members of the District's planning committees formed to implement NCLB will ensure parent involvement activities improve student academic achievement and school performance.

(b) The Family Service Team, chaired by the Supervisor of Community Involvement and comprised of parents, teachers, principals, District personnel, and community agency representatives, will coordinate the district's parent/family involvement efforts, provide technical assistance, direction and support to assist schools in planning and implementing effective parent involvement strategies.

(c) The district will implement school based monitoring of parent participation to evaluate the effectiveness of increased parent participation. The Superintendent will report the findings to the School Board and the Department of Education and will make the findings available to the community on an

annual basis. The district will use the findings in designing new strategies for parent/family involvement and school improvement.

(d) Pinellas County Schools is committed to setting high expectations that result in highest student achievement and believes that while parent/family involvement is not a substitute for high quality educational programs, effective instruction or systemic research-based school improvement, it is a critical component of an effective school. The district encourage development of additional parent/family involvement strategies and, encourages the use of practices suggested for successful programs such as outlined in the guidelines of the National PTA *National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs*.

Statutory Authority: 1001.32(2), 1001.41, 1001.42, 1001.43 F.S.

Laws Implemented: 1002.23 F.S.

History: New 4/13/04; Amended 12/12/06

(6) In each instance in which a student's record is transferred out of the school system, the school system shall retain a complete copy of the student's academic record, together with all other confidential information and reports. An orderly process of microfilming of such records for central storage and retrieval shall meet this requirement.

(7) Under no circumstances shall students working in school offices have access to student records.

(8) The Superintendent shall provide, within a handbook entitled STUDENT EDUCATION RECORDS, additional guidelines to implement the statutes, regulations and policies pertaining to student records.

Statutory Authority: 1001.32(2), 1001.41, 1001.42, 1001.43 F.S.

Laws Implemented: 1001.41, 232.23 F.S.; 6A-1.0955 SBE Rules...

History: New 7/28/65; Amended 7/13/68, 2/27/74; Revised and Amended 12/18/74; Amended 6/30/76, 8/23/78, 5/12/82, 6/30/98, 6/15/04

Note: Former 6Gx52-8.22 (changed 6/30/98)

## 4.18 STUDENT HONORS

### (1) Elementary:

(a) **Honor Roll:** Students in grades 3 - 5 who receive no grade lower than a "B" in the academic subjects, and who achieve all "E's"/"V's"/"S's" in grades for conduct, work habits, physical education, art and music shall have their names entered on the Honor Roll.

(b) **Principal's List:** Students in grades 3 - 5 who receive all "A's" in the academic subjects, and who achieve all "E's"/"V's"/"S's" in grades for conduct, work habits, physical education, art and music shall have their names entered on the Principal's List.

### (2) Secondary:

(a) **Honor Roll:** Students who achieve an unweighted grade point average of 3.0 with not more than one grade of "C" during a grading period shall have their names entered on the Honor Roll.

(b) **Dean's List:** Students who achieve an unweighted grade point average of 4.0 during a grading period shall have their names entered on the Dean's List.

#### (c) **National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society**

1. The National Honor Society shall be open only to juniors and seniors in the Pinellas County high schools. National Junior Honor Society shall be open only to students in grade eight in Pinellas County middle schools.

2. Students shall be inducted into the National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society according to the school bylaws which have been enacted in accordance with the National Honor Society and National Junior Honor Society constitution and the criteria established in these administrative procedures.

3. The number of inductees cannot be limited.

4. Students who have attended the school for less than one semester must have a recommendation from their former principal or have the faculty council waive this provision.

5. *Academic Achievement:*

a. National Junior Honor Society: A minimum overall cumulative grade point average of 3.5 (not rounded) shall be required as a prerequisite for membership in National Junior Honor Society. The grade point average is calculated based on end-of-year final grades for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade combined.

b. National Honor Society: A minimum overall unweighted grade point average of 3.0 (not rounded) and a minimum overall weighted grade point average of 3.5 (not rounded) shall be required as a prerequisite for membership in National Honor Society.

c. All individual school chapters must use this grade point average standard and may not set a different standard.

d. A grade point average less than the minimum that could be rounded to the minimum shall not be acceptable.

6. *Selection Process Guidelines:*

a. Since membership in the National Honor Society is an honor conveyed by the school faculty, no student may serve on the faculty council.

b. The faculty council will create a list of all students with the necessary grade point average and notify those students.

c. Students who want to seek induction will complete and submit by the deadline a student activity form that outlines their leadership and service experiences. Other information may be required by school bylaws.

d. Faculty or Staff Recommendation:

(i) The evaluation instrument shall be measurable and quantifiable; i.e., a point score shall be established so that a negative evaluation shall not override more positive responses. A 3.5 average will be required in each area of service, leadership, and character. The faculty council will review the student's discipline record as listed in the computer.

(ii) A list of eligible students will be given to all teachers. Teachers may only evaluate students they have taught or worked with on a school or community activity sponsored by that teacher (i.e., cheerleaders, student council).

(iii) The selection procedures shall not allow a single, negative response to deny the admission of a student.

(iv) The evaluation instrument shall provide explanations for each low measurement. No anonymous or unwritten input will be considered. All information shall be signed and documented.

(v) All materials considered are student records and must be maintained as such. This information may be reviewed by the parent or student.

e. The faculty council creates the list of new members.

7. The honors shall be designated in the high school graduation program unless the student objects.

8. All appeals must follow the grievance procedure outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*.

9. Each school shall create, maintain, and notify students and parents of written criteria for dismissal.

**(d) Awarding Academic Letters And Chevrons:** Students who earn an unweighted grade point average of 3.75 or above and who receive not less than a "B" in each subject for a semester grade shall be eligible for an academic letter, and each such student who repeats the achievement in a subsequent semester(s) shall be eligible for a chevron for each such repetition, consistent with the following provisions:

1. *First Semester:* Students who become eligible for an academic letter during the first semester of the academic year shall be recognized, as deemed appropriate by the individual high school, and shall receive their letters as soon as possible after the data processing printout has been made available to the school. Such students shall also be recognized at the school's annual awards ceremony.

2. *Second Semester:* Students who become eligible for an academic letter during the second semester of the academic year shall be recognized, as deemed appropriate by the individual high school, and shall receive their letters at the beginning of the next academic year. Such students shall also be recognized at the school's annual awards ceremony.

3. *Second Semester Seniors:* High school students who become eligible for an academic letter during the second semester of their senior year shall have their letters mailed to them.

4. Each student who repeats the eligibility requirements for an academic letter shall receive a chevron for each such repetition, which shall be given to the student consistent with the above procedures.

Statutory Authority: 1001.32(2), 1001.41, 1001.42, 1001.43 F.S.

Laws Implemented: 1001.41, 1008.25 F.S.

History: Previous title: "National Honor Society," New 8/77; Amended 9/13/78, 2/8/84, 10/24/84, 7/25/84, 9/25/85, 9/9/87, 9/12/90, 7/28/93 (Emergency), 8/25/93; Previous title "Awarding of Academic Letters and Chevrons", New 7/9/86, Amended 8/8/90, 7/12/95, 6/30/98, 10/12/99, 2/10/04, 11/14/06

Note: Former 6Gx52-8.30 (changed 6/30/98)

#### **4.19 FLORIDA'S BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

(1) Florida's Bright Futures Scholarship program is administered through the Financial Aid Department.

#### **(2) Community Service Work Experience for Florida Academic Scholars Award.**

**(a) Policy:** This policy addresses only community service work experience required for students to be eligible to receive the Florida Academic Scholars Award and does not address any community service that may be required in a course or other programs such as the Creativity, Action, Service (CAS) requirement of the IB program. This policy does not intend to restrict a student from using these hours to fulfill other requirements, if appropriate. (Note: community service work experience is not required for the Florida Medallion Scholars Award or Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars Award).

#### **(b) Requirements:**

1. To be eligible to receive the Florida Academic Scholars Award a student must complete a program of community service work that includes a "minimum of 75 hours of community service work."

2. The student will identify a social problem that interests him or her, develop a plan of personal involvement in addressing the problem and evaluate and reflect upon the experience.

3. The community service work shall address a social problem in the state of Florida with preference to benefiting Pinellas County.

4. All hours must address the same social problem. The service may be performed at more than one agency if the same social problem is being addressed; however, each agency needs to be approved by the high school's community service designee.

5. The high school's community service designee must approve the student's plan prior to the beginning of the experience.

6. The student must be a high school student enrolled in grades 9-12.

**(c) Procedures:** The following steps are the process that the student will use for documenting the community service experience.

1. Meet with the community service designee at the student's high school to discuss community service and complete form #1 (PCS2-2602-1).

2. Contact the community agency for an interview to discuss the community service work and to develop the student's schedule of hours.

3. Complete form #2 (PCS2-2602-2) after developing a detailed identification of the social problem.

4. Submit community service form #2 (PCS form 2-2602-2) to the community service designee at the high school for approval.

5. Log community service hours on form #3 (PCS form 2-2602-3). The agency contact person must sign this documentation.

6. Summarize, evaluate and reflect upon the community service work experience and the persons in the community that the student interacted with during this service work. Submit this information to the high school community service designee by completing community service form #4(PCS form 2-2602-4).

**(d) Restrictions:** What hours cannot be counted?

1. Hours logged prior to the high school community service designee's approval and signature.

2. Court mandated community service.

3. High school work program and Executive Internship program hours.

4. Classroom hours.

5. Hours logged at "for Profit" organizations (certain exceptions apply such as nursing homes).

6. An activity for which a student is personally compensated either financially or with some other material benefit.

7. Simple, tedious and repetitive work, like returning library books to the shelves.

8. All forms of duty within the family.

9. Religious devotion or any activity which can be interpreted primarily as proselytizing.

10. An activity where there is no leader or responsible adult on site to evaluate and confirm student performance.

11. Coaching (not to be confused with PARC, UPARC and Special Olympics).

12. Working as a teacher assistant or with students in non-academic classes, clubs or groups.

**(e) Approved Project List:** The Financial Aid Department shall maintain a list of the types of community service projects that are approved.

**(f) Appeals:** If a proposed plan is not approved by a high school's community service designee, the student may appeal the denial to the Bright Futures Community Service Appeals Committee,

**(3) Transfer of College Credit or Credits Earned Outside Pinellas County Schools:** Credit for high school graduation shall not be granted a Pinellas County student for courses taken in a high school that does not meet the guidelines outlined in subsection (2) except under conditions 1-5 of paragraph (a) of that subsection, or for courses completed in college, except in a Pinellas County School Board approved dual credit program. Such schoolwork shall be evaluated, however, to determine if the student should be placed at a higher level.

**(4) Transfer of St. Petersburg College Credits Earned During Home Education:** St. Petersburg College credits earned by home education students will be accepted toward high school graduation since SPC is SACs accredited. An official college transcript must be provided to the high school so that credits from the school which delivered the instruction (SPC vs. the school of record – home education) may be accepted.

**(5) Transfer of Correspondence Credits:** The district shall accept correspondence credits earned by students living in wilderness areas where correspondence credit and itinerant teachers are an integral part of the state's educational system.

**(6) Correspondence Credit Provisions:** Students who have completed two full years in high school may earn one (1) credit per school calendar year by correspondence under the following conditions:

(a) Prior approval is obtained from the principal.

(b) The correspondence course is taken from the University of Florida or a school, which is accredited by a regional accrediting agency under the governance of National Study of School Evaluation to grant high school credit for correspondence course work.

(c) The student presents an official transcript indicating successful course completion to the high school principal or designee.

(d) A maximum of two credits may be earned via correspondence for high school graduation.

**(7) Acceptance of Early Admission to College Credits:** A student who enters college prior to graduation from high school may be awarded a high school diploma upon successful completion of the first year of college, provided that prior arrangements have been made with the school principal and the student meets all the provisions of the Pinellas County Schools Early Admissions to College application PCS Form 2-2446. In order to be eligible to receive a Pinellas County high school diploma the student must have been enrolled in a Pinellas County high school for the entire semester prior to participation in the early admission program. (See also 5.13 (5)(b)).

**(8) Transfer of Area Vocational and Technical School Credit:** High school students attending specialized courses at area vocational or technical schools shall be given credit for such courses toward graduation requirements.

**(9) Acceptance of Adult High School Credit:** When a student sixteen (16) years of age or older withdraws from a regular day high school program and enters an adult high school program and later desires to re-enter a regular day high school, the student shall be re-admitted with the permission of the principal, and the school shall accept the transfer of all credits earned in state-approved adult high schools, provided all other Board requirements are met and provided further that the student will be

enrolled for at least one full semester before graduation from the regular day high school to which the student wishes to return.

**(10) In order to have credits awarded:** A student who wished to have credits transferred to a Pinellas County high school from any educational institution as outlined in subsections (2) through (8) of this policy shall provide an official transcript of completed course work in such educational institution. The official transcript(s) shall include the grading scale used by the transferring school(s).

Statutory Authority: 1001.32(2), 1001.41, 1001.42, 1001.43 F.S.

Laws Implemented: 230.22, 232.03, 232.032, 232.25 F.S.; 6A-1.095 SBE Rules

History: New 7/28/65; Amended 11/17/71, 2/27/74; Revised 12/18/74; Amended 8/23/78, 7/11/79, 8/27/80, 12/3/80, 6/10/81, 7/13/83, 2/8/84, 12/18/85, 6/25/86, 9/24/86, 9/23/87, 5/25/88, 2/8/89, 9/27/89, 1/24/90, 6/13/90, 8/8/90, 1/9/91, 4/8/92, 6/23/93, 6/27/95, 1/10/96, 6/30/98, 6/29/99, 10/10/00, 12/9/03, 6/21/05

Note: Former (portion) 6Gx52-8.17 (changed 6/30/98)

## 5.13 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS: HIGH SCHOOL

**(1) Graduation Defined:** Graduation from a Pinellas County high school implies that students have satisfactorily completed the prescribed high school core curriculum in accordance with the provisions of 5.11 and that they have satisfactorily passed any examinations and other requisites set by the State Board of Education and the Pinellas County School Board. These requirements are based on the assumption that a high school education represents the successful completion of a four (4) year program of studies, with enough flexibility to allow qualified students other alternatives for graduation. High school credits earned in grades 7 and 8 will apply to graduation requirements but will not be used for acceleration of graduation.

**(2) Standard Diploma:** (See also paragraph (f) Progress Toward Graduation Based on 4x4 High School Schedule)

*(a) Number of Credits Required for Graduation:* The minimum number of credits required for graduation from high school is twenty-four (24) in the six period schedule high school and twenty-nine (29) in the 4x4 schedule high school. Students may also select the three-year eighteen (18) credit standard college preparatory program or three-year eighteen (18) credit career preparatory program (for eighteen (18) credit options see subsection (n) GPA Requirement and paragraph (4) Accelerated Graduation). Students in their third year in the eighteen (18) credit option program may participate in senior activities directly related to graduation but are not eligible for participation in other senior activities or privileges.

### 1. Graduation Program Options

- a. Four-year twenty-four (24) credit program or twenty-nine (29) credits in a 4x4 schedule high school.
- b. Three-year eighteen (18) credit standard college preparatory program.
- c. Three-year eighteen (18) credit career preparatory program.

## 2. Selection of a Graduation Program Option

- a. Students make their initial selection of a graduation program option while in 8<sup>th</sup> grade during the spring high school registration process.
- b. A student must achieve at least a level 3 on the most recent FCAT reading, mathematics and writing assessments in order to select an 18 credit accelerated graduation program option.
- c. If a three-year eighteen (18) credit graduation program option is selected, the parent or guardian and student must both sign the *Standard Diploma Option Selection Form*. If the form is not signed to select an eighteen (18) credit graduation program option, then the student is automatically classified as a four year twenty-four (24) credit (or twenty-nine (29) credits in 4x4 high schools) diploma graduation program student.

## 3. Procedure for Changing the Graduation Program Option

- a. A student may change their graduation program option only once per year while in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grades. The change must be made during the spring registration for courses for the next school year. A parent or guardian's signature is required in order for a student to change their graduation program option. A student may not choose an 18 credit graduation option after the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year. New students to the district may choose an 18 credit graduation option until the end of the first semester of 10<sup>th</sup> grade.
- b. During the 11<sup>th</sup> grade year (3<sup>rd</sup> year of high school enrollment), the school district's Dropout Prevention office or the Directors of School Operations may initiate a request for a change of graduation program option on behalf of a student due to extenuating circumstances. Such request must be approved in writing by the student's parent or guardian. During their 3<sup>rd</sup> year of enrollment in high school, a student-initiated request for a change of their graduation program option will not be approved.

## 4. Failure to Complete the 18 credit Graduation Program within Three Years

- a. A student who selects a three-year 18 credit graduation program option and does not meet the specific program requirements within three years, automatically reverts to the four-year 24 credit (or 29 credits in a 4x4 high school) graduation program option.
- b. An 18 credit student who does not score at level 3 or higher on the grade 10 FCAT writing assessment, or achieve 5 credits by the end of grade 9 or 11 credits by the end of grade 10 will be reassigned to the 24 or 29 credit program option.

**(b) Specific Credit Requirements for Graduation:** (See 1003.43(1) F.S. for specific content requirements of designated courses.)

1. A student must complete the core curriculum by earning the following high school credits or complete the International Baccalaureate curriculum to be eligible for graduation:

*English* - 4 credits

*Social Studies* - 3 credits American history is required for one of the social studies credits. In addition, world history is required for one (1) credit, American government for one-half (1/2) credit, and economics for one-half (1/2) credit.

*Mathematics* - 3 credits (Includes one credit of algebra 1, a series of equivalent courses or a higher level mathematics course if the algebra requirement was satisfied prior to ninth grade for students entering grade 9 in 1997-98 or subsequent years.)

*Science* - 3 credits Upon completion of the JROTC Naval Science program, including Naval Science I, II, and III, students may substitute on a curriculum equivalency basis one JROTC credit for Physical Science (2003310) to satisfy one of the three science requirements. Agriscience Foundations I counts as one of the three required science credits.

*Physical Education* - 1 credit. Includes 1/2 credit of personal fitness and 1/2 credit of a physical education course that consists of both basic knowledge and skill related activities. A student entering ninth grade during 1999-2000 and subsequent years can satisfy a full credit of physical education by participating in an interscholastic sport approved by FHSAA for two full seasons at the junior varsity or varsity level and passing a competency test on personal fitness with a score of "C" or better. Students will have only one opportunity to pass the test. Satisfactory completion and approval of PCS Form 2-2782 is needed for this substitution. Satisfying the personal fitness and the physical education course in this manner does not decrease the minimum number of credits needed for graduation since no course credit or grade is earned through sports.

Beginning with the 2002-03 school year students may participate in a marching band class or a physical activity class that requires participation in marching band activities as an extracurricular activity to satisfy the requirement of 1/2 credit of a physical education course. Beginning with the 2003-04 school year, completion of a JROTC class that includes a significant component of drills will satisfy the requirement of the 1/2 credit of a physical education course. Students must earn a "C" or higher in the class. Participation in marching band or JROTC may **not** be used to satisfy the personal fitness 1/2 credit requirement or the adaptive physical education requirement under an IEP or 504 plan.

All High School physical education courses should be staffed by certified physical education teachers. Physical education shall consist of physical activities of at least a moderate intensity level and for a duration sufficient to provide a significant health benefit to students, subject to the differing capabilities of students. The physical education program will reflect the following program outcomes that are developmentally appropriate for the high school student:

- a. Students will demonstrate competency in many movement forms and proficiency in a few forms of physical activity.
- b. Students will apply movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of motor skills.
- c. Students will understand that regular participation in physical activity provides a major component in personal fitness and wellness.
- d. Students will achieve and maintain a health enhancing level of physical fitness.
- e. Students will demonstrate responsible personal and social behavior in physical activity.

f. Students will understand how participating in physical activity promotes inclusion and an understanding of the abilities and cultural diversity of people.

g. Students will understand that physical activity provides the opportunity for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression and communication.

*Life Management Skills* - 1/2 credit with content as defined in 1003.43(1)(i) F.S. Upon completion of the Army JROTC Leadership Education and Training courses I and II or the Marine Corp JROTC Leadership Education courses I and II, students may substitute, on a curriculum equivalency basis, one JROTC credit for .5 credit of health life management skills. These courses must contain all requirements specified in Sections 232.246 and 233.067 F.S.

*Performing Arts/Practical Arts* – 1 credit

Either:

1 credit of performing fine arts selected from music, dance, drama, an art form requiring manual dexterity, speech or debate

or

1 credit of practical arts/career and technical education or exploratory career and technical education

or

1/2 credit performing fine arts

and

1/2 credit of practical arts/career and technical education or exploratory career and technical educational.

Students must be scheduled into ninth grade performing fine arts or practical arts, career and technical education or exploratory career and technical education courses as a priority. Students may satisfy the practical arts graduation requirement on a curriculum equivalency basis upon completion of any JROTC program or Journalism I, II, III, or IV.

## 2. Level 1 Courses, Remedial Courses, Non-academic Activities and Community Service Work

a. Level 1 Courses: A student will not be placed in a Level 1 course for graduation credit unless the student's assessment indicates that a more rigorous course of study is inappropriate to meet the student's needs. A written assessment of the need must be included in the student's AIP or IEP.

b. Remedial Courses: Remedial instruction provided during high school may not be in lieu of English and mathematics credits required for graduation.

c. Nonacademic Activities: Credit for high school graduation may be earned for volunteer activities and nonacademic activities that have been approved by the State Board of Education.

d. Community Service Work: Students may earn credit towards graduation by completing voluntary community service work or school service work. Credit may be earned by passing a one-half (1/2) credit elective social studies course and/or a one-half (1/2) credit elective course as designated by the district. Students must complete 75 hours of service for each one-half (1/2) credit and meet other guidelines established by the district. Community Service credits may not be used for acceleration of graduation. The community service project site will be selected (within the district guidelines) by the student. Each participating student must meet the community service requirements specified in section

1003.43(1)(k) of Florida Statutes. Credit may not be earned for community service provided as a result of court action. (See also policy 4.19 Florida's Bright Futures Scholarship Program)

***(c) Career and Technical Education Course Substitutions to Fulfill Graduation Requirements:***

1. Any student in grades 9 through 12 who enrolls in and satisfactorily completes a job preparatory program listed below may substitute credit for a portion of the required four credits in English, three credits in mathematics, or three credits in science as specified.

2. The credit substituted for English, mathematics, or science earned through the vocational job preparatory program shall be on a curriculum equivalency basis. Vocational course substitution may not exceed two (2) credits in each subject area. A program, which has been used to substitute in one subject area, may not be used to substitute for any other subject area.

3. Job preparatory programs which have been identified as being the equivalent of Business English I (#1001440), Business English II (#1001450), Business Mathematics (#1205540), Pre-Algebra (#1200300) General Science (#2002310), and Anatomy and Physiology (#2000350) are listed below:

a. Business English I: Accounting Operations 8203300, Administrative Assistant 8212000, and Business Supervision and Management 8215100.

b. Business English I and/or Business English II: Administrative Assistant 8212000.

c. Business Mathematics: Administrative Assistant 8212000, Business Computer Programming 8206300, PC Support Services 8207200, Business Supervision and Management 8215100, Accounting Operations 8203300, Academy of International Business 8216100.

d. Pre-Algebra: Electronics 8730000.

e. General Science: Nursery & Floriculture Operations 8121200, Environmental Horticulture 8121500, Natural Resources & Forest Ecology 8118200 and Animal Science 8106100.

f. Anatomy and Physiology: Allied Health Assisting 84171310, Electrocardiograph Aide 84171610, First Responder 84171710, Home Health Aide 8417190, Nursing Assistant 84172110 and Health Unit Coordinator 84171810.

4. A student who completes a job preparatory program and substitutes part of that program for Business Mathematics, Business English, Business English II, General Science or Anatomy and Physiology may not take these courses and receive additional credit.

**5. Business Technology Education Program Guidelines**

a. Business English I and Business English II are yearlong courses for vocational students. Students who earn a full credit in both of these courses may substitute them for English III and IV. Students who earn credit only in Business English I must take English III as their fourth English credit. Students who complete only one semester of Business English I must take one semester of English III to complete their third English credit and a full year of English IV to complete their fourth English credit.

b. Business Mathematics satisfies one year of the mathematics requirement for graduation. Since Business Mathematics is a level 1 course (waiver required) and does not prepare a student to meet the algebra requirement for graduation, it is recommended that students take this course as their third mathematics credit only when a more rigorous course would not be appropriate. Business Technology Education program completers may use course substitution for this course as outlined in the Florida Course Code Directory and Instructional Personnel Assignments.

c. In determining program completers in Business Education, Keyboarding and Business Skills (8200320) and Computer and Business Skills (8200330) may be combined as a substitute for Business Systems and Technology I (8209020).

d. The first semester or a full year of Word Processing I (8212010) may be substituted for the second semester of Business Systems and Technology I (8209020) provided the equivalent Student Performance Standards have been met.

e. Practical Computer and Business Skills (8200330) may substitute for the first semester of Business Systems and Technology II (8209030) provided the equivalent Student Performance Standards have been met.

***(d) Exceptional Student Requirements:*** Exceptional students must meet the requirements outlined for high school students in the general education program to earn a standard diploma. Additional policies pertaining to exceptional student education are located in the Pinellas County Schools Special Programs and Procedures for Exceptional Students Handbook as referred in policy 5.17 Exceptional Student Education.

Access to a standard diploma for any exceptional student means that:

1. Exceptional students may enroll in any general education or exceptional student education course that is described in the Pinellas County Course Code Directory to meet graduation requirements. Courses with special diploma performance standards will count only as elective credit toward a standard diploma.

2. Course accommodations are provided as needed in regular and vocational courses as specified on the Individual Education Plan (IEP). Accommodations cannot change course performance standards.

3. Test accommodations for classroom, district and state test administration procedures are provided as needed in regular and vocational courses as specified on the Individual Education Plan (IEP).

4. Exceptional students (except gifted, vision impaired, or speech impaired only) may pursue a Special Diploma if they are unable to meet standard diploma requirements. The diploma decision must be made by the IEP team no later than the end of the first semester of eighth grade. This decision is reviewed at least annually by the IEP team. The decision may be changed, understanding that it may increase the amount of time required prior to graduation (see also 5.13 (5)).

***(e) Progress Toward Graduation in Regular High School Schedule:***

1. Progress toward graduation in grades 9-12 shall be based on passing the FCAT, mastery of subject matter by earning the required 24 credits and earning the required cumulative unweighted 2.0 GPA. Students progress through high school each year at their own pace. When a student accumulates a minimum of eighteen (18) high school credits, senior or 12<sup>th</sup> grade status will be granted.

2. Students scoring below Level 2 on FCAT Reading or Mathematics, below 4.0 on FCAT Writing or the district writing test, or below Level 2 on FCAT Science or the district science test will receive remediation and may be retained. Additional diagnostic assessments aligned to FCAT will be administered. Upon subsequent evaluation, if the documented deficiency has not been remediated in accordance with the academic improvement plan, the student may be retained.

3. No students may be assigned to a grade level based solely on age or other factors that constitute social promotion.

***(f) Progress Toward Graduation Based on a 4x4 High School Schedule:***

1. Minimum Number of Credits: The minimum number of credits required for graduation from high school shall be twenty-nine (29) for students entering 9th grade during 1997-98 and subsequent years.

2. Progress toward graduation in grades 9-12 shall be based on passing the FCAT, mastery of subject matter by earning the required 29 credits and earning the required cumulative unweighted 2.0 GPA. Students progress through high school each year at their own pace. When a student accumulates a minimum of twenty-one (21) high school credits, senior or 12<sup>th</sup> grade status will be granted.

3. Students scoring below Level 2 on FCAT Reading or Mathematics, below 4.0 on FCAT Writing or the district writing test, or below Level 2 on FCAT Science or the district science test will receive remediation and may be retained. Additional diagnostic assessments aligned to FCAT will be administered. Upon subsequent evaluation, if the documented deficiency has not been remediated in accordance with the academic improvement plan, the student may be retained.

4. No students may be assigned to a grade level based solely on age or other factors that constitute social promotion.

5. Students enrolled in a 4x4 schedule must meet all other requirements specified in paragraph (2) Standard Diploma.

***(g) Full Time Enrollment Requirement in Regular Schedule High School:*** Students shall be enrolled full time for at least six (6) credits during a school calendar year. A school calendar year includes first semester, second semester and coursework completed prior to July 1st of each year. Students may earn six (6) credits in the regular high school program, and additional credits in the Extended Learning Program, adult school, the Florida Virtual School or college dual credit. A student may also earn credit in a regionally accredited public or private summer term program.

Credits earned in summer term, the Extended Learning Program, the Florida Virtual School, college dual credit or adult school may not be used for the purpose of accelerating graduation except for students in the Early Graduation Option program or an approved Pinellas County Schools Dropout Prevention Program.

**(h) Full Time Enrollment Requirement in 4x4 High School Schedule:** Students shall be enrolled full time for at least eight (8) credits during a school calendar year. A school calendar year includes first semester, second semester and coursework completed prior to July 1st of each year. Students may earn eight (8) credits in the regular high school program, and additional credits in the Extended Learning Program, adult school, the Florida Virtual School or college dual credit. A student may also earn credit in a regionally accredited public or private summer term program.

Credits earned in summer term, the Extended Learning Program, the Florida Virtual School, college dual credit or adult school may not be used for the purpose of accelerating graduation except for students in the Early Graduation Option program or an approved Pinellas County School Dropout Prevention Program.

***(i) Credit Requirements for Students Transferring from Out-of-State:***

If a student enters from out-of-state with fewer than six (6) credits, but is classified as a tenth grade student, the student must earn eighteen (18) additional credits to graduate. If a student enters from out of state with fewer than twelve (12) credits but is classified as an eleventh grade student, the student must earn twelve (12) additional credits to graduate; these credits must include as many required subjects as possible in order to give greater emphasis to the academic subjects. If a student enters from out-of-state with fewer than eighteen (18) credits but is classified as a twelfth grade student, the student must earn six (6) additional credits to graduate; these credits must include as many required subjects as possible in order to give greater emphasis to the academic subjects. Credit requirements of students transferring between schools offering the 4x4 schedule will be handled in the same manner with eight credits required per year. For each such student transferring from out-of-state, "OUT-OF-STATE TRANSFER" should be entered in the comment section of the student academic history screen to explain the possibility of a student's graduating with fewer than the regularly required number of credits for graduation. (See also 5.12 Acceptance of Credits (2)).

***(j) High School Students in Adult High School:*** With the approval of the high school principal/designee, 24-credit standard diploma high school students who are within one (1) month of their sixteenth (16th) birthday or older may enroll in adult high school credit courses if any of the following apply:

1. A student who is in his third or fourth year of high school, is behind in earned credits, and cannot earn all needed credits in day school in time to graduate with his class, may enroll in a required subject area course he has not taken before for subject area credit.
2. A student who is in his third or fourth year of high school, is behind in earned credits and cannot earn all needed credits in day school in time to graduate with his class, may enroll in an elective course he has not taken before for elective credit.
3. A student needs forgiveness for a failed course.
4. A student with an un-weighted GPA of less than a 2.0 may enroll to replace a "D" grade with a grade of "C" or higher on a space available basis only.

5. Course work is needed to meet requirements of the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program Certificate or the Early Graduation Option program (EGO).

6. Under extenuating circumstances with approval of the principal and Director of School Operations.

**(k) High School Students in the Florida Virtual School:** With the approval of the high school principal/designee, high school students may enroll in course work beyond the regular school day/year through the Florida Virtual School. High schools may also build Florida Virtual School courses into their master schedules during the school day.

**(l) Additional Credit for Dropout Prevention Students:** A student enrolled in a Department of Education approved Pinellas County Schools Dropout Prevention Program may earn additional credit if enrolled in course modification classes and/or an after school work experience program and may be eligible to graduate in less than twelve (12) years (grades 1-12). Students enrolled in the school who have previously been retained one or more grades may be eligible to participate in an upgrade program. If a student is in an eighth grade upgrade, the student will be classified as a ninth grader and enrolled in high school credit courses which may include approved course modifications if the student remains at the discovery school for the entire year. Eighth grade students at the school not eligible for the upgrade program may earn up to 1.5 non-academic high school credits.

**(m) Summer Term Credits:** A student may earn high school credit by successfully completing a summer term course in a regionally accredited public or private summer term program.

The summer grades of students are acceptable as credit needed to meet graduation requirements provided the program meets the 120 class hours required by the State Department of Education and that the students shall have successfully completed an examination given by the school granting the credit.

**(n) GPA Requirement**

1. Students entering 9th grade before the 1997-98 school year must have a 1.5 unweighted GPA for all 24 credits required by state law for high school graduation. These students entering 9th grade before 1996-97 must, in addition to maintaining a minimum unweighted GPA of 1.5 for all courses required for graduation, either (1) maintain an unweighted GPA of 2.0 for all credits earned toward high school graduation requirements after July 1, 1997, or (2) if it is to the student's advantage, choose the option of a 2.0 unweighted overall GPA for all high school courses in the student's educational program, except those to which a forgiveness policy has been applied.

2. Students entering 9th grade during 1997-98 through 1999-2000 must achieve a cumulative unweighted grade point average of 2.0 or above on a 4.0 scale for all credits required for graduation to be eligible for a diploma. For diploma purposes, a grade point average of 1.950 or higher will be rounded to a 2.0.

3. Students entering 9th grade during 2000-2001 and subsequent years must achieve a cumulative unweighted grade point average of 2.0 or above on a 4.0 scale to be eligible for a diploma. All high school courses taken will be included in the GPA calculation unless the grade has been forgiven. For diploma purposes, a grade point average of 1.950 or higher will be rounded to a 2.0.

4. Students selecting either of the 18 credit three-year graduation program options must earn at least a cumulative weighted grade point average of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in the courses required for graduation.

**(o) *Statewide Assessment Program:*** Each student must meet the requirements of the Statewide Assessment Program and must earn a passing score in reading, mathematics and writing as measured by the FCAT to be eligible for a diploma. The FCAT also serves as the assessment of a high school student's readiness to enter the workforce. Exceptional students are eligible for test administration accommodations as specified on their Individual Education Plan. Students with disabilities, whose abilities cannot accurately be measured by the statewide assessment test, may be determined eligible for a waiver of the FCAT requirement for graduation (See 5.17 Exceptional Student Education Procedures and Assessment). In order to select an 18 credit graduation option, a student must achieve at least a level 3 on the most recent FCAT reading, mathematics and writing assessments.

**(p) *Elective Credits:*** Remedial and compensatory courses taken in grades 9-12 may only be counted as elective credit. Credits for electives for a standard diploma may not include more than a total of nine (9) credits of remedial and compensatory courses, nor more than one (1) credit for exploratory vocational, nor more than three (3) credits for practical arts family and consumer sciences classes. ESE students pursuing a special diploma may earn additional elective credits.

**(q) *Dual Credit Program:*** The Pinellas County School Board has established articulation agreements with St. Petersburg College (SPC), the University of South Florida and the University of Florida. The SPC agreement enables our high school students to take college courses on the high school campuses or on a St. Petersburg College campus. Students who satisfactorily complete the requirements of the courses within the program receive college credit by complying with the District board of Trustees rules and high school credit prorated according to the college credit hours for each college course successfully completed.

1. To be eligible to participate in the dual credit program, a student must be a sophomore, junior, or senior attending a public high school in Pinellas County who has demonstrated prior academic achievement by attaining at least an unweighted 3.0 grade point average for academic dual credit or an unweighted 2.5 GPA for technical dual credit. Participating sophomores must be in need of a college course in order to meet specific graduation requirements. The University of South Florida agreement provides for early admission into the Honors College only. Students entering the Honors College must have an unweighted minimum GPA of 3.7.

2. Approved dual credit courses are listed in the current Pinellas County High School Course Code Directory. Courses may be added or deleted throughout the year by the mutual agreement of the College President and the Superintendent of Pinellas County Schools.

3. If a high school does not have enough students to form a dual credit class on the high school campus, two options are available to eligible students:

a. A student may travel to a St. Petersburg College campus to take a district approved dual credit class as part of a student's class schedule. Class time in scheduled high school courses held on the high school campus may not be missed due to participation in this dual credit option. The student must provide his own transportation.

b. A student may participate in a dual credit class formed after school on a high school campus if the instructional materials are purchased from the school's instructional materials allocation. The school district is not eligible to collect FTE for this option.

***(r) Diploma Requirements for Pinellas County Students Participating in Foreign Study:*** A twelfth grade student who participates in a foreign studies program may be granted a diploma from his regular Pinellas County high school under the following conditions:

1. The student shall have successfully completed the eleventh grade or the first semester of the twelfth grade in a Pinellas County public high school.
2. The principal of the Pinellas County public high school from which the student intends to graduate agrees to the student's participation in the foreign studies program.
3. The student presents to his Pinellas County principal evidence indicating that the foreign school is a recognized/accredited institution qualified to grant such credit consistent with the standards of the country in which the school is located.
4. The principal subsequently approves the twelfth grade student's program of studies at the foreign school and verifies that credits earned at the foreign school are comparable to those approved for credit by the Pinellas County School Board.
5. The student, upon completion of his foreign program of studies, presents to his regular school registrar an official transcript from such foreign school of attendance indicating that the student successfully completed the planned program of studies.
6. The student has successfully completed all other state and district requirements for high school graduation.
7. The principal has determined that the foreign school will not grant a diploma to the student because graduation requirements for the foreign school exceed those required by the Florida State Department of Education and the School Board of Pinellas County.

### **(3) International Baccalaureate (IB) Program Diploma**

The IB Program is the curriculum whereby students are enrolled in a program of studies offered through the IB Program and administered by the IB Office.

A student who has successfully completed the following IB course requirements will receive a standard high school diploma.

4 credits of language A (student's native language)

4 credits of language B (foreign language)

4 credits of Study of Individuals in Societies

4 credits of experimental sciences

4 credits of mathematics

2 credits of IB sixth subject

1 credit (100 hours) Theory of Knowledge

1 credit Inquiry Skills (or equivalent)

Requirements equal 24 total credits plus an extended essay, at least 150 hours of Creativity/Activity/Service and all internal and external IB assessments required by the IB Organization for diploma candidates.

The State Board of Education has established rules that specify the cutoff scores and IB Examination that will be used to grant postsecondary credit at community colleges and universities. Students shall be exempt from payment of any fees for administration of the examinations regardless of whether or not the student achieves a passing score on the examination.

**(4) Accelerated Graduation:** An accelerated graduation student shall achieve the appropriate cumulative grade point average in high school and complete all requirements of the Statewide Assessment Program as specified in (2)(n) GPA Requirement and (2)(o) Statewide Assessment Program. Earned credits shall meet all requirements specified in (2)(b).

*(a) Standard College Preparatory Program (3 year). Students must earn at least a "B" (3 points) in an unweighted class and a "C" (3 points) in a weighted class to receive course credit in the Standard College Preparatory Program. Eighteen (18) credits are required in the following courses:*

1. English – 4 credits (major concentration in composition and literature).
  2. Mathematics – 3 credits at the Algebra I level or above from the list of courses that qualify for state university admission.
  3. Science – 3 credits in natural science (two must have a laboratory component).
  4. Social Sciences – 3 credits (1 credit world history, 1 credit American history, 1/2 credit American Government, 1/2 credit economics)
  5. World Language – 2 credits or demonstrated proficiency in same second language.
  6. Electives – 3 credits
- At least 6 of the 18 credits required for this program must be earned in classes that are honors, advanced placement, IB, or dual enrollment.

*(b) Career Preparatory Program (3 year). Students must earn at least a weighted or unweighted "C" (at least 2 points) in a class to receive course credit in the career preparatory program. Eighteen (18) credits required in the following courses:*

1. English – 4 credits (major concentration in composition and literature).
2. Mathematics – 3 credits (one of which must be Algebra I).
3. Science – 3 credits in natural science (two must have a laboratory component).

4. Social Sciences – 3 credits (1 credit world history, 1 credit American history, 1/2 credit American Government, 1/2 credit economics)

5. Career Preparation – 3 credits in a single vocational or career education program, 3 credits in career and technical certificate dual enrollment, or 5 credits in vocational career technical courses.

6. Electives – 2 credits in electives unless 5 credits are earned as referenced above.

**(c) *Early Graduation Option (EGO):***

1. Students enrolled in the Early Graduation Option program earn a total of eight (8) credits per school calendar year using a combination of credits earned in first semester, second semester, the Florida Virtual School, and course modifications approved for the EGO program. Adult night school is also an option for EGO students who are within one (1) month of their sixteenth (16th) birthday or older.

2. Since the EGO program is located in a high school using a 4x4 schedule, a student must earn a total of twenty-seven (27) credits to graduate. EGO program students may earn credits using a combination of credits as described in (4) (c) 1. above.

3. A student enrolled in the EGO program who has earned seventeen (17) credits will be classified as a senior during the third and final year of school. Since the EGO program is located in a high school using a 4x4 schedule, a student must earn eighteen (18) credits to be classified as a senior during the third and final year of school.

**(d) *Early Admission to College/University:*** The Board has approved a graduation plan whereby students who meet the conditions of an early admission and advanced studies program may be graduated with fewer than four (4) years in grades 9-12. Such programs shall meet the following conditions:

1. Application for Early Admission to college which has a School Board approved articulation agreement may be made after satisfactory completion of three (3) full years of high school and a minimum of eighteen (18) credits or twenty-three (23) in a school offering the 4x4 schedule. If a student enters college through early admission with exactly eighteen (18) high school credits, the student will need to earn a total of thirty-six (36) semester hours in order to be granted a high school diploma.

2. The student who meets the conditions of an early admission and advanced studies program may be excused by the Board for the fourth (senior) year of high school providing the student has obtained the principal's signature on the Pinellas County High School Application for Early Admission to College and has been enrolled as a public school student for at least the semester prior to participation in the early admission program.

3. The student may be awarded a diploma at the regular time of his class graduation, or at a time convenient to the principal, based on the following:

a. The student has completed one (1) academic year of college or equivalent with a normal class load and maintained at least a "C" average or equivalent; and the student has earned sufficient college

credits creditable toward the high school diploma to fulfill graduation requirements as specified by the Board in (2)(b) Regular Diploma.

b. The student provides the high school with a complete official college transcript of grades and credits earned.

c. The student's permanent record shall show adequate notations covering work accomplished while in college.

4. No early admission student will be included in class rank computations or consideration for valedictorian, salutatorian, other honors or membership in any school organization or competition. With the exception of the graduation ceremony, early admission students may not participate as a student in high school activities, competitions, senior class events, or high school sports. These students are eligible to participate in the events and organizations of the college at which they attend.

5. Early admission is a form of dual enrollment. The early admission student is not a full-time registered student in high school unless enrolled in an institution, which has a dual enrollment agreement with Pinellas County Schools.

6. Students who have attended a high school for three years based on magnet enrollment or an approved SAP may receive their standard high school diploma from that school upon successful completion of the early admission to college program. These students will not, however, receive any recognition, special certification or diploma for magnet program completion. A student who leaves the early admission program to return to high school may attend the high school where the student attended grades 9-11.

7. Early admission students are exempt from the payment of registration, matriculation and lab fees.

*(e) Early Completion of Graduation Requirements:* Students having completed 11 1/2 years of education (grades 1-12) and who have completed all requirements for graduation, as specified above, may, with their parents, submit a written request to the principal to be excused from school for the last semester of high school. Such students may be awarded their diplomas with their regular graduating class or at a later convenient time.

#### **(5) Special Diploma Options for Exceptional Students**

The purpose of the special diploma is to prepare students with disabilities for adult living and employment after graduation. Students earning the special diploma will **not** be eligible for entry into 2 year AA programs or into a four year university or college.

To earn a special diploma, exceptional students must:

**(a) Acquire the minimum number of credits (24) in a 6 period schedule and (29) in a 4x4 schedule.** Courses may be selected from general education, vocational and special diploma courses.

**(b) Achieve required minimum GPA.**

**(c) Demonstrate mastery of Sunshine State Standards for Special Diploma:**

1. Florida Sunshine State Standards for Special Diploma (SSSSD) are designed to prepare students with disabilities for adult living and employment after graduation. The SSSSD address the following strands: appropriate Sunshine State Standards, functional academics, life work, personal care, self-management, working with others and communicating with others.

2. The student's IEP team determines annually whether the student will master each standard at the independent, supported, or participating level. Alternate assessment, selected by the IEP team, is used to measure mastery of the SSSSD. Successful completion of special diploma coursework, which includes the SSSSD in the performance standards of the courses, also documents mastery.

***(d) Meet Option 1A, Option 1B or Option 2 requirements:***

Option 1A Independent/Supported Credit Requirements:

Language Arts/Reading	3 credits
Mathematics	3 credits
Science	1 credit
Career Preparation or Exploratory Education	1 credit
Physical Education	.5 credit
Social Studies	1 credit
Career Education	1 credit
Vocational Transition	2 credits
Electives	11.5 credits for a 6 period schedule; 16.5 credits for a 4x4 schedule

Option 1B Supported/Participatory Credit Requirements:

Academic/Supported/Participatory/Special Skills	8 credits
Physical Education	.5 credit
Prevocational and Electives	15.5 for a 6 period schedule; 20.5 for a 4x4 schedule

Option 2 Vocational Transition Credit Requirements:

Language Arts/Reading	.5 credit
Mathematics	.5 credit
Career Preparation or Exploratory Education	.5 credit

Career Placement/Vocational/Electives 22.5 credits for a 6 period day schedule;  
27.5 credits for 4x4 schedule

The student should be at least 17 years of age.

The student should have successfully completed one full semester of career placement.

The student should have completed at least one semester of ESE language arts/reading, mathematics, and career preparation.

The student must be employed at least 30 hours per week.

Selected PTEC students may combine employment and vocational training only if approved by the district and specified in the Student's Training Plan. Full-time high school students enrolled at a PTEC Center seeking a special education diploma are required to meet the state mandated one-half (1/2) credit in Physical Education.

All necessary training plans and IEP information must be completed and signed.

(e) An exceptional student (except gifted, Vision Impaired or Speech Impaired) who meets all standard diploma requirements but cannot achieve a passing score on the state's assessment test may earn a special diploma.

#### **(6) Certificate of Completion:**

(a) A student will be eligible to receive a certificate of completion if the student has acquired the minimum number of required credits for graduation in grades 9 through 12, but has not achieved the appropriate cumulative grade point average or has not met the requirements of the Statewide Assessment Program as specified in (2)(n) and (2)(o).

(b) A student eligible to receive a certificate of completion who has achieved a cumulative grade point average as specified in (2)(n) but has not met the requirements of the Statewide Assessment Program shall be awarded a *College Placement Test Eligible* certificate and will be awarded a standard high school diploma upon successfully meeting the requirements of the Statewide Assessment Program. The standard diploma will be issued by the high school the student last attended. The adult high school will issue the standard diploma if the student earned the majority of their 24 credits in the adult program. (See also 5.15 (9)).

#### **(7) Graduation Assistance Opportunities:**

The following opportunities are available to assist students who need extra help to meet graduation requirements.

##### ***(a) Lacking the Credits Required for Graduation***

1. Repeating a course to improve a grade
2. Extended Learning Program

3. Adult evening school - for students 16 years or above in third or fourth year of high school and cannot earn all needed credits in a day school in time to graduate with their class.

4. Options for Students Needing One Credit or Less to Graduate After Four Years in High School: A student who has been enrolled in high school and who has completed his fourth year and who needs one (1) credit or less to graduate from a regular day high school may, within one (1) year of completing the fourth year, enroll in an adult high school an approved dual enrollment course, Florida Virtual School or a regionally accredited correspondence school, to complete the credit needed for graduation without the necessity of re-enrolling in the regular day high school for the last semester immediately preceding graduation.

***(b) Lacking the GPA Required for Graduation***

1. Repeating a course to improve a grade

2. Dropping certain grades for elective courses not needed for graduation from final GPA calculation. (Applies only to students entering 9th grade before the 2000-2001 school year. See 5.13 (n) 1 and 2.)

3. Adult Evening School – students 16 years or above may choose to attend an adult education class to replace a "D" grade with a grade of "C" or higher if the student is working toward a 24-credit standard diploma and has an un-weighted GPA of less than 2.0. Students will be enrolled to improve a "D" grade on a space available basis only.

4. Homework Helpline

5. School-based assistance programs, e.g. National Honor Society tutoring

6. Extended Learning Program

Note: Parents of students who have a cumulative GPA of less than .5 above the cumulative GPA required for graduation at the end of each semester in grades 9-12 will be notified that the student is at risk of not meeting graduation requirements and options of the district has in place to assist these students in meeting the GPA requirement.

***(c) Lacking the Minimum Number of Attendance Hours Required for Course Credit***

1. Repeating a course to improve a grade

2. Adult evening school (16 years or older)

3. Extended Learning Program

***(d) Lacking Statewide Assessment Program Requirements***

1. After school tutorial services

2. Adult evening school (16 years or older)

3. Homework Helpline
4. School-based assistance programs, e.g. National Honor Society tutoring
5. Thirteenth year of school
6. Extended Learning Program

**(8) Additional Schooling for Non-Graduates to Remedy Deficiencies**

(a) Any student who is otherwise entitled to a certificate of completion (but has elected not to receive it) may elect to remain in a high school during the following school year for the duration of one (1) additional year either as a full-time student or as a part-time student to receive special instruction designed to remedy his identified deficiencies.

(b) Exceptional students are eligible for services until they earn a standard diploma or GED or through the school year in which they turn twenty-two (22). Exceptional students who have received a certificate of completion or special diploma may walk in a high school graduation ceremony and then return to high school through the school year in which they reach age 22.

**(9) Eligibility for Students Younger than Eighteen (18) to Take the General Educational**

**Development (GED) Tests:** Students sixteen (16) years of age to eighteen (18) years of age who are residents of Pinellas County, shall be permitted to take the comprehensive examination for the equivalency diploma if one of the following conditions exists:

(a) The student's class (defined as that class in which the student would have entered kindergarten) has already graduated.

(b) The student is married and/or a parent.

(c) The student is experiencing extraordinary life circumstances and has written approval from the appropriate Director of School Operations.

(d) The student is a resident of Pinellas County and has met all of the following:

1. Is enrolled in a dropout prevention, dropout retrieval, in-school GED, exceptional student program funded through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP); or is court ordered to a GED class; or has been withdrawn from regular day school for at least three (3) months.

2. Has been counseled as to the educational alternative appropriate to the student's needs.

3. Has obtained a pretest score of 500 or better on all five (5) parts of the official GED pretest.

**(10) Unauthorized Diplomas:** The granting of diplomas other than those approved by the Board is not allowed.

**(11) Final Semester Attendance Requirement for Diploma Eligibility:**

(a) Students who transfer out of the Pinellas County school system before the last full semester of their senior year and do not return to this school system to complete the last semester of their senior year shall not be eligible for a diploma from a Pinellas County public school.

(b) A student who transfers out of the Pinellas County school system during the last full semester of their senior year shall not be eligible for a diploma from a Pinellas County public high school unless the student has transferred to a school district with a policy which will not allow that district to grant a diploma to a student who was not enrolled for the entire semester prior to graduation. In this instance our school district will work with the receiving high school to verify the student's final grades, GPA, and diploma eligibility.

(c) Students who transfer into a Pinellas County high school during their senior year must be enrolled for the entire semester prior to graduation in order to be eligible for a diploma from a Pinellas County public school. However, a Pinellas County high school diploma may be granted to a student transferring in from a school district with a policy, which will not allow that district to grant a diploma to a student who was not enrolled for the entire semester prior to graduation.

**(12) Mid-term Graduation Ceremonies:** Mid-term graduation ceremonies shall not be held in high schools.

**(13) Code of Conduct for High School Graduation Ceremonies:**

(a) It is the intent of the Board to set guidelines for high school graduation ceremonies that will help make graduation a dignified occasion, worthy of the time and effort students and parents have expended to accomplish the goal of students' graduating from high school. It is imperative that students, parents, teachers and school administrators take an active part in implementing this code.

***(b) Student Rights and Responsibilities:******1. Student Rights:***

a. Each graduating senior has the right to expect a dignified ceremony, worthy of recognizing the effort that has been applied in achieving graduate status.

b. Each graduating senior has the right to be properly recognized before family and friends without interference from any source.

***2. Student Responsibilities:*** Students attending graduation ceremonies are expected to fulfill the following responsibilities:

a. Students shall abide by all rules of dress and conduct as developed by the school.

b. Students shall avoid any behavior that would cause discomfort or embarrassment to any other graduate or the family or friends or a graduate.

c. Students shall follow all directions given by members of the school staff or administration.

***(c) Student Conduct at Graduation:*** All students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that will contribute to the best interests of the graduating class. School authorities have jurisdiction

over all students during the graduation ceremonies. The Board's current Code of Student Conduct shall apply to all participants and student spectators attending the graduation ceremonies.

Statutory Authority: 1001.32(2), 1001.41(2), 1001.42(23), F.S.

Laws Implemented: 1003.43, F.S.; 6A-1.095 SBE Rules..

History: New 7/12/50; Amended 3/15/53, 7/13/55, 5/22/57, 7/22/59, 7/12/61, 7/28/65, 7/31/68, 11/17/71, 2/27/74; Revised and Amended 12/18/74; Amended 8/23/78, 5/23/79, 8/13/80, 12/3/80, (Subsection (6) temporary provision for allowing students under age 18 to take GED after 7/1/83, under certain conditions, adopted as an emergency policy 8/10/83; expired automatically 11/8/83; present subsection adopted 1/12/83) Amended 2/8/84, 1/30/85, 8/14/85, 9/11/85, 12/18/85, 3/19/86, 4/9/86, 6/25/86, 12/10/86, 5/27/87, 9/9/87, Subsection (4) "Credit by Examination" repealed 11/11/87; Amended 11/25/87, 2/24/88, 5/25/88, 11/9/88, 2/22/89 (Emergency), 3/29/89, 5/24/89 (Emergency), 6/28/89, 7/26/89, 8/9/89, 6/13/90, 8/8/90 (Emergency), 9/12/90, 1/9/91, 7/10/91, 4/8/92, 8/26/92, 1/13/93, 2/24/93, 8/11/93, 3/9/94, 8/9/94, 6/27/95, 1/10/96, 4/24/96, 10/8/96, 1/28/97, 9/9/97, 1/13/98, 6/30/98, 2/09/99, 6/29/99, 10/12/99, 8/15/00, 1/16/01, 7/31/01, 12/10/02, 12/9/03, 11/9/04, 2/22/05, 10/24/06, 12/12/06

Note: Former 6Gx52-8.24 (changed 6/30/98)

## 5.14 HIGH SCHOOL MAGNET PROGRAMS

- (1) The high school magnet programs constitute essentially a "school within a school". Students choosing to participate in social and extra-curricular activities shall do so in the magnet host school.
- (2) Students attending a magnet program must be enrolled full time in the magnet host school. Magnet students must complete academic graduation requirements by completing magnet courses and may not substitute dual credit correspondence or on-line courses for magnet courses.
- (3) All high school career academy and magnet programs are four-year twenty-four credit standard diploma option programs. A student who chooses an eighteen (18) credit, three-year standard diploma option may not participate in a career academy or magnet program.
- (4) Students who enter a magnet program are expected to remain in that program for that school year. Students who voluntarily withdraw or who no longer meet eligibility requirements must visit a Family Education and Information Center for a school assignment. The student may not enter any other magnet program for the remainder of that school year.
- (5) Students who transfer from a high school magnet program to a regular school program shall be allowed to transfer honors points only in those courses generating honors points in the regular school program.

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