



Pinellas Pathways to Graduation and State Graduation Requirements

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the new Diploma Designations?

A new state law creates new designations or seals for Florida's standard high school diploma. Students who earn a high school diploma can also earn new state diploma seals: a Scholar designation or a Merit designation.

Students seeking a Scholar designation must satisfy specific course and testing requirements above and beyond those required for a standard diploma. Students seeking a Merit designation must attain one or more industry certifications from a list established by the state. The list can be found at <http://www.fldoe.org/workforce/fcpea/pdf/1314icfl.pdf>.

Pinellas County Schools has also implemented its own new diploma designation, the Pinellas Advanced Scholar designation. Students who meet all of the requirements for a state Scholar diploma designation and earn a score of 3 or better on three Advanced Placement examinations will be eligible for the district's Advanced Scholar seal. They will also be eligible for recognition as Advanced Placement Scholars by the College Board.

Students may earn any or all of these designations, but they are not required to do so.

Are these designations different diplomas?

No. There is one Florida standard high school diploma. Students who earn a diploma can also earn state and/or district diploma designations or seals.

Does my child have to choose a Diploma Designation or will he earn it automatically?

Students who meet the requirements for diploma designations will earn these designations automatically.

Is my child required to earn one of the new diploma designations and can she earn more than one?

As stated above, students may earn any or all of these designations, but they are not required to do so.

What are Pinellas Pathways to Graduation and how do they relate to the Diploma Designations?

Pinellas County Schools has created Pinellas Pathways to Graduation to boost student achievement and assist families with educational planning. The Advanced Scholar



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Pathway, the College Pathway and the Technical/College Pathway provide rigorous and relevant course offerings that help students to successfully complete the state requirements for earning a high school diploma. The Pathways also prepare students for future success and allow our graduates to uniquely distinguish themselves as they apply to colleges, universities, and technical schools, or enter the workforce.

The Advanced Scholar Pathway is aligned with the district's Advanced Scholar diploma designation. The College Pathway is aligned with the state's Scholar diploma designation. And the Technical College Pathway is aligned with the state's Merit diploma designation.

Students are free to pursue different Pinellas Pathways later or multiple Pathways at the same time. No matter which Pinellas Pathway(s) students choose, they will be eligible for any of the diploma designations if they meet the necessary requirements.

More information is available at your child's school and on Pinellas County Schools website at www.pcsb.org/pinellas-pathways.

Are there new graduation requirements for all high school students?

No. The new graduation requirements chiefly apply to students entering ninth grade in 2013-14 and later. It is also important to note that the minimum graduation requirements for seniors have not changed. All high school students can earn the new diploma designations.

My child enrolled in high school before the 2013-14 school year and opted for one of the previous 18-credit accelerated high school graduation options? What are the options for him now?

If a student enrolled in high school prior to 2013-2014 and chose one of the former 18-credit accelerated high school graduation options, the student can continue earning credits as part of the program. After completing the program, the student can graduate with a standard diploma.

What type of 18-credit, accelerated graduation options exist for students entering ninth grade this year and later?

The state has implemented a new 18-credit accelerated high school graduation option, which allows students to be awarded a standard high school diploma if they complete the majority of the standard diploma course requirements. Students choosing this option are not required to take a physical education course and they need only three credits in electives. They must also earn a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale.

How can I find out more about assessments that my child is required to take?

Contact your child's school or visit the Pinellas Pathways to Graduation website, at www.pcsb.org/pinellas-pathways, for details about required assessments.



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Are there any tools to help my child with an academic plan for high school?

Yes, the district has implemented a new online academic planning system called Counselor Connect. The system, which can be accessed through the district's PCS Portal system, helps students choose diploma designations and plan their path through high school and beyond. Parents also can log into Counselor Connect to track their children's progress. For more information, contact your child's guidance counselor. If you have additional questions, contact Andrew Weatherill, K-12 Guidance Services Specialist, at (727) 588-6053

I'm overwhelmed by the high school planning process for my child and I'm not sure what classes and tests she needs to graduate. Where can I get additional assistance and information?

You will find a number of helpful materials on the district's Pinellas Pathways to Graduation website, www.pcsb.org/pinellas-pathways. Your child's guidance counselor and principal are great resources as well. If you have additional questions, please contact Andrew Weatherill, K-12 Guidance Services Specialist, at (727) 588-6053, or Rita M. Vasquez, Executive Director of High School Education at (727) 588-6302.