

**GRADUATES 2019-2021:**

All students are encouraged to graduate with a Standard or higher JCSD Diploma. Students must earn a minimum of 28 credits for graduation with a Standard Diploma, 21 credits for a Career Diploma, and 21 credits for a Basic Diploma. Students earning 32 credits will graduate with an Advanced Diploma. The Career Diploma meets all requirements set forth in MS Code 37-16-17. The Basic Diploma track requires a recommendation from teacher, counselor, principal or other appropriate individual; completed application form; approval by a committee comprised of the school principal (or designee), counselor, TST Interventionist, teacher, and special education representative (if applicable); and the parent must provide written consent. Students must meet college and career qualification scores in all core content areas on a series of end-of-course exams and/or the required benchmarks for college readiness on the ACT (19 in English Composition; 22 in mathematics; 22 in reading; 23 in science) or IHL approved college entrance exam with the approval of the Superintendent.

**GRADUATES 2022 AND LATER WILL FOLLOW THE MS DIPLOMA OPTIONS PROVIDED IN THE STUDENT HANDBOOK:**

The District follows all state mandated requirements for graduation. Specific graduation course requirements are posted in the MS Public School Accountability Standards each year and will change as changes are required by the MS Department of Education or based on school leaders requesting improvements to the current district requirements.

All requirements as indicated by the Mississippi State Department of Education and the Commission on School Accreditation in Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards must be met by the graduate. These requirements include satisfactorily passing the assessments at the level established by the state (MS Code 37-16-7).

Special Education students' diploma and graduation requirements will be based on the criteria established by the Individual Education Plan (IEP)/Vocational transition plan reviewed on an annual basis.

- Special Education students receiving a diploma must participate in the Subject area Testing Program and pass at the level required by the state (MS Code 37-16-7)
- Special Education students receiving a Certificate of Completion must participate in a course of study outlined in the IEP transition plan for gained employment.

Courses allowed for graduation credit must be subjects listed in the Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi. Courses that are not listed in the Approved Courses for the Secondary Schools of Mississippi require approval from the Commission on School Accreditation before being offered.

Courses are not designated as academic/non-academic. The student may complete his/her schedule to include those courses of interest as long as the above requirements are met.

It will be the responsibility of the student to decide if he/she plans to enter college or go into the workforce upon graduation from high school. Once the student makes this decision, he/she should enroll in the courses, while in high school, to prepare for the career of his/her choice.

### **VALEDICTORIAN, SALUTATORIAN, AND HISTORIAN – RECOGNITION FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT:**

The student(s) having attained the highest, second highest, and third highest quality point average (QPA) during his/her high school period shall be recognized as Valedictorian, Salutatorian, and Historian respectively. Only students earning a diploma with 28 required credits or more are eligible to serve as Valedictorian, Salutatorian, or Historian until 2022, when it will change to 26 required.

A student may serve as Valedictorian, Salutatorian, or Historian if he/she has attended the respective high school for his/her entire senior year. Grades attained from any school during the high school period will be entered into the aggregate compilation of the Valedictorian, Salutatorian, and Historian recognition: however, in the event that number grades are not sent from a prior school and verification is present that efforts have been made to secure the number grades and these efforts have been unsuccessful, then the following number grades will be given for the following letter grades:

A+	98-100
A	95-97
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	68-69
D	66-67
D-	65
F	64 and below

The Valedictorian, Salutatorian, and Historian will be chosen based on the highest Quality Point Average through the third (3rd) nine weeks of the senior year.

The Quality Point System will be utilized to compute and determine the rank-in-class of graduating seniors. Rank-in-class is defined as the comparison of a student's academic performance with those of the members of his graduating class. Class rank computed on the basis of quality points, rather than on grade-point average, projects a more accurate profile of academic performance. It is also designed to encourage many good students to enroll in more challenging courses. Students in advanced courses earn additional quality points directly proportionate to regular courses. In this way those students in courses of average academic difficulty set the 4.0 norm. Additional quality points assigned to advanced academic courses merely serve to achieve a more accurate class ranking. Grade-point averages are unaffected by quality points and will continue to be the report of academic achievement on the high school transcript.

Students with a quality point average of 4.0 to 4.49 will graduate with honors. Students with a quality point average of 4.5 and above will graduate with special honors.

**Descriptor Term:**  
**GRADUATION POLICY**

**IHF**

**ISSUE DATE: 07-18-2005**

**REVISED: 05-14-2018**

**TEMPORARY REVISION DATE: 07-27-2020**

Quality Point Equivalency Scale for E-3, E-2, and E-1 courses and the number of quality points a student will receive for the grade he/she makes in each course is listed in the student handbook:

E-3 – AP – Advance Placement and Dual Credit

E-2 – Accelerated

E-1 – Honors

**COLLEGIATE ACADEMY OR SIMILAR PROGRAMS:**

Students enrolled in the Collegiate Academy or similar programs will be ranked separately and will not follow the traditional class ranking. Students enrolled in the Collegiate Academy will not be considered for the Valedictorian, Salutatorian, or Historian. Prior approval must be obtained from a guidance counselor and the school principal to participate in Collegiate Academy or similar programs.

**DUAL CREDIT:**

Dual credit is awarded when students get prior approval to take a college course for high school and college credit. Prior approval must be obtained from a guidance counselor and principal. Failure to get prior approval may result in an ineligible course and no high school credit being awarded. Grades for dual credit will transfer according to the following scale:

A	=	100
B	=	89
C	=	79
D	=	69
F	=	64

**GRADING:**

All grades awarded to students in grades 1-12 shall be awarded in compliance with the district's promotion/retention policy

**EARLY GRADUATION:**

Students fulfill all requirements for graduation may opt to complete their high school career early. Students will be allowed to participate in the commencement exercises with their class and will receive their diploma at that time. Students will not be allowed to participate in any extra-curricular activities sponsored by the school for the remainder of the school year and will no longer be considered enrolled in the Jackson County School District. Students will be considered as a visitor when present on the high school campus.

To qualify for early graduation, a student must complete the following:

1. Schedule a meeting with the counselor and present a post-secondary plan (i.e., college, work, vocational training, and military) as a rationale for early graduation. The student's parents must attend this meeting. A tentative schedule will be created provided the courses are available. The tentative schedule must be approved by the Principal.

The school is not obligated to provide two (2) core courses (per subject) within a school year. (Fall-Spring).

An exit conference will be scheduled prior to early release. In addition, the principal and parent must approve all early graduations.

**EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR:**

Extended School Year, if available, may be available to general education students if:

1. A student shall be allowed to enroll annually in one course offered for credit. The principal may approve a student to enroll in more than one course for credit, if extenuating circumstances exist.
2. A student shall be allowed to enroll in a maximum of two courses offered as enrichment, unless approved by the principal due.
3. All other requirements of the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards shall be met in any summer school or Extended Year program held in the Jackson County School District. In addition, approval will not be granted nor credit awarded, to any student attending a summer school or extended year program not meeting the requirements of the Commission on School Accreditation.

4. Extended year programs shall only be available to those students who fail a course with an average of 55 or better.
5. A maximum of four units in summer school may be counted toward graduation requirements.

**EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR (ESY) FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Extended School Year (ESY) is available to students with disabilities based on their IEP and data demonstrating a need.

**CORRESPONDENCE COURSES:**

The Jackson County School District will follow the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standard for Correspondence courses.

**PROCEDURE FOR CORRESPONDENCE COURSES:**

1. The correspondence course must have been approved by the principal and administered through an approved program.
2. The evaluation criteria will have been administered by a certified member of the school district.
3. The correspondence course must be one which is contained in the curriculum of the school in which the student is enrolled.
4. The building principal will supervise and administer the tests to the student taking the correspondence course or will assign a counselor within the building to supervise and administer the tests.

**GRADUATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:**

Students with disabilities will be issued a regular education high school diploma, certificate of life skills completion or alternate diploma option as follows:

1. By age fourteen (14) or prior to a student entering the ninth grade, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) Committee will consider the exiting options from high school. The parent(s) and, if appropriate, the student will be informed of the requirements for each option and the various alternatives in post-school activities based on each exiting option. An IEP Committee will determine and document the option appropriate for each student.

2. Students pursuing a regular education high school diploma must meet the requirements set forth by the State Board of Education and the Jackson County School District. Special education and related services will be provided to assist a student to reach this goal based on the student's IEP.
3. For students who are significantly cognitively disabled pursuing alternate diploma completion, a comprehensive curriculum of basic life skills will be utilized for instructional purposes. Transition services, including a functional vocational evaluation (if appropriate), will be provided based on each student's preferences and interests, his or her IEP and the planned outcomes for post-secondary activities specific to the student. As determined appropriate by the IEP Committee, transition services may include-
  - Instruction in functional academics
  - Community experiences
  - Adult living
  - Employment skills
  - Related services
  - Daily living skills
4. An IEP Committee will review the previous exiting option decision for each student at least annually. The committee, along with the parent(s) and, if appropriate, the student, may change the original or previous decision regarding the student's exiting option.
5. Students pursuing the alternate diploma option, which is not equivalent to a traditional high school diploma and is not recognized by postsecondary entities that require a traditional high school diploma. All students are required to participate in the Mississippi Assessment Program Alternate Assessment (MAAP-A) with a score TBD. Students who have met the criteria on their IEP for having a Significant Cognitive Disability (SCD) may participate in a program of study to earn the Alternate Diploma.
6. Every student who completes an approved course of study by or before age 21 will receive an alternate option diploma and will be permitted to participate in graduation activities.

**GRADING FOR STUDENT WITH DISABILITIES:**

All grades awarded to students in grades 1-12 shall be awarded in compliance with the district's promotion/retention policy.

Grades awarded to students who have been ruled eligible for special education services and who are also actively participating in the District's special education program(s) shall be based on the following:

- Inclusion and resource students receiving a traditional diploma is based on the same guidelines as the district's promotion/retention policy. Accommodations/modifications provided in coordination of both special classroom teachers and general classroom teachers to obtain final grades will be provided.

**GRADUATION CEREMONIES:**

The following requirements concerning graduation ceremonies shall be met:

1. The scheduling of formal graduation ceremonies shall be limited to those honoring senior students who have successfully completed prescribed secondary school graduation requirements.
2. Preparation for graduation ceremonies shall be scheduled in such manner that complies with all MS Department of Education requirements.
3. The secondary schools shall not deliver a diploma, signed or unsigned, to a student who fails to meet the requirements for graduation. A student who fails to meet the graduation requirements is not permitted to participate in graduation exercises. Students who have completed satisfactorily the local district's secondary curriculum for special education may be awarded a high school certificate or diploma which states, "This student has successfully completed an Individualized Educational Program." This student may be permitted to participate in graduation exercises.
4. All State and District requirements must be met in order for a student to participate in graduation or receive a diploma. This includes foreign exchange students. (Decision of Mississippi Commission on School Accreditation, Summer 1988).



**STUDENT MESSAGE AT GRADUATION CEREMONIES:**

It is the intent of the Jackson County School District to allow the graduating senior class the discretion to use a brief opening and/or closing message, not to exceed two (2) minutes at their respective school graduation exercises. If the graduating class chooses to use an opening and/or closing statement, the message shall be given by a student in the graduating senior class chosen by the senior class as a whole and the message shall be wholly prepared by the student selected. The content of the message delivered shall not be monitored or otherwise reviewed by the school administration, the board of education or any school district employee, but the content shall not be libelous, slanderous or obscene.

**The printed event program at all graduation ceremonies shall include the following disclaimer:**

***“The opinions, remarks and viewpoints expressed by any student speaker at this ceremony do not reflect the endorsement, sponsorship, position, opinion, expression or viewpoint of the Jackson County School District.”***

**PARTICIPATION IN GRADUATION CEREMONIES/DISCIPLINE VIOLATIONS:**

The Jackson County Board of Education recognizes that participation in graduation ceremonies is a significant milestone in the education of our students and believes that said participation should be protected whenever possible. However, schools must have the ability to discipline students who are near the end of their academic career in the high schools in the Jackson County School District in meaningful ways in order to sustain the type of safe, secure, disciplined environment that is necessary.

In accordance with this philosophy, it shall be the policy of the Jackson County Board of Education that high school seniors will be held to high standards of discipline until the conclusion of the academic year. Since some of the typical discipline measures that are approved for other students are not applicable for seniors who are near the end of the school year, additional measures need to be available to administrators in the high schools.

Any senior who commits a Level 5 infraction (as defined by the discipline code of the district) during the last 3 weeks of the school year shall have his/her right to participate in the graduation exercises for his/her school revoked.

This policy does not restrict the ability of the administration to address severe discipline issues that may occur during an earlier term of the school year in any way.

**Descriptor Term:**  
**GRADUATION POLICY**

**IHF**

**ISSUE DATE: 07-18-2005**

**REVISED: 05-14-2018**

**TEMPORARY REVISION DATE: 07-27-2020**

**REFERENCE:**

Accreditation Requirements of the State Board of Education

**LEGAL REFERENCES:**

37-16-7 Graduation standards established by district school boards; standard diploma  
Standard diploma

37-16-11 Special diploma or certificate of completion for handicapped students

37-13-4.1 MS Code (1994)

In the event of a COVID-19 related need for distance learning, seniors with 21 or more Carnegie unit credits from required courses will be allowed to graduate with a high school diploma. This meets the minimum requirements set forth by the State Board of Education, and outlined in Appendix A. (A-1, A-2, A-3, and A-4).