



DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

A+ High School Eligibility for 2020 Seniors Additional Guidance

Issued March 27, 2020

Last week the Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development (MDHEWD) issued guidance regarding accommodations for 2020 high school seniors impacted by school closures as a result of the COVID-19 virus. At that time, guidance relating to the Algebra I end-of-course exam requirement was forthcoming but is now available.

The Algebra I EOC requirement is waived for all 2020 high school seniors, including those who have already taken the exam but did not meet the requirement as well as those who have not yet taken the exam. Waiver of this requirement also exempts the 2020 seniors from having to meet the ACT math subscore/high school GPA alternative.

DESE indicated that high schools could provide the Algebra I EOC to the seniors for A+ purposes even though it is not being administered as a required standardized test this year. However, given the uncertainty of when/if students will return to school this spring, MDHEWD determined it was in the best interest of students to waive the requirement now to reduce the negative impact on students and to provide them with peace of mind about their A+ eligibility.

As with all of the other guidance provided last week, this waiver only applies to the 2020 seniors. All other students will have the opportunity to take the Algebra I EOC, whether as part of their school's regular testing or solely for A+ purposes, before they graduate high school.

The department has also received requests for clarification on whether there will be special accommodation for this year's juniors who were unable to work toward their 50 hours of unpaid tutoring/mentoring this semester. The temporary accommodations only apply to the 2020 seniors. The students who are currently juniors will have the ability to complete their required number of hours next year. However, high schools may need to be flexible in how these students complete their hours, particularly for students who were enrolled in but unable to complete an A+ tutoring class in this spring 2020 semester.

In addition, in last week's guidance the department indicated that for 2020 high school seniors the A+ 9 through 12 CGPA requirement would remain in place but that high schools have the flexibility to use the student's CGPA at the end of the fall semester or at graduation. Since that announcement, it has become apparent that some districts are moving to a pass/fail grading system for the current semester, which would result in no GPA calculation for that period. This could negatively impact some students that are near the 2.5 CGPA cutoff and who would have likely achieved eligibility as a result of their performance in the spring. As a consequence, and only for students in districts that have or will move to a pass/fail grading system for the spring semester, the district may use the student's CGPA at the time classes were halted or the student's CGPA at the third quarter break.