

## **Fayette County Public Schools Early Graduation Certificate Information**

### **Introduction**

The Early Graduation statute and regulation are a result of Senate Bill 61 and are a companion regulation to Senate Bill 97 in 2013. Beginning in 2014-2015, Early Graduation will be possible for students who intend to move on an accelerated timeline through high school and graduate college ready in three academic years or less. Early Graduation is a deliberate pathway for students that wish to complete high school early, receive a diploma from the district and be eligible for acceptance into a two-or four- year Kentucky SACS accredited, public or non-profit institution without remediation. The regulation provides a financial incentive, known as the Early Graduation Certificate, for the student to support this action.

### **Academic Requirements for Early Graduation**

- **Meet proficiency benchmarks on Kentucky required End-of-Course (EOC) Exams**
  - Students must successfully complete courses before taking the corresponding (EOC) exams.
  - Currently those courses are *English II, Algebra II, Biology* and *US History*.
- **Meet Council of Post-Secondary Education (CPE) defined college readiness benchmarks on a college readiness exam**
  - Current benchmarks for the ACT (English = 18, Reading = 20, Mathematics = 19) as set by CPE in 13 KAR 2:020.

### **Financial Incentives**

A student who meets the Early Graduation requirements in 704 KAR 3:305 shall earn an Early Graduation Certificate and be eligible for a one-time scholarship award to be used at a SACS accredited Kentucky college or university the academic year immediately following early high school graduation.

- The award shall be equal to one-half (1/2) of the state portion of the average statewide per pupil guarantee for one year. This award amount is determined in the biennial budget for each fiscal year. For 2013-2014, the award amount was approximately \$1913.
- The Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) will administer the scholarship; funds will be forwarded directly to the institute of higher education.
- Early Graduation Certificate funds shall be available only during the academic year following graduation.

Effective with the Class of 2015, students who are eligible for the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship (KEES) program and graduate from a Kentucky high school in three years may be eligible for a KEES award that is the equivalent of four years of high school.

- The KEES award amount is based on the average of GPA awards.
- The Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) should be contacted for additional information regarding the KEES program.

## REASONS FOR EXITING EARLY GRADUATION

- **Voluntary academic**
  - Student is meeting blueprint for success but voluntarily chooses to remain in high school longer than three years to complete a career track, certification or accelerated/advanced courses such as AP, IB or dual credit.
- **Voluntary Financial/Scholarships**
  - Student is meeting blueprint for success but voluntarily chooses to remain in high school longer than three years to be eligible for college scholarships and financial benefit.
- **Involuntary academic**
  - Student is not meeting academic benchmarks on End-of-Course exams or proficiency benchmarks on the ACT. Student and family are counseled and advised against continuing on an Early Graduation pathway.
- **Health**
  - Student health issues that prevent student from accomplishing Early Graduation criteria.
- **Athletics**
  - Students choose to stay the full four years in high school to take advantage of programs in sports in high school.

*For more information regarding the Early Graduation Process, please contact your school counselor or check out the information at <http://education.ky.gov/educational/AL/Pages/Early-Graduation.aspx>*