

SC 10.23.25 6 (B)

File: IKFE – COMPETENCY DETERMINATION

Haverhill Public School ~ Competency Determination Policy

Massachusetts state law requires students to satisfy the requirements of the Competency Determination (CD) to graduate from high school. As described in the new regulations, the CD represents two accomplishments: demonstrating mastery of skills in English language arts, mathematics, and science; and the satisfactory completion of relevant coursework aligned with the standards measured by the high school English Language Arts, Mathematics, US History*, and science MCAS assessments administered in 2023. To show mastery, a student must successfully complete in accordance with the district’s grading policy: (1) the Competency assessment for a course; or (2) a capstone or portfolio project; or (3) an equivalent measure identified in the district’s CD policy.

To satisfactorily complete coursework, a student must earn full credit in accordance with the district’s grading policy in the courses listed in the table below. Haverhill Public School District offers the following courses required for the Competency Determination that satisfactorily align with the state curriculum frameworks.

Aligned Courses Class of 2026 & Beyond

Content Area	Aligned Courses	Evidence of Mastery in all content areas must earn a passing grade of 60 or above
English Language Arts	English I (All Levels) Fundamentals of ELA I English II (All Levels) Fundamentals of ELA II AP Seminar ELD Reading and Writing Level I ELD Reading and Writing Level II	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Final Course Assessment <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Standards-based assessment accompanied by a portfolio of writing <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Portfolio of writing that reflects mastery of standards which is reviewed by a panel

<p>Mathematics</p>	<p>Algebra I (All Levels) Integrated Math I ELD Algebra I Geometry (All Levels) Integrated Math II ELD Geometry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Final Course Assessment <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standards assessment and a portfolio of performance tasks <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Portfolio of writing that reflects mastery of standards, which is reviewed by a panel
<p>Science</p>	<p>Biology (All Levels) Integrated Science I ELD Biology Chemistry (All Levels) Physics (All Levels) Conceptual Physics (All Levels)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Final Course Assessment <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standards-based assessment accompanied by a portfolio of Literacy Tasks, lab reports or research <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Portfolio of writing that reflects mastery of standards, which is reviewed by a panel
<p>U.S. History I (Class of 2027 and beyond)</p>	<p>US History I (All Levels) Fundamentals of US History I ELD US 1 AP US History Social Studies II (All Levels)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Final Course Assessment <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Standards-Based Assessment accompanied by completion of a Civics Project <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> ● Or a score of 2 or better on the AP Exam, accompanied by completion of a Civics Project <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> ● Portfolio of writing that reflects mastery of standards, which is reviewed by a panel
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Additional Considerations

Students who received a qualifying score on the MCAS (i.e., students who earned a CD through a regular or retest administration of the MCAS, or through a DESE appeal process) and passing grades according to the District Graduation Requirements prior to January 3, 2025, qualify for Competency Determination (CD).

The Haverhill Public Schools reserve the right to substitute any courses for the above-stated courses provided they fully align with the appropriate MA Curriculum Framework Standards and the State Law regarding Competency Determination M.G.L. c.69 §1D.

The Competency Determination is inclusive for students in Career and Technical Education (CTE), homeschooled students, students with special education needs, and multilingual learners. Students in the Class of 2027-2029 who were part of the Grade 8 Accelerated Math Program will be required to take and pass Algebra I utilizing various academic options. A qualifying MCAS score of at least meeting or exceeding expectations achievement levels on the relevant high school MCAS assessment may be utilized as an alternative to the Competency Requirement in Algebra I.

Students who do not meet the required passing grades in the above-prescribed courses may enroll in summer school credit recovery courses, tutoring and/or CD coursework workshops and/or be scheduled by their counselor to take additional coursework that meets the same MA Curriculum

Framework Standards. These opportunities will provide a student who has yet to meet the CD requirements with additional opportunities to meet this standard for graduation.

Students with Disabilities

The Haverhill Public School District provides both a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and will determine that the student has met (a) the competency determination, (b) the local graduation requirements, and (c) received transition to adulthood services, before issuing a diploma.

- Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) will be held to the same mastery standards as their general education peers.
- Students with disabilities can utilize the accommodations tailored to their specific learning needs as outlined in their IEPs/504s.

Out of District Placements

Students with disabilities placed in out-of-district programs/schools must meet the requirements of Haverhill Public School's CD policy. Consistent with past practices, students placed in out-of-district programs/schools will undergo a transcript review to ensure they have met the Haverhill Public School's CD graduation requirements.

Multilingual Learners

Multilingual Learners (ML students) will be subject to the same evidence of mastery as general education peers using accommodations that are appropriate to their level of English proficiency.

Late-Enrolling Students

Students who enroll in Haverhill Public Schools after 10th grade may be granted a determination of competency by Haverhill Public Schools in one or more of the following ways:

- Transcript Review by the School Counselor in collaboration if needed with the Supervisor of School Counseling or Building Principal
- A qualifying MCAS score of at least meeting or exceeding expectations achievement levels on the relevant high school MCAS assessment.

Transcript Review Procedures

Haverhill Public Schools will evaluate prior coursework—especially for late-enrolling students or homeschooled students—against state standards to determine mastery when MCAS is unavailable. Coursework must be equivalent in length and demonstrate competency. Students from the classes of 2003–2024 who lacked a diploma due to unmet Competency Determination requirements may request a transcript review. The principal or designee will assess eligibility and may award a diploma.

Transcript Review: All students transferring to Haverhill Public Schools (HPS) in grades 9–12 will undergo a transcript review during Guidance registration and scheduling.

Review Panel: Conducted by guidance counselors in collaboration with the Principal, Supervisor of Counseling, and/or other appropriate personnel.

Credit Evaluation: Courses are reviewed for equivalency with the HPS Program of Studies to ensure credit value from the sending school is maintained.

Competency Assessment: The review determines if the student has demonstrated required competencies per HPS or the sending school's policies. *If a student has earned a CD from a previous district, it will be honored, yet the student's transcript will be reviewed. Students will need to meet the Haverhill Public School graduation requirements.*

Alternative to CD Assessment: For students enrolling after grade 10, passing MCAS scores (meets/exceeds) may be used as an alternative measure.

Missing Grades Protocol: Students without grades follow the Missing/Incomplete Grades Mastery Grading protocol and must complete the final assessment.

Certificate of Attainment: Haverhill Public Schools offers eligible students in the classes of 2003 through 2024 who did not earn a diploma as a result of failing to meet the state's CD requirement an opportunity to determine their current eligibility for a diploma pursuant to the district's CD requirements.

An eligible student is one who:

1. Was previously enrolled in the district; and
2. Previously met the criteria for a Certificate of Attainment 5 (i.e., they met local graduation requirements but did not receive a high school diploma because they did not earn a CD); and
3. Was not previously reported as a graduate in any district's Student Information Management System (SIMS) submission.

Any student who has not previously met the criteria for a Certificate of Attainment (indicating that they did not meet all local graduation requirements when they exited high school) must meet the district's current CD requirements and local graduation requirements in order to earn a diploma for the current graduating year.

Appeals Process

The appeals process ensures that students and families have a clear and fair pathway to challenging a Graduation Competency Determination.

Level 1: Department Review

- When a student/parent believes that a Graduation Competency Determination decision may be in error, the student/parent must first meet with the Department Chair associated with the assessments or academic requirement in question.
- The Department Chair will review the grading criteria, course expectations, and supporting evidence to ensure the graduation competency determination aligns with school policy.
- In some cases, additional evidence (such as student work, assessment data, or accommodations provided) may be reviewed.
- A written determination and summary of the review will be provided within five (5) school days.

Level 2: School-Level Administrative Review

- If the issue is not resolved at the department level, the student and/or parent may request a review with the Principal or his/her designee.
- At this stage, the administrator will:
 - Review all prior documentation and communications
 - Confirm whether policies, procedures, and accommodations (IEP/504, if applicable) were correctly applied.
 - Determine if additional evidence of competency can or should be considered.
- The administrator will issue a written decision within five (5) school days of the meeting.

LEGAL REFS: [DESE Graduation Requirements and Related Guidance](#)
[DESE Graduation and Transition Planning for Students with IEPs](#)
[DESE Competency Determination Guidance and Policy Submission](#)
[603 CMR 30.00](#)
[M.G.L. c. 69, § 1D](#)

CROSS REFS: [Haverhill Public Schools Handbooks](#)

LAST REVIEWED: October 21, 2025

Local Graduation Requirements

Section 1: Credit Requirements

At Haverhill Public Schools, students in grades 9–12 typically earn credits in half-credit or full-credit increments, corresponding to semester-long or full-year courses (subject to change as course offerings change). A credit is awarded upon successful completion of a course with a passing grade. To meet graduation requirements, students must earn a total of 20 credits. While the minimum requirement for graduation is 20 credits, students also have the opportunity to meet the Massachusetts MassCore recommendations by completing a total of 24 credits (including Wellness).

Credits are required in each of the following content areas as part of Haverhill Public Schools' local graduation requirements (stated below):

Subject	Requirements	Credit
English Language Arts	English I*, II*, III, IV	4.0
Mathematics	Algebra I* or Integrated Math I*, Geometry* or Integrated Math II*, (Students must enroll in and complete four Math courses. A minimum of three must be passed, including mandatory completion of the CD requirement courses*)	3.0
Science	Biology* or equivalent course* and two other lab Sciences	3.0
History and Social Science	US History I* or AP US History* and two other History or Social Sciences	3.0**
World Language or Fine Arts		1.0
Physical Education	PE 1 and PE Electives	1.0

***In addition, students are expected to take and pass the Competency Determination assessment as part of their high school graduation requirement.**

****A CD for US History I is required for Class of 2027 and beyond.**

A passing score of 60 or above is needed to earn full credit in all courses.

Section 2: Additional Requirements

Haverhill Public Schools' additional components of local graduation requirements.

Subject	Requirements	Credit
Health	Health I and Health Electives	1.0
Electives	(Options can include, but are not limited to: Technology and/or school-to-career, CTE, Humanities, STEM, Languages, Fine Arts, Early College, Dual-Enrollment, Wellness)	4.0

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