



State Board of Education

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MEMORANDUM

TO: School District Superintendents

FROM: Hershel Lyons

DATE: December 29, 2017

SUBJECT: Graduation Requirements for Displaced Puerto Rico High School Students

We are excited and pleased to announce that we have confirmation for graduation requirements for displaced Puerto Rican high school juniors and seniors to substantially complete the Puerto Rico high school curriculum and earn a Puerto Rico high school diploma if they choose this option.

Eligible Students

The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) will request that Florida public school districts provide students with an option to earn a Puerto Rico high school diploma if the student

- 1) is enrolled in a public school in Florida;
- 2) was enrolled in a public school in Puerto Rico;
- 3) has been displaced by Hurricane Maria; and
- 4) had attained the 11th or 12th grade in Puerto Rico by the time Hurricane Maria made landfall in October 2017.

Requirements for Earning a Puerto Rico High School Diploma for a Student Who is Currently a Junior or a Senior in High School

- In order for a student to earn a high school diploma from Puerto Rico, the student must complete a minimum of 18 credits, 20 hours of occupational experiences (which may include mentoring, internship or work experience, or a combination thereof) and 40 hours of community service.
- The 18 credits required for a student to earn a Puerto Rico high school diploma must include the following:
 - Spanish – 3.0 credits
 - English – 3.0 credits
 - Mathematics – 3.0 credits
 - Social Studies – 3.0 credits
 - Science – 3.0 credits

HERSHEL LYONS
CHANCELLOR OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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- Physical Education – 1.0 credit
 - Art – 0.5 credit
 - Health – 0.5 credit
 - Responsible Parenting – 0.5 credit (may also be satisfied with a Health Education or elective course)
 - Technology, Family Science, Agriculture or other elective – 0.5 credit.
- There are no specific courses required for the credits in mathematics, English, Science or Social Studies.
 - There are no requirements for a student to earn a minimum grade point average or satisfy standardized assessment requirements.

Student Transcripts

We will need to identify the process by which students may request official transcripts and a diploma from the Puerto Rico Department of Education. Until that process has been established, there is a process in place for establishing a student's progression plan that is outlined in State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.09941, Florida Administrative Code. When a high school student transfers into a Florida public school, the credits and grades earned and offered for acceptance are based on official educational records. If a high school student from Puerto Rico transfers into a Florida public school without official educational records, then the receiving school determines grade-level placement based on the district student progression plan. Principals, in cooperation with faculty, take steps to assess the student's level of learning in the core content areas. An academic history is created based on student and parent interviews, assessments, teachers' consultation and other factors. The student is then placed in the most appropriate sequential course. Validation of credits established in the academic history is based, in part, upon performance during the first grading period. Please refer to questions and answers in the [Guidance to School Districts of Enrolling Students Displaced by Hurricane Maria](#) (pdf).

The Florida Department of Education is working collaboratively with the Puerto Rico Department of Education to ensure that student credit hours are accurately transferred. Further information will be forthcoming. In the meantime, any student choosing this option and transferring back to their school in Puerto Rico will not count in the denominator and/or adversely affect graduation rates. These students will be coded as "W3B – Any PK12 student who withdraws to attend a public school in another public school out-of-state or out-of-country." This code should be used for all students returning to Puerto Rico including seniors who are returning to receive their high school diploma.

Thank you for your support.

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