K12 ACADEMICS — NATIONAL REFERENCE SERIES



Graduation Requirements

All 50 States + D.C.

Credits, exit exams, diplomas & pathways — how each state defines a high-school diploma.

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2026 EDITION

ABOUT THIS REFERENCE

How every state compares.

This reference covers **graduation requirements** in all 50 states and the District of Columbia — one page per state, with the key facts at a glance and a plain-English summary. Part of K12 Academics, the world's largest education resource, online since 2004.

21+	200+	30M+	185
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A NOTE ON ACCURACY

State rules change. Every entry links to that state's full, regularly-updated guide online, and we recommend confirming specifics with the state's official department of education.

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STATE 01 OF 51

Alabama

AT A GLANCE

Credits	**24**
Exit exam?	**No (eliminated 2015)**
Diplomas	**Standard + endorsements**
Districts	**May require more**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Alabama requires 24 credits with no exit exam — the Alabama High School Graduation Exam was eliminated in 2015. Students take state assessments, but a passing score is not required to graduate.

READ ALABAMA'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 02 OF 51

Alaska

AT A GLANCE	
Credits	21 (state minimum)
Exit exam?	No
Also	College/career readiness exam (tak...
Districts	Often require more
Confirm with	Your district

OVERVIEW

Alaska requires a state minimum of 21 credits with no exit exam — the Alaska High School Graduation Qualifying Exam was eliminated. Students must take a college/career readiness assessment (but not pass it). Districts often require more.

READ ALASKA'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 03 OF 51

Arizona

AT A GLANCE

Credits	**22 (state minimum)**
Exit exam?	**No**
Required	**Civics test (60/100)**
Districts	**Often require more**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Arizona requires a state minimum of 22 credits with no exit exam — but students must pass the civics test to graduate. Districts frequently require more than the state minimum.

READ ARIZONA'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 04 OF 51

Arkansas

AT A GLANCE

Units	22 (Smart Core)
Exit exam?	No
Also	Computer science & personal financ...
Test	ACT taken statewide
Confirm with	Your district

OVERVIEW

Arkansas requires 22 units under the Smart Core curriculum with no exit exam . Recent LEARNS Act changes added a computer science credit and reinforced financial literacy .

READ ARKANSAS'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 05 OF 51

California

AT A GLANCE

Exit exam?	**No (repealed in 2015)**
Based on	**Course/credit completion**
State minimum	**Specific required courses**
Districts	**Often require more credits**
Honors	**Golden State Seal; Seal of Biliter...**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

California requires students to complete a set of required courses to earn a high school diploma — there is no exit exam (the CAHSEE was repealed in 2015). The state sets minimum course requirements , and districts frequently require more credits, so your local requirements are what ultimately matter.

READ CALIFORNIA'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 06 OF 51

Colorado

AT A GLANCE

Credits	**Set by districts**
State role	**Menu of readiness demonstrations**
Exit exam?	**No single exit exam**
Choose from	**SAT/ACT, AP, IB, ASVAB, capstone &...**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Colorado is a strong local-control state — districts set the credit requirements . What the state defines is a menu of college- and career-ready demonstrations : students choose one or more options to show they're ready to graduate. There's no single exit exam .

READ COLORADO'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 07 OF 51

Connecticut

AT A GLANCE

Credits	25
Exit exam?	No
Includes	Mastery-based diploma assessment
Also	Fine arts & financial literacy
Confirm with	Your district

OVERVIEW

Connecticut requires 25 credits with no exit exam . It emphasizes a mastery-based diploma approach and a specific course distribution across the disciplines.

READ CONNECTICUT'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 08 OF 51

Delaware

AT A GLANCE	
Credits	24
Exit exam?	No
Also	Career pathway + Student Success P...
Districts	May require more
Confirm with	Your district

OVERVIEW

Delaware requires 24 credits with no exit exam , plus a career pathway (a sequence of related courses) and a Student Success Plan .

READ DELAWARE'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 09 OF 51

Florida

AT A GLANCE

Standard diploma	**24 credits**
Exit exam?	**Yes — Grade 10 ELA + Algebra I EOC**
Accelerated	**18-credit ACCEL option**
Designations	**Scholar & Merit**
Also	**Personal financial literacy**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Florida's standard diploma requires 24 credits , and Florida is one of the few states that still requires passing state assessments to graduate. There are also accelerated options and special designations for high achievers.

READ FLORIDA'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 10 OF 51

Georgia

AT A GLANCE

Units	**23 required**
Exit exam?	**No (eliminated)**
Milestones	**Count toward course grade**
Seals	**Biliteracy & others**
Districts	**May require more**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Georgia requires 23 units to graduate — and there is no exit exam (the Georgia High School Graduation Test was eliminated). End-of-course Georgia Milestones assessments count toward the course grade rather than serving as a separate graduation gate.

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STATE 11 OF 51

Hawaii

AT A GLANCE

System	**Single statewide district (HIDOE)**
Credits	**24**
Exit exam?	**No**
Honors	**Academic, CTE & STEM Honors**
Also	**Senior project; transition plan**

OVERVIEW

Hawaii is a single statewide school district (HIDOE), so graduation requirements are uniform: 24 credits with no exit exam . Students complete a senior project and a Personal Transition Plan , and can earn diploma honors .

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STATE 12 OF 51

Idaho

AT A GLANCE

Credits	**46 semester credits**
Exit exam?	**No (proficiency via options)**
Required	**College entrance exam (SAT/ACT)**
Also	**Senior project**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Idaho requires 46 semester credits (about 23 year-long credits), a college entrance exam , and a senior project . There’s no single exit exam , though students demonstrate proficiency.

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STATE 13 OF 51

Illinois

AT A GLANCE

Exit exam?	**No**
Based on	**Course/credit completion**
Civics	**Required course**
Also	**Consumer education / financial lit...**
Districts	**Often require more**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Illinois requires students to complete required courses to graduate — there is no exit exam . The state sets minimum course requirements (including civics), and districts commonly add more.

READ ILLINOIS'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 14 OF 51

Indiana

AT A GLANCE

Framework	**Indiana diploma + Graduation Pathw...**
Exit exam?	**No single exit exam**
Pathways	**Diploma + employability + readines...**
New	**Redesigned diploma (phasing in)**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Indiana graduation combines a diploma (credits) with Graduation Pathways — and there's no single exit exam . Indiana has also redesigned its diploma around readiness, phasing in for future classes — so confirm what applies to your student.

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STATE 15 OF 51

Iowa

AT A GLANCE

Core	4 English, 3 math, 3 science, 3 so...
Total credits	Set by districts
Exit exam?	No
Confirm with	Your district

OVERVIEW

Iowa sets minimum core course requirements but leaves the total credit count to districts . There is no exit exam . So your local district's requirements determine the full picture.

READ IOWA'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 16 OF 51

Kansas

AT A GLANCE	
Credits	21 (state minimum)
Exit exam?	No
Districts	Often require more
Also	Individual Plan of Study
Confirm with	Your district

OVERVIEW

Kansas requires a state minimum of 21 credits with no exit exam . Districts commonly require more, and every student develops an Individual Plan of Study.

READ KANSAS'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 17 OF 51

Kentucky

AT A GLANCE	
Credits	22 (state minimum)
Also	Graduation qualifiers (reading & m...
Demonstrate	Via state test or alternatives
Not a strict	Pass-or-fail exit exam
Confirm with	Your district

OVERVIEW

Kentucky requires a state minimum of 22 credits , plus "graduation qualifiers" — students must demonstrate basic competency in reading and math through the state assessment or approved alternatives.

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STATE 18 OF 51

Louisiana

AT A GLANCE

Diplomas	**TOPS University & Jump Start Caree...**
Units	**23—24**
Exit exam?	**Yes — LEAP EOC exams**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Louisiana offers two diploma pathways — the college-prep TOPS University diploma and the Jump Start Career diploma — each requiring about 23–24 units . Louisiana is one of the few states that still requires passing end-of-course exams to graduate.

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STATE 19 OF 51

Maine

AT A GLANCE

Model	**State minimums + local control**
Exit exam?	**No**
Note	**Proficiency-based mandate repealed**
Districts	**Set specifics**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Maine sets minimum course requirements but leaves much to districts . There is no exit exam . Maine previously mandated a proficiency-based diploma , but that statewide mandate was repealed , returning flexibility to districts.

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STATE 20 OF 51

Maryland

AT A GLANCE	
Credits	21 (state minimum)
Assessments	MCAP (take; alternatives if not pa...
Distinctive	75 hours of service-learning
Districts	Often require more
Confirm with	Your district

OVERVIEW

Maryland requires a state minimum of 21 credits , participation in state MCAP assessments , and a distinctive student service-learning requirement. Districts (Maryland has 24) often require more.

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STATE 21 OF 51

Massachusetts

AT A GLANCE	
Big change	**MCAS graduation test repealed (202...**
Now	**Districts certify competency**
Recommended	**MassCore course of study**
MCAS	**Still taken, not required to pass**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Massachusetts made a major change in 2024: voters repealed the requirement to pass the MCAS to graduate (starting with the class of 2025). Now, districts certify that students have met state standards through coursework. The MassCore program of study is the state's recommended course sequence.

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STATE 22 OF 51

Michigan

AT A GLANCE

Framework	**Michigan Merit Curriculum**
Exit exam?	**No**
Includes	**Algebra II, 2 world language**
Also	**Online learning; financial literac…**
Districts	**Set total credits**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Michigan graduation follows the Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) — a set of required courses with no exit exam . It's known for including Algebra II, two years of world language, an online learning experience , and a financial-literacy requirement.

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STATE 23 OF 51

Minnesota

AT A GLANCE

Credits	**21.5 (state minimum)**
Exit exam?	**No**
Tests	**MCA taken, not required to pass**
Districts	**Often require more**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Minnesota requires a state minimum of about 21.5 credits with no exit exam — the state removed passing-test graduation requirements. Students take the MCA assessments, but a passing score is not required to graduate.

READ MINNESOTA'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 24 OF 51

Mississippi

AT A GLANCE

Units	**24 (Traditional)**
Endorsements	**Academic, Distinguished, CTE**
Exit exam?	**No strict single exit exam**
Assessment	**Subject-area tests with options**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Mississippi requires 24 units for the Traditional diploma, with optional endorsements (Academic, Distinguished Academic, and CTE). Students take subject-area tests, but Mississippi provides multiple options to meet the assessment requirement rather than a single pass-or-fail exit exam.

READ MISSISSIPPI'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 25 OF 51

Missouri

AT A GLANCE

Units	**24 (state minimum)**
Exit exam?	**No**
Required	**U.S. & Missouri civics/constitutio...**
Also	**CPR training**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Missouri requires a state minimum of 24 units with no exit exam — but students must pass civics/constitution tests and complete a few other requirements. Districts often require more.

READ MISSOURI'S FULL GUIDE
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Montana

AT A GLANCE	
Units	**20 (state minimum)**
Exit exam?	**No**
Districts	**Set most requirements**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Montana sets a state minimum of 20 units with no exit exam , and — as a strong local-control state — districts set most of the specifics.

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Nebraska

AT A GLANCE

Model	**State minimums + local control**
Exit exam?	**No**
Districts	**Set most requirements**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Nebraska is a strong local-control state: it sets some minimum requirements , but districts determine most of the credits and courses . There is no exit exam .

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Nevada

AT A GLANCE

Diplomas	**Standard, Advanced, College & Care...**
Credits	**~23 (Standard)**
Exit exam?	**No (passing not required)**
Also	**ACT taken statewide**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Nevada offers several diplomas — Standard , Advanced , and College and Career Ready — with the Standard diploma requiring about 23 credits . Nevada students take end-of-course exams and the ACT, but a passing score is not required to graduate.

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New Hampshire

AT A GLANCE	
Model	**Competency-based**
Credits	**20 (state minimum)**
Exit exam?	**No**
Districts	**Often require more**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

New Hampshire is a national leader in competency-based education : students earn credit by demonstrating competencies , not just seat time. The state minimum is 20 credits , with no exit exam — and districts often require more.

READ NEW HAMPSHIRE'S FULL GUIDE
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New Jersey

AT A GLANCE

Credits	**120**
Exit exam?	**Yes — NJGPA (ELA & math)**
Alternatives	**SAT/ACT/etc. concordant scores**
Also	**Financial literacy required**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

New Jersey requires 120 credits and is one of the few states that still requires a graduation assessment — the NJGPA . Students must demonstrate proficiency in ELA and math (or use an approved alternative).

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New Mexico

AT A GLANCE

Units	**24**
Exit exam?	**No single exit exam**
Competency	**Demonstrated via multiple measures**
Also	**Next Step Plan each year**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

New Mexico requires 24 units and a demonstration of competency in core areas — but there's no single pass-or-fail exit exam . Students show competency through multiple measures and complete a yearly Next Step Plan .

READ NEW MEXICO'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 32 OF 51

New York

AT A GLANCE

Currently	**22 units + Regents exams**
Diplomas	**Local, Regents, Regents Advanced**
Big change	**Regents exam requirement being pha…**
New system	**NY Inspires / Portrait of a Gradua…**
First new cohort	**~grade 9 in 2027**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

New York is in the middle of a major overhaul of its graduation requirements. Currently , students earn a diploma with 22 units of credit and by passing a set of Regents exams . But the state is phasing out the Regents-exam requirement and moving to a single, competency-based diploma under its "NY Inspires" / Portrait of a…

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STATE 33 OF 51

North Carolina

AT A GLANCE

Framework	**Future-Ready Core**
Credits	**22 (state minimum)**
Exit exam?	**No**
EOC tests	**Count toward course grade**
Districts	**Often require more**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

North Carolina uses the Future-Ready Core course of study, requiring a state minimum of 22 credits — with no exit exam . End-of-course (EOC) tests count as part of the course grade , not as a separate gate.

READ NORTH CAROLINA'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 34 OF 51

North Dakota

AT A GLANCE

Units	22
Exit exam?	No
Framework	Choice Ready
Ready in	Post-secondary, workforce or milit...
Confirm with	Your district

OVERVIEW

North Dakota requires 22 units with no exit exam , organized around the Choice Ready framework — students build essential skills plus readiness in a post-secondary, workforce, or military track.

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STATE 35 OF 51

Ohio

AT A GLANCE

Credits	20 minimum
Exit test?	Yes — competency in Algebra I & En...
Plus	Two graduation seals
Backups	Alternative competency demonstrati...
Confirm with	Your district

OVERVIEW

Ohio requires 20 credits plus two additional pieces: demonstrating competency (through state tests or alternatives) and earning two graduation seals . Ohio is one of the states that still ties graduation to assessment results.

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STATE 36 OF 51

Oklahoma

AT A GLANCE	
Units	23
Exit exam?	No (EOI exams dropped)
Required	ICAP (career/academic plan)
Districts	May require more
Confirm with	Your district

OVERVIEW

Oklahoma requires 23 units with no exit exam — the end-of-instruction (EOI) exams were removed as a graduation requirement. Students complete an Individual Career Academic Plan (ICAP) .

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STATE 37 OF 51

Oregon

AT A GLANCE

Credits	24
Essential Skills	Proficiency requirement suspended
Exit exam?	No (proficiency paused)
Also	Education plan & career-related le...
Confirm with	Your district

OVERVIEW

Oregon requires 24 credits plus personalized learning requirements . Notably, Oregon has suspended its "Essential Skills" proficiency requirement (demonstrating reading, writing, and math proficiency), so students are not currently required to pass a proficiency test to graduate — confirm the current status with your district.

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STATE 38 OF 51

Pennsylvania

AT A GLANCE

Statewide	**Pathways system (Act 158)**
Assessment	**Keystone Exams (one pathway)**
Not a strict	**Exit exam — multiple pathways**
Credits	**Set by districts**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Pennsylvania uses a flexible pathways system (under Act 158) to demonstrate readiness for graduation, rather than a single exit exam. Students can meet the requirement through one of several pathways — and districts set the credit requirements .

READ PENNSYLVANIA'S FULL GUIDE
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Rhode Island

AT A GLANCE	
Credits	~20 (Carnegie units)
Exit exam?	No
Proficiency	Via multiple pathways
Also	Individual Learning Plan
Confirm with	Your district

OVERVIEW

Rhode Island requires about 20 Carnegie units with no exit exam (the state removed the requirement to pass a state test). Students demonstrate proficiency through multiple pathways and complete an Individual Learning Plan .

READ RHODE ISLAND'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 40 OF 51

South Carolina

AT A GLANCE

Units	**24**
Exit exam?	**No**
EOC tests	**Count 20% of course grade**
Diplomas	**Standard + Seal options**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

South Carolina requires 24 units with no exit exam . End-of-course (EOCEP) tests count as 20% of the final course grade , not as a separate graduation gate.

READ SOUTH CAROLINA'S FULL GUIDE
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South Dakota

AT A GLANCE

Units	22
Exit exam?	No
Endorsements	Advanced & Career
Also	Personal finance
Confirm with	Your district

OVERVIEW

South Dakota requires 22 units with no exit exam . Students can earn Advanced or Career endorsements, and personal finance is part of the requirements.

READ SOUTH DAKOTA'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 42 OF 51

Tennessee

AT A GLANCE

Credits	22
Exit exam?	No
EOC tests	Count toward course grade
Also	ACT/SAT required
Confirm with	Your district

OVERVIEW

Tennessee requires 22 credits with no exit exam . End-of-course (TCAP/EOC) tests count as a portion of the final course grade , and students must take the ACT or SAT .

READ TENNESSEE'S FULL GUIDE
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Texas

AT A GLANCE	
Program	**Foundation High School Program**
Credits	**22 (foundation) / 26 (with endorse...**
Exit exam?	**Yes — 5 STAAR EOC exams**
Endorsements	**5 areas to choose from**
Top honor	**Distinguished Level of Achievement**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Texas graduation runs on the Foundation High School Program — a base of 22 credits that students build on by choosing an endorsement (reaching 26 credits). Texas is one of the few states that still requires passing end-of-course exams to graduate.

READ TEXAS'S FULL GUIDE
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STATE 44 OF 51

Utah

AT A GLANCE

Credits	24
Exit exam?	No
Also	Financial literacy & digital studi...
Districts	May require more
Confirm with	Your district

OVERVIEW

Utah requires 24 credits with no exit exam . Requirements include financial literacy and digital studies , and districts may add more.

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STATE 45 OF 51

Vermont

AT A GLANCE

Model	**Proficiency-based diploma**
Exit exam?	**No**
Demonstrate	**Proficiency in required areas**
Districts	**Set specifics**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Vermont uses a proficiency-based graduation system: students earn a diploma by demonstrating proficiency against state standards (Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements), not just seat time. There's no exit exam , and districts implement the specifics.

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Virginia

AT A GLANCE	
Diplomas	**Standard (22) & Advanced (26)**
Exit exam?	**Yes — verified credits via SOL**
Also	**Virtual course, CPR, career ed**
Seals	**Multiple diploma seals**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Virginia offers two main diplomas — the Standard Diploma (22 standard units) and the Advanced Studies Diploma (26). Virginia still requires "verified credits" , meaning students must pass certain Standards of Learning (SOL) end-of-course tests (or approved substitutes).

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Washington

AT A GLANCE

Credits	**24 (Career & College Ready)**
Assessment	**Graduation pathway (choose one)**
Plan	**High School and Beyond Plan**
Not a single	**Exit exam**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Washington requires 24 credits (the Career and College Ready framework), a High School and Beyond Plan , and completion of a graduation pathway — but there's no single exit exam : students choose from several pathway options.

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Washington, D.C.

AT A GLANCE

Credits	**24 (Carnegie units)**
Exit exam?	**No**
Distinctive	**100 hours of community service**
Agency	**OSSE**
Confirm with	**Your school**

OVERVIEW

Washington, D.C. requires 24 credits and a distinctive 100 hours of community service to graduate, with no exit exam . Requirements are set by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) .

READ WASHINGTON, D.C.'S FULL GUIDE
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West Virginia

AT A GLANCE	
Credits	~24
Exit exam?	No
Also	Personalized Education Plan
Districts	May require more
Confirm with	Your district

OVERVIEW

West Virginia requires about 24 credits with no exit exam , and every student develops a Personalized Education Plan .

READ WEST VIRGINIA'S FULL GUIDE
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Wisconsin

AT A GLANCE

Credits	**22 (state minimum)**
Exit exam?	**No**
Required	**Civics test (60/100)**
Also	**ACT taken statewide**
Confirm with	**Your district**

OVERVIEW

Wisconsin requires a state minimum of 22 credits with no exit exam — but students must pass a civics test to graduate. Districts often require more.

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Wyoming

AT A GLANCE	
Required	4 English, 3 math, 3 science, 3 so...
Exit exam?	No
Scholarship	Hathaway Success Curriculum
Credits	Total set by districts
Confirm with	Your district

OVERVIEW

Wyoming sets minimum required courses but leaves the total credits to districts , with no exit exam . Students aiming for the Hathaway Scholarship follow the Hathaway Success Curriculum .

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