

4.45.1—SMART CORE CURRICULUM AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS- CLASS OF 2027 AND THEREAFTER

All students are required to participate in the Smart Core curriculum unless their parents or guardians, or the students if they are 18 years of age or older, sign a *Smart Core Waiver Form* to not participate. While Smart Core is the default option, both a *Smart Core Informed Consent Form* and a *Smart Core Waiver Form* will be sent home with students prior to their enrolling in seventh grade, or when a 7-12 grade student enrolls in the district for the first time and there is not a signed form in the student's permanent record. Parents must sign one of the forms and return it to the school so it can be placed in the students' permanent record. This policy is to be included in student handbooks for grades 6-12 and both students and parents must sign an acknowledgement they have received the policy. Those students not participating in the Smart Core curriculum will be required to fulfill the Core curriculum or the requirements of their IEP (when applicable) to be eligible for graduation. Counseling by trained personnel shall be available to students and their parents or legal guardians prior to the time they are required to sign the consent forms.

While there are similarities between the two curriculums, following the Core curriculum may not qualify students for some scholarships and admission to certain colleges could be jeopardized. Students initially choosing the Core curriculum may subsequently change to the Smart Core curriculum **providing** they would be able to complete the required course of study by the end of their senior year. Students wishing to change their choice of curriculums must consult with their counselor to determine the feasibility of changing paths.

This policy, the Smart Core curriculum, and the courses necessary for graduation shall be reviewed by staff, students, and parents at least once every four years to determine if changes need to be made to better serve the needs of the district's students. The superintendent, or his/her designee, shall select the composition of the review panel.

Sufficient information relating to Smart Core and the district's graduation requirements shall be communicated to parents and students to ensure their informed understanding of each. This may be accomplished through any or all of the following means.

- Inclusion in the student handbook of the Smart Core curriculum and graduation requirements;
- Discussion of the Smart Core curriculum and graduation requirements at the school's annual public meeting, PTA meetings, or a meeting held specifically for the purpose of informing the public on this matter;
- Discussions held by the school's counselors with students and their parents; and/or
- Distribution of a newsletter(s) to parents or guardians of the district's students.

Administrators, or their designees, shall train newly hired employees, required to be licensed as a condition of their employment, regarding this policy. The district's annual professional development shall include the training required by this paragraph.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

All students must receive a passing score on the Arkansas Civics Exam in order to graduate.

Students shall be trained in quality psychomotor skill bases in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of automated external defibrillators in order to graduate.

Personal and Family Finance

All students shall receive credit in a course covering the Personal and Family Finance Standards in order to graduate.

Computer Science

All students shall earn one (1) unit of credit in a computer science or computer science related career and technical education course in order to graduate.

Community Service

Each student must receive seventy-five (75) clock hours of community service that is certified by the service agency or organization where the student volunteers.

The community service must be in programs or activities, either in Arkansas or outside of Arkansas, that meet the requirements established by the State Board and the District Board of Directors and include preparation, action, and reflection components. Except as provided by this policy, a student must receive at least the following documented clock hours of community service each year;

- Fifteen (15) hours for students in grade nine (9);
- Twenty (20) hours for students in grade ten (10);
- Twenty (20) hours for students in grade eleven (11); and
- Twenty (20) hours for students in grade twelve (12).

Students transferring into the District after grade nine (9) or students who are graduating early may receive a diploma provided that the minimum requirement for each year the student attends the District is met. The District Board of Directors may grant a waiver of the community service requirement for extenuating circumstances on a case-by-case basis, which may include without limitation;

- A major illness associated with a student or a family member of a student;
- Student homelessness or housing insecurity; and
- Notice to the public school district board of directors if the student is a major contributor to family income.

The number of units students must earn to be eligible for high school graduation is to be earned from the categories listed below. A minimum of 22 units is required for graduation for a student participating in either the Smart Core or Core curriculum. In addition to the 22 units required for graduation by the Arkansas Division of Elementary & Secondary Education, the district requires an additional 1 unit to graduate for a total of 23 units for all College Prep Diplomas of Distinction. The additional required unit may be taken from any electives offered by the district. There are some distinctions made between Smart Core units and Graduation units. Not all units earned toward graduation necessarily apply to Smart Core requirements.

SMART CORE: Sixteen (16) units

Course offerings may vary from year to year, not all of the following courses are available at Van Buren High School.

English: four (4) units – 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th

Oral Communications: one-half (1/2) unit

Mathematics: four (4) units (all students under Smart Core must take a mathematics course in grade 11 or 12 and complete Algebra II.)

1. Algebra I or Algebra A & B* which may be taken in grades 7-8 or 8-9
 2. Geometry or Investigating Geometry or Geometry A & B* which may be taken in grades 8-9 or 9-10
- *A two-year algebra equivalent or a two-year geometry equivalent may each be counted as two units of the four-unit requirement for the purpose of meeting the **graduation** requirement, but only serve as one unit each toward fulfilling the **Smart Core** requirement.
3. Algebra II; and
 4. The fourth unit may be either:
 - A math unit beyond Algebra II: this can include Pre-Calculus, Calculus, AP Statistics, Algebra III, Advanced Topic and Modeling in Mathematics, Mathematical Applications and Algorithms, Linear Systems and Statistics, or any of several IB or Advanced Placement math courses (Comparable concurrent credit college courses may be substituted where applicable) ; or
 - One unit of computer science chosen from DESE Essentials of Computer Programming, DESE Computer Science and Mathematics, AP Computer Science, IB Computer Science, or other options approve by DESE.

Natural Science: a total of three (3) units with lab experience chosen from one unit of Biology; and either:
Two units chosen from the following three categories (there are acceptable options listed by the DESE for each)

- Physical Science;
- Chemistry;
- Physics or Principles of Technology I & II or PIC Physics; or
- One unit from the three categories above and one unit of computer science chosen from DESE Essentials of Computer Programming, DESE Computer Science and Mathematics, AP Computer Science, IB Computer Science, or other options approved by DESE.

Social Studies: three (3) units

- Civics one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) unit
- World History - one unit
- American History - one unit

Physical Education: one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) unit

Note: While one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) unit is required for graduation, no more than one (1) unit may be applied toward fulfilling the necessary units to graduate.

Health and Safety: one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) unit

Economics – one half ($\frac{1}{2}$) unit – dependent upon the licensure of the teacher teaching the course, this can count toward the required three (3) social studies credits or the six (6) required Career Focus elective credits.

Fine Arts: one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) unit

CAREER FOCUS: - Six (6) units

All career focus unit requirements shall be established through guidance and counseling based on the student's contemplated work aspirations. Career focus courses shall conform to the curriculum policy of the district and reflect state curriculum frameworks through course sequencing and career course concentrations where appropriate.

CORE: Sixteen (16) units

English: four (4) units – 9, 10, 11, and 12

Oral Communications: one-half (1/2) unit

Mathematics: four (4) units

- Algebra or its equivalent* - 1 unit
- Geometry or its equivalent* - 1 unit
- All math units must build on the base of algebra and geometry knowledge and skills.
- (Comparable concurrent credit college courses may be substituted where applicable)
- One unit of computer science chosen from DESE Essential of Computer Programming, DESE Computer Science and Mathematics, AP Computer Science, IB Computer Science, or other options approved by DESE may be substituted for a math credit beyond Algebra I and Geometry.

*A two-year algebra equivalent or a two-year geometry equivalent may each be counted as two units of the four (4) unit requirement.

Science: three (3) units

- At least one (1) unit of biology or its equivalent
- Two units chosen from the following three categories:
 - Physical Science;
 - Chemistry;
 - Physics; or
- One unit from the three categories above and one unit of computer science chosen from DESE Essentials of Computer Programming, DESE Computer Science and Mathematics, AP Computer Science, IB Computer Science, or other options approve by DESE.

Social Studies: three (3) units

- Civics one-half (1/2) unit
- World history, one (1) unit
- American History, one (1) unit

Physical Education: one-half (1/2) unit

Note: While one-half (1/2) unit is required for graduation, no more than one (1) unit may be applied toward fulfilling the necessary units to graduate.

Health and Safety: one-half (1/2) unit

Economics – one half (1/2) unit – dependent upon the licensure of the teacher teaching the course, this can count toward the required three (3) social studies credits or the six (6) required Career Focus elective credits.

Fine Arts: one-half (1/2) unit

CAREER FOCUS: - Six (6) units

All career focus unit requirements shall be established through guidance and counseling based on the student's contemplated work aspirations. Career focus courses shall conform to the curriculum policy of the district and reflect state curriculum frameworks through course sequencing and career course concentrations where appropriate.

Legal References:

- Standards of Accreditation 9.03 – 9.03.1.9, 14.02
- ADE Guidelines for the Development of Smart Core Curriculum Policy
- ADE Rules Governing the Digital Learning Act of 2013
- Smart Core Informed Consent Form 2014
- Smart Core Waiver Form 2014
- A.C.A. § 6-16-1406
- Standards for Accreditation 1-C.2, 1-C.2.1, 1-C.2.2, 1-C.2.3
- DESE Guidelines for the Development of Smart Core Curriculum Policy
- DESE Rules Governing Distance and Digital Learning
- Smart Core Information Sheet
- Smart Core Waiver Form
- Commissioner's Memo LS-18-082
- A.C.A. § 6-4-302
- A.C.A. § 6-15-2906
- A.C.A. § 2911
- A.C.A. § 6-16-122
- A.C.A. § 6-16-143
- A.C.A. § 6-16-149
- A.C.A. § 6-16-150
- A.C.A. § 6-16-152
- A.C.A. § 6-16-1901 et seq.
- A.C.A. § 6-28-115

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