

3.8200 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND EXIT STANDARDS

Legal References: G.S. 115C-81
State Board of Education Policy GCS-M-001

Cross References: 3.8100 PROMOTION AND RETENTION
3.8105 PROMOTION APPEALS
3.8110 SUMMER RECOVERY
4.2000 ATTENDANCE

The Board believes that Falls Lake Academy graduates should exemplify the highest standards possible in terms of preparation for the world beyond high school including success in college and the world of work, national and global citizenship and competitiveness, and community involvement. To that end, the Board adopts these high school graduation and exit standards, by which FLA Principals and teachers shall determine how graduating students shall be identified, approved, and honored as FLA graduates.

I. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

A. Occupational Diploma: To the extent possible, students with disabilities shall be held to the same graduation standards as all other students. However, certain students with active Individual Education Plans (IEPs) who qualify on the basis of those IEPs shall be awarded a North Carolina Occupational Diploma upon successful completion of the following requirements (both state and FLA requirements included):

1. Satisfactory completion of all academic requirements (including, but not necessarily limited to, specific course completion and state testing requirements) for the NC Occupational Diploma as established by the NC State Board of Education for the year in which the student graduates
2. Satisfactory accomplishment of the student's IEP goals as determined by his/her IEP Committee
3. Satisfactory performance on 2 PBL project content and presentations in the first semester of the senior year [Note: students approved for early graduation after their 7th semester are exempt from this requirement]
4. Satisfactory performance on a pre-approved individual Graduation Project (both content and presentation)
5. Not more than 8 unexcused absences in any course in the senior year [Note: more than 8 unexcused absences in any high school course = loss of credit (see Board policies 4.2000 and 3.8101)]
6. Satisfactory completion of not less than 10 hours of approved school and/or community service in the senior year

For students with IEPs who take alternative assessments in lieu of the EOG or EOC tests in their respective grades and/or high school courses, graduation decisions shall be based on criteria as recommended by the IEP team. Such decisions may or may not be tied to passing or failing course grades and/or other promotion requirements outlined in this policy.

Each IEP team, with the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) as members (and the student himself/herself as member, also, where appropriate) shall work together to determine the appropriate course of study leading to graduation for that student.

B. North Carolina High School Diploma: All students who do not qualify for the NC Occupational Diploma (see IA above) shall be awarded a North Carolina High School Diploma upon successful completion of the following requirements (both state and FLA requirements included):

1. Passing final grades on and resultant course credit for 28 or more high school – level courses (including all courses required by the state of North Carolina for awarding of an NC High School Diploma) offered at FLA or approved by the FLA administration for transfer from:
 - a) other schools or colleges
 - b) NC Virtual Public School approved high school course offerings
 - c) other pre-approved e-learning programs and/or vendors
 - d) NCDPI's Credit by Demonstrated Mastery program
2. Satisfactory performance (3 or higher) on all state-mandated End-of-Course (EOC) tests and other state-mandated testing program requirements for graduation
3. Satisfactory performance on 2 PBL project content and presentations in the first semester of the senior year [Note: students approved for early graduation after their 7th semester are exempt from this requirement]
4. Satisfactory performance on a pre-approved individual Graduation Project (both content and presentation – see III below)
5. Not more than 8 unexcused absences in any course in the senior year [Note: more than 8 unexcused absences in any high school course = loss of credit (see Board policies 4.2000 and 3.8101)]
6. Satisfactory completion of not less than 10 hours of approved school and/or community service in the senior year

II. NON-GRADUATION, DELAYED GRADUATION

Students who do not graduate due to their failure to meet any of the criteria outlined in this policy are eligible to seek late graduation through the Promotion Appeals and/or Summer Recovery processes (see Board policies 3.8105 and 3.8110).

When participation in neither process earns a student's graduation, he/she may re-take failed courses and/or re-do any of the requirements outlined in this policy which initially were adjudged to be insufficient for passing credit. Once such repeat efforts yield satisfactory results, the Principal is authorized to declare the student "graduated" and award him/her any and all of those diploma(s) and honor(s) due him/her.

Students who then meet graduation requirements under these conditions may elect to walk in the next scheduled Commencement Exercises if they choose to do so.

III. GRADUATION PROJECT

All candidates for the North Carolina High School Diploma shall successfully complete, with satisfactory passing scores, an individual Graduation Project. Graduation Projects shall:

1. adhere to the standards and requirements developed for FLA Graduation Projects by the FLA Principal and high school faculty (see below);
2. take the place of both the regular quarterly PBL projects required in the student's final semester before his/her scheduled graduation;
3. be original pieces of research and presentation, subject to regular rules and procedures regulating all forms of academic honesty and integrity;

4. be presented to an adjudication panel in a public forum in the second quarter of the student's final semester before his/her scheduled graduation; and
5. carry no course credit nor individual weighted or unweighted grade, but shall be recorded as "P" or "F" on the student's report card and transcript.

The FLA Principal shall convene a committee of high school faculty each fall to review the existing Graduation Project standards and requirements and make recommendations to the full high school faculty concerning any changes, additions, deletions, and/or modifications reached by consensus for that year's graduating seniors' Graduation Projects. The full high school faculty shall affirm or deny such changes, additions, deletions, and/or modifications by a vote of the full faculty (majority rule carries vote).

IV. EARLY GRADUATION

Students who are on-track to meet graduation requirements by the end of their 7th semester in high school may apply for early graduation at the end of that semester. Students who are approved to graduate at the end of their 7th semester shall be awarded all honors and/or recognitions due them as part of the graduating class of that academic school year, including the privilege of walking in the graduate line at the following spring's commencement exercises (barring other disqualifying factors) and being named in the list of Honor Graduates, if applicable.

V. GRADUATION HONORS

A. Honor Graduates: Falls Lake Academy graduates shall be named Honor Graduates in three categories: *Cum Laude* graduates, *Magna Cum Laude* graduates, and *Summa Cum Laude* graduates. GPA standards for each of the three categories shall be set and periodically reviewed by the Board upon the recommendation of the chief FLA administrator as those standards evolve in North Carolina and surrounding counties. Determination of Honor Graduate status each year shall be determined by the students' cumulative weighted GPAs. Honor graduates shall be identified in the graduation line by specific regalia insignia corresponding to each category.

B. Valedictorian and Salutatorian: The students ranked #1 and #2 in each graduating class, respectively, shall be named Valedictorian and Salutatorian. Both shall be afforded the privilege, barring other disqualifying factors, to speak at Commencement. The ranking of students to determine who will be named Valedictorian and Salutatorian shall be determined by the students' cumulative weighted GPAs.

C. Additional Honors: Graduates shall be recognized and awarded honors each year for the widest possible range of academic and other significant achievements as approved by the Board upon recommendation of the chief FLA administrator. Such recognition includes, but is not necessarily limited to, such things as the North Carolina Academic Scholars' seal, the International Baccalaureate and/or Advanced Placement program diplomas, and individual FLA awards. Medals, pins, and other award insignia relating to these awards may be worn on the students' graduation attire as appropriate.

VI. JUNIOR MARSHALLS

The top 10 ranked students in each year's Junior class shall be invited to serve as Marshalls at Commencement Exercises for that year, barring other disqualifying factors.