Diplomas and Graduation

The Virginia Board of Education sets forth graduation requirements and diploma options for students based upon the year a student enters ninth grade for the first time. In accordance with School Board Policy 662, “Graduation Requirements,” Prince William County Public Schools (PWCS) shall follow the rules and regulations stipulated for graduation. Diplomas may be earned by eligible students who satisfy the requirements for their diploma option. Only students officially enrolled in PWCS shall be eligible to receive a diploma or certificate of studies.

I. Diploma Options and Certificate of Studies

A. Students may earn an Advanced Studies, Standard, or Applied Studies diploma. For detailed information about specific graduation requirements and diploma options, refer to the General Information section of the PWCS High School Course Catalog, which is published annually.

B. A certificate of studies is awarded to students in any grade level who are officially enrolled in a high school through an approved foreign exchange student sponsoring agency. The certificate serves only to recognize the completion of one year of study in PWCS. Foreign exchange students are admitted to PWCS on a temporary, cultural exchange basis, and not for high school graduation purposes, therefore, they are not eligible to earn a high school diploma or participate in graduation ceremonies.

C. All graduation requirements must be completed before a student is eligible to receive any type of diploma, graduation document, or recognition.

D. Any student who is seeking a PWCS diploma must be officially enrolled in PWCS as a full-time student for at least nine weeks (one grading period) immediately preceding graduation. The granting of credit for courses completed while in a private school or on home instruction does not qualify a non-enrolled or partially enrolled student to receive a PWCS diploma. As outlined in the PWCS High School Course Catalog, students must earn a specific number of standard units of credit and earn the designated number of verified units of credit to be awarded a Standard or Advanced Studies diploma.
II. Diploma Warranty

A. PWCS provides a two-year warranty for all diploma recipients. The diploma warranty guarantees minimum competencies in reading, writing, and mathematics. A student receiving a diploma from PWCS:

1. Understands, interprets, and analyzes written material.
2. Carries out oral and written directions or obtains clarification when necessary.
3. Expresses ideas both orally and in writing, using appropriate vocabulary and proper grammar.
4. Locates and obtains needed information from common reference materials, computerized databases, maps and diagrams, and resource people.
5. Applies basic computational skills.
6. Uses problem-solving strategies in the work environment.

B. PWCS graduates who are identified by employers as lacking one or more of these minimum competencies may be re-trained through the PWCS Nontraditional Education and/or Summer School Program at no expense to the graduate.

III. Graduation

A. Students are required to satisfy all requirements before graduation day to participate in the end of school year graduation ceremony.

B. Any senior needing to attend a summer school or alternative program during the summer to complete graduation requirements is not eligible to participate in the end of the year graduation ceremony.

C. Students who complete graduation requirements through the PWCS Summer School Program may participate in the end of summer school graduation ceremony. The last high school attended during the school year shall award the diploma.

D. There shall be no graduation exercises for elementary and middle schools.
The Associate Superintendent for Student Learning and Accountability (or designee) is responsible for implementing and monitoring this regulation.

This regulation and related policy shall be reviewed at least every five years and revised as needed.