

# Harford County Public Schools

## POLICY

**POLICY TITLE:**

Financial Literacy Graduation Requirement

**ADOPTION/EFFECTIVE DATE:****MOST RECENTLY AMENDED:****MOST RECENTLY REAFFIRMED:****POLICY/PROCEDURE MANUAL SUMMARY CATEGORY:**

Instruction

**POLICY NUMBER:**

### I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students graduating from Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) high schools are equipped with the essential personal financial literacy skills necessary for responsible citizenship, post-secondary academic success, and lifelong financial well-being. As the demands of an increasingly complex financial landscape continue to grow, it is incumbent upon HCPS to prepare students to make informed and effective financial decisions throughout their lives.

### II. Definitions

**A. Financial Literacy:** The knowledge, skills, and confidence necessary to make informed and effective decisions about personal financial matters, including but not limited to budgeting, saving, investing, credit management, debt, insurance, and retirement planning.

**B. Personal Financial Literacy Course:** A course or integrated instructional unit aligned with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) personal financial literacy content standards that provides instruction across the six financial literacy domains established by COMAR 13A.04.06.

**C. Credit:** A unit of achievement awarded for the successful completion of a course, as defined in HCPS Policy 04-0006-000, Graduation Requirements, and the HCPS Student Education Planning Guide (SEPG).

**D. Half Credit (0.5 Credit):** One-half unit of credit, typically representing the successful completion of a semester-length course or equivalent.

**E. COMAR:** Code of Maryland Regulations. Maryland State agency regulations as compiled and maintained by the Maryland Division of State Documents.

**F. MSDE:** Maryland State Department of Education. The state agency responsible for supervising public education in Maryland.

**G. Student Education Planning Guide (SEPG):** The district's comprehensive outline of course and program offerings, graduation and completion requirements, and individual course information for all HCPS high schools, published annually.

**H. IEP:** Individualized Education Program. A legally binding document developed for each public school student who is eligible for special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

### III. Statement of Policy

#### **A. Graduation Requirement**

Effective with students entering Grade 9 for the first time in the 2028-2029 school year, all students pursuing a Maryland High School Diploma from Harford County Public Schools must successfully complete a minimum of one-half (0.5) credit in personal financial literacy as a condition of graduation.

Students with disabilities who are working toward a Maryland High School Diploma shall be afforded equal access to the financial literacy requirement in a manner consistent with their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

## **B. Course Content Standards**

Approved financial literacy courses and instructional programs must align with the six content domains established by the MSDE Personal Financial Literacy State Curriculum (COMAR 13A.04.06), which include:

1. Making informed and financially responsible decisions;
2. Relating careers, education, and income;
3. Planning and managing personal finances;
4. Managing credit and debt;
5. Creating and building personal wealth; and
6. Managing risks and preserving wealth.

## **C. Pathways to Fulfill the Requirement**

Students may satisfy the financial literacy graduation requirement through one or more of the following approved pathways:

1. Successful completion of a standalone personal financial literacy course offered by HCPS and listed in the Student Education Planning Guide;
2. Successful completion of a Career and Technology Education (CTE) course or pathway that has been formally reviewed and approved by the Superintendent or designee as meeting the MSDE financial literacy content standards in full; or
3. Acceptance of equivalent transfer credit from another accredited school system, subject to review and approval by the student's school counselor and building principal; or
4. Successful completion of a course in any subject area that incorporates substantial financial literacy content and has been formally reviewed and approved by the Superintendent or designee as meeting the MSDE financial literacy content standards in full. Such approval shall be documented in writing and the approved course shall be listed in the HCPS Student Education Planning Guide for the applicable school year.

## **D. Implementation Timeline**

1. This policy shall take effect beginning with students who enter Grade 9 for the first time in the 2028-2029 school year.
2. Students who entered Grade 9 prior to the 2028-2029 school year are not subject to this requirement; however, they are encouraged to pursue financial literacy coursework as part of their educational plan.
3. The Superintendent or designee shall begin developing administrative regulations, course approval processes, and teacher capacity plans no later than the 2027-2028 school year in preparation for full implementation.

## **E. Graduation Credit Requirement Adjustment**

In recognition that the adoption of a new graduation requirement should not increase the overall academic burden placed on students, the Physical Education credit requirement shall be reduced by one-half (0.5) credit, effective with the same entering freshman cohort in the 2028-2029 school year. The new 0.5 credit financial literacy requirement is established as a distinct required category in place of that reduction. The net change maintains the minimum total graduation credit requirement at 26.0 credits. This adjustment is intended to preserve scheduling flexibility and ensure students retain meaningful opportunities to pursue coursework aligned with their individual interests and post-secondary goals.

The table below reflects the current HCPS graduation credit requirements for students entering Grade 9 in the 2021-2022 school year and beyond, alongside the proposed requirements that would take effect for students entering Grade 9 in the 2028-2029 school year. Updated credit distribution tables reflecting these changes shall be published in the HCPS Student Education Planning Guide prior to the 2028-2029 school year.

## HCPS High School Graduation Credit Requirements – Maryland State vs. Current HCPS vs. Proposed HCPS

Subject Area	MD State Min. (COMAR)	Current HCPS (Class of 2025+)	Proposed HCPS (Class of 2032+)
English	4.0	4.0	4.0
Mathematics (incl. Algebra I & Geometry)	4.0	4.0	4.0
Science	3.0	3.0	3.0
Social Studies (incl. American Government, World History, U.S. History)	3.0	3.0	3.0
Fine Arts	1.0	1.0	1.0
Physical Education	0.5	1.0 *	0.5
Health Education	1.0	1.0	1.0
Computer Science / Technology Education	1.0	1.0	1.0
World Language or CTE / Career Pathway Completer	2.0 min.	4.0–6.0 *	4.0–6.0 *
Local Electives	At LEA discretion	Varies (to reach 26.0 total)	Varies (to reach 26.0 total)
Financial Literacy	Not Required	Not Required	<b>0.5 (NEW)</b>
<b>Minimum Total Credits Required</b>	<b>22.0</b>	<b>26.0</b>	<b>26.0</b>

\* HCPS currently requires 1.0 credit of Physical Education (exceeding the state minimum of 0.5). Under this policy, the HCPS Physical Education requirement is reduced to 0.5 credit, aligning with the state minimum, effective with students entering Grade 9 in the 2028-2029 school year. HCPS requires 4.0–6.0 credits for Career Pathway & Completer Programs (exceeding the state minimum of 2.0 credits of World Language or CTE); this requirement is unchanged by this policy. State-required credits (22.0 per COMAR 13A.03.02.03) are unchanged by this policy. Green cells indicate the newly added financial literacy requirement.

### F. Course Offerings and SEPG Publication

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that courses eligible to satisfy the financial literacy graduation requirement are identified, reviewed for alignment with MSDE content standards, and published annually in the HCPS Student Education Planning Guide. HCPS shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that qualifying course options are accessible to all students across all high schools in the district.

### G. Student Notification and Counseling

School counselors shall inform all incoming ninth-grade students and their parents or guardians of the financial literacy graduation requirement beginning with the 2028-2029 school year. Counselors shall incorporate this requirement into each student's six-year education plan and shall monitor student progress toward fulfillment of the requirement annually.

### H. Administrative Regulations

The Superintendent is authorized to develop and adopt such administrative regulations and procedures as are reasonably necessary to implement this policy, including but not limited to course approval criteria, transfer credit equivalency procedures, special education accommodations, and reporting requirements.

**I. Alignment with State and Local Goals**

This policy is consistent with and complementary to the Maryland State Department of Education’s personal financial literacy program of instruction requirements as set forth in COMAR 13A.04.06, and supports HCPS’s long-term goal of preparing every student for success in post-secondary education and career.

**Board Approval Acknowledged By:**

---

Superintendent of Schools

Policy Action Dates			
ACTION	DATE	ACTION	DATE

Responsibility for Policy Maintenance & References	
<b>LAST EDITOR/DRAFTER NAME:</b>	<b>JOB POSITION OF LAST EDITOR/DRAFTER:</b>
<b>PERSON RESPONSIBLE:</b>	<b>JOB POSITION OF PERSON RESPONSIBLE:</b>
<b>DESIGNEE NAME:</b>	<b>JOB POSITION OF DESIGNEE:</b>
<b>POLICY NUMBER PRIOR TO NOVEMBER 1, 2005:</b> N/A	

**LEGAL REFERENCES**

- COMAR 13A.04.06 – Personal Financial Literacy Education
- COMAR 13A.03.02 – High School Graduation Requirements
- Maryland Education Article, §7-205 – Financial Literacy Instruction
- 20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq. – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

*Note: All references are to specific federal or Maryland statutes or regulations. References are provided for convenience and informational purposes only and are not to be considered exhaustive or as precluding Harford County Public Schools from relying upon any other statutes or regulations in support of this policy.*