

REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES

College Preparatory Studies Certificate

The Missouri State Board of Education awards the College Preparatory Studies Certificate (CPSC) to Missouri students who successfully complete a rigorous academic program in high school. The certificate is awarded in addition to the regular high school diploma granted by local school districts. Created by the Board in 1985, the certificate is designed to provide incentive and recognition for public and non-public high school students who exceed the state's minimum graduation requirements. **Because the certificate is awarded by the state, local schools may not add additional requirements for students to qualify.**

In 1994, the State Board of Education revised its requirements for the CPSC in order to align with the "Core Curriculum" standards recommended by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education as a basis for college admissions in Missouri. This flier outlines the revised criteria. These guidelines will be used in awarding certificates to qualified high school students, beginning in 1996.

Awarding the College Preparatory Studies Certificate is voluntary on the part of school districts, and meeting the requirements is voluntary on the part of the students. While the certificate is primarily intended as an incentive for college-bound students, those who are not planning to enter college also may wish to work toward earning the award. School officials are encouraged to use the program to encourage ALL students to pursue excellence in their high school studies.

To be eligible for the certificate, a student must meet these requirements:

1. Complete a rigorous high school program cooperatively planned by the school, the student and the student's parents. The program must include at least these units of credit:

Subjects	Units
English/Language Arts.....	4
Mathematics.....	3
Science.....	2
Social Studies.....	3
Fine Arts.....	1
Practical Arts.....	1
Physical Education.....	1
Specified Core Electives.....	3
General Electives.....	6
Total	24

2. Earn at least a 3.0 grade point average (GPA), on a 4.0 scale, in the combined subject areas of English/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. The school may calculate GPAs for its students at the end of the seventh or eighth semester of high school.
3. Score above the prior year's national composite average on the American College Test (ACT) or on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). This criterion is revised annually to reflect the latest national averages from the ACT and SAT. *Check the current year's certificate order form for the required minimum scores.*
4. Complete a strong academic program, as specifically outlined below, in the subject areas of English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies and specified core electives. **No substitutions are authorized.**
 - **ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS** – At least four units, one of which may be speech or debate, and two units of which must be in courses emphasizing composition or writing skills

Examples of courses generally acceptable toward the four units: English or Language Arts I, II, III, and IV, literature courses, journalism (if writing intensive), speech and debate. "Applied Communications," developed by the Agency for Instructional technology (AIT), may be counted.

Examples of unacceptable courses: yearbook, school publications, acting, theater, dramatics, business English, mass media and photography.

- **MATHEMATICS** – At least three units, high school level algebra and beyond, including Algebra II.

Examples of courses generally acceptable toward the three units: Algebra I, plane geometry, Algebra II, pre-calculus, trigonometry, analytic geometry, calculus and math analysis. "Applied Mathematics" courses, developed by the Center for Occupational Research and Development (CORD), may be counted only if the student successfully completes a standard Algebra II course. Standard algebra courses that have been subdivided, e.g., Algebra I is divided into Algebra 1A and 1B, may be counted only as one course unit. Algebra I taken in the seventh or eighth grade may be counted toward meeting the requirement.

Examples of unacceptable courses: computer math, computer programming, consumer math, computer science, pre-algebra, basic math, general math, terminal math, business math and accounting.

- **SCIENCE** – At least two units (**not including general science**) selected from biology, chemistry, or physics, one of which is a laboratory course.

Examples of unacceptable courses: life science, physical science, and Earth science if not taught at the high school level in a rigor

- **SOCIAL STUDIES** – At least three units, including American history and at least one semester of government.

Examples of courses generally acceptable toward the three units: world history, American history, American government, civics, principles of democracy, economics, psychology, sociology, political science and geography.

Examples of unacceptable courses: regional history, family living, family relations, marriage and family, consumer education, and courses generally listed under “practical arts” or “human environmental science.”

- **FINE ARTS** – At least one unit of fine arts courses in the visual arts, music, dance and theater.

Examples of courses generally acceptable toward the one unit: Art I, II, III, and IV, sculpture, design, drawing, painting, theater, oral interpretation, dance, dramatics, band and any other instrumental music, chorus, and any other vocal music courses, and art, music, or theater appreciation courses.

Examples of unacceptable courses: speech, debate, radio and television, mass media, stagecraft, arts and crafts.

- **SPECIFIED CORE ELECTIVES** – At least three units selected from foreign language (two units of one foreign language are strongly recommended) and/or combinations from two or more of the following course areas: English, mathematics, social studies, science, and fine arts. A computer science course with a prerequisite of at least Algebra I is permissible as a mathematics elective. State and/or international history courses are permissible as social studies electives.

- **GENERAL ELECTIVES** – At least six units sufficient to meet state and local graduation requirements. The courses should be selected and planned by the school, the student, and the student’s parents to develop the student’s aptitude and skills. Advanced vocational-technical courses which have been selected to support and strengthen the student’s college preparatory program or career choice may be used to fulfill this general elective requirement.

5. Dual-credit courses taken in high school for both high school and college credit may be counted toward satisfying the core curriculum requirements.
6. Middle/junior high school courses taken by middle/junior high school students in math, science or foreign language may be counted as satisfying the high school core curriculum requirement if the content is equivalent to high school courses (e.g., Foreign Language I and Algebra I) and if subsequent courses in the subject are shown on the high school transcript (e.g., Foreign Language II and Algebra II).

Each year, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provides forms to all high school principals so they can certify the number of prospective graduates who have qualified for the College Preparatory Studies Certificate. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provides the appropriate number of certificates at no cost to each school or school district.

For more information, contact
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