

CHAPTER 54**(SB 61)**

AN ACT relating to early high school graduation.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔Section 1. KRS 158.142 is amended to read as follows:

- (1) Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, a public school student may complete an early high school graduation program and qualify for an Early Graduation Scholarship Certificate for use at a Kentucky public two (2) year community and technical college or a Kentucky four (4) year public or nonprofit, independent institution that is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, if conditions specified in this section are met.
- (2) Each student desiring to complete an early graduation program shall indicate to the secondary school principal his or her intent prior to the beginning of grade nine (9) or as soon thereafter as the intent is known. The intent shall be indicated on a form provided by the Kentucky Department of Education and signed by the parent.
- (3) For early graduation in accordance with this section, a student shall ~~+~~
 - (a) ~~Obtain a qualifying benchmark score as determined by the Kentucky Board of Education on each of the end of course examinations that make up the high school achievement portion of the accountability system under KRS 158.6453;~~
 - (b) ~~successfully~~ complete the requirements for early high school graduation as established in administrative regulation by the Kentucky Board of Education~~;~~ ~~and~~
 - (c) ~~Score on the ACT examination at or above the benchmarks set by the Council on Postsecondary Education for mathematics, reading, and English and any additional content areas for which the Council on Postsecondary Education establishes benchmarks.~~
- (4) The Kentucky Board of Education or a local board of education shall not impose graduation requirements that would prohibit a student who is pursuing an early graduation program as described in this section from finishing high school in less than four (4) years.
- (5) Students pursuing early graduation may take two (2) high school English courses in an academic year.
- (6) Students pursuing early graduation may complete selected courses at the middle school level. Each school district is encouraged to provide access to all middle school students to English I and Algebra I courses for high school credit. Access may be provided by each middle school offering the course on-site or by the district providing transportation for students to a central location within the district, to a neighboring school within the district, or to a neighboring school district. The district may also provide access for the student to take these courses online based on the local board of education policy.
- (7)
 - (a) In addition to the regular high school diploma, a student who completes a program of study that meets the requirements of subsection (3) of this section shall receive an Early Graduation Scholarship Certificate signed by the high school principal and district superintendent.
 - (b) A student who earns an Early Graduation Scholarship Certificate shall be eligible for a scholarship award to be used at an institution described in subsection (1) of this section. The award amount shall be equal to one-half (1/2) of the state portion of the average statewide per pupil guaranteed base funding level as described in KRS 157.360 for the year in which the student graduates.
 - (c) The student shall be eligible for the scholarship award only for the next academic year following early graduation.
 - (d) Each public high school shall report all Early Graduation Scholarship Certificate recipients by July 1 for the previous academic year to the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority.
 - (e) Each postsecondary institution described in subsection (1) of this section shall notify the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority of students with an Early Graduation Scholarship Certificate who enroll in the institution. The authority shall disburse the award amount described in paragraph (b) of this subsection from the early graduation trust fund established by KRS 164.7892.

Signed by Governor March 30, 2022.