

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Community Members,

We are writing to inform you about an important change to the way our schools will calculate and report graduation rates, beginning in the 2025-2026 school year. These changes result from a recent review by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) that affects how we calculate students who graduate under the CORE Curriculum pathway.

What You Need to Know

Starting in the 2025-2026 school year, Oklahoma public schools are being required to change the way we calculate the graduation in order to comply with federal regulations. As a result, schools with students graduating under the CORE Curriculum will see a **lower graduation rate**. This may be significant in schools with a large number of students on this pathway.

Why is This Happening?

The USDE determined that the **Core Curriculum pathway** does not meet Oklahoma's current standards for college and career readiness, nor does it support OSDE's ESSA plan graduating all students ready to enroll in post-secondary options without the need for remediation. The state's **College Preparatory/Work Ready Curriculum (CPW)** is designed to ensure students meet the requirements for admission to public colleges and universities in Oklahoma. Since the CORE Curriculum does not align with these requirements, the USDE considers it a "lesser credential" under federal law.

Both graduation pathways—the **College Prep/Work Ready Curriculum** and the **CORE Curriculum**—have been part of Oklahoma's education system since 2005. While both are considered valid diplomas in Oklahoma, the **CORE Curriculum** is no longer recognized in the same way under federal guidelines for calculating graduation rates.

What does this mean for Students?

Students will still graduate with a standard diploma regardless of their pathway. Depending on the particular courses students who graduate on the Core pathway choose to take in their ICAP, they may be required to take remedial classes in math and science if they decide to apply to a state college or university. CORE Curriculum graduates also may not meet eligibility requirements for OLAP scholarships.

What Does This Mean for Schools?

While this change affects how graduation rates are calculated, it is important to understand that students graduating on the CORE Curriculum pathway will still receive a valid high school diploma in Oklahoma. However, the change will impact how graduation rates are reported, and schools with many students on the CORE Curriculum pathway will see a decrease in their reported graduation rate.

What Are We Doing to Support Students and Families?

We want to ensure that all students are on track to graduate with the diploma that best supports their future goals. To help with this transition, we are taking the following steps:

1. **Reviewing Graduation Plans:** We are reviewing each student's academic plan to ensure they are on the correct pathway. This includes meeting with students and families to discuss graduation options.
2. **Providing Extra Support:** For students who may need to transition to the **College Prep/Work Ready Curriculum**, we will offer additional resources, such as virtual learning platforms, to help them complete the necessary coursework.
3. **Keeping Families Informed:** It's important for families, especially those with students in grades 8-10, to understand that choosing the Core Curriculum means the student will not meet college entrance requirements. We will work closely with families to ensure they are aware of these implications.

What Can Families Do?

- **Stay Informed:** We encourage you to discuss your child's academic plan with their school counselor to ensure they are on track to meet their graduation and post-high school goals.
- **Ask Questions:** If you have any questions or concerns, our school counselors and staff are available to help. We will also be holding informational sessions to explain this change in more detail.

We understand that this change may raise questions, and we are committed to helping every student and family navigate this process. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with any concerns. Our goal is to ensure all students are prepared for success after high school, whether that be through college, a career, or other opportunities.

Thank you for your continued partnership and support.

Sincerely,

[Superintendent's Name]
[School District Name]
[Contact Information]