



New York State Board of Regents
Dr. John B. King, Jr.
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The State Education Department
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Office of Communications



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**BOARD OF REGENTS TO VOTE ON NEW GRADUATION OPTIONS
New STEM and CTE Pathways to Diplomas Will Improve NYS Economic
Competitiveness**

The New York State Board of Regents will consider new options to meet high school graduation requirements at its April meeting next week. The Board will discuss creating two new pathways to meeting graduation requirements: one focused on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM), and one centered on Career and Technology Education (CTE).

“The jobs created in today’s economy demand a different skills set,” Regents Chancellor Merryl H. Tisch said. “The Board of Regents has examined possible revision of high school graduation requirements. Our goal is to ensure every student graduates from high school college- and career- ready, but that doesn’t mean one size fits all students. These new pathways to graduation will give students new pathways to economic success. The Regents will look carefully at options that increase flexibility for students without diminishing rigor.”

“We’re talking about different, not easier,” State Education Commissioner John B. King, Jr. said. “Our students are falling behind the rest of the world. More options mean a better future for our students. The traditional path to a Regents diploma is still available, but we should increase the pathways to graduation without sacrificing rigor. The global economy is demanding a new set of tools. STEM and CTE can help our students develop those tools. STEM and CTE focus students on the higher-order thinking and problem solving skills necessary for success in today’s – and tomorrow’s - economy.”

“Legitimizing CTE as a pathway to a high school diploma makes all kinds of sense,” Robert Schwartz, Professor of Practice at Harvard Graduate School of Education and co-author Pathways to Prosperity said. “We know that CTE programs are what keep many students in schools and moving towards graduation. The Regents proposal sends a powerful message about the value of CTE in high school education.”

(more)

Current Regents diploma requirements mandate students pass five Regents exams (English Language Arts, Global History and Geography, U.S. History, one Mathematics exam and one science exam) with a score of 65 or better.

The Board of Regents will consider recommendations to make the Global History and Geography exam optional for students pursuing STEM or CTE pathways to graduation. That exam would be replaced by exams relevant to the STEM and CTE pathways. King noted there are several funding options for school districts that implement the new graduation path options. He said districts could use Title I and BOCES aid to implement the options, and federal School Innovation Fund (SIF) and School Improvement Grant (SIG) grants could also be used for both STEM and CTE efforts.

"One of the keys to addressing the diverse educational needs of students in New York is to provide multiple rigorous pathways where students can demonstrate the ability to meet high standards while achieving graduation credentials", Monroe 1 - BOCES District Superintendent Daniel T. White said.

King cited a groundbreaking 2011 report on American education, *Pathways to Prosperity: Meeting the Challenges of Preparing Americans for the 21st Century*, as clear evidence of the need to open more graduation options for students. The report notes that American students lag behind their international counterparts in the skills necessary to fill 21st century jobs.

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