



Nancy S. Grasmick  
State Superintendent of Schools

200 West Baltimore Street • Baltimore, MD 21201 • 410-767-0100 • 410-333-6442 TTY/TDD

**TO:** Members of the State Board of Education  
**FROM:** Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*  
**DATE:** February 23, 2010  
**SUBJECT:** COMAR 13A.03.02.04  
Graduation Requirements  
**ADOPTION**

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**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this action is to request adoption of .04 Credit Requirements under COMAR 13A.03 Graduation Requirements to add Environmental Science to the list of science credits acceptable for graduation.

**BACKGROUND:**

In January, 2008, Executive Order 01.01.2008.06 established the Maryland Partnership for Children in Nature. The Partnership called for the development of a state Environmental Literacy Plan, including the goal of providing a course of study that leads all students to graduate as environmentally literate citizens. An “environmentally literate student” was defined as “one that possesses the knowledge, intellectual skills, attitudes, experiences and motivation to make and act upon responsible environmental decisions as individuals and as members of their community”.

Currently, students must earn three (3) science credits in order to graduate from a Maryland high school. The current language recognizes earth, life and physical sciences. Environmental science, a relatively new field that evolved after the establishment of these graduation requirements, is not recognized in the state regulation. This amendment updates the regulation to add environmental science to the list of science credits acceptable for graduation.

Basic environmental science concepts are addressed in Maryland’s State Curriculum as Goal 6 of the science curriculum in Grades 3-8. Most school systems offer environmental science and/or Advanced Placement Environmental Science as electives in high school. The addition of environmental science to the list of accepted courses of study aligns the high school graduation requirements with current practice.



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In October 2009, the Board granted permission to publish in the Maryland Register the amendment to add Environmental Science to the list of science credits accepted for graduation (attached). The 30-day open comment period has ended. No public comments were received.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

The proposed amendment to COMAR regulations is designed to update current science graduation requirements to include environmental science as an option for a science credit.

**ACTION:**

I am requesting the adoption of the proposed amendment to COMAR 13A.03.02.04.

NSG/rhb

**Attachment**

## **Subtitle 03 GENERAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS**

### **13A.03.02 Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland**

Authority: Education Article, §§2-205, 4-110, 4-111, 7-205, 7-205.1, 7-206, and 8-404,  
Annotated Code of Maryland

#### **Notice of Proposed Action**

[09-400-P]

The Maryland State Board of Education proposes to amend Regulation .04 under **COMAR 13A.03.02 Graduation Requirements for Public High Schools in Maryland**. This action was considered at the Maryland State Board of Education meeting held on October 27, 2009.

#### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this action is to update current science graduation requirements to include environmental science as an option for a science credit.

#### **Comparison to Federal Standards**

There is no corresponding federal standard to this proposed action.

#### **Estimate of Economic Impact**

The proposed action has no economic impact.

#### **Economic Impact on Small Businesses**

The proposed action has minimal or no economic impact on small businesses.

#### **Impact on Individuals with Disabilities**

The proposed action has no impact on individuals with disabilities.

#### **Opportunity for Public Comment**

Comments may be sent to Mary L. Gable, Director of Instructional Programs, Division of Instruction, Maryland State Department of Education, 200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201, or call 410-767-0349, or email to [mgable@msde.state.md.us](mailto:mgable@msde.state.md.us), or fax to 410-333-1146. Comments will be accepted through January 19, 2010. A public hearing has not been scheduled.

#### **Open Meeting**

Final action on the proposal will be considered by the Maryland State Board of Education during a public meeting to be held on February 23 and 24, 2010, at 200 West Baltimore Street, Baltimore, MD 21201.

**.04 Credit Requirements.**

A. To be awarded a diploma, a student shall be enrolled in a Maryland public school system and shall have earned a minimum of 21 credits that include the following specified core credits:

(1)—(5) (text unchanged)

(6) Science—three credits of which one shall be in biology aligned with the Maryland High School Assessment for biology and two from the earth, life, *environmental science*, or physical sciences, or all of the above, in which laboratory experiences are an integral component;

(7)—(8) (text unchanged)

(9) Earn one of the following:

(a) Two credits of [foreign] *world* language or two credits of American Sign Language;

(b)—(c) (text unchanged)

B. (text unchanged)

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