

COVENTRY HIGH SCHOOL

COVENTRY, RHODE ISLAND



GRADUATION BY PROFICIENCY:

A Guide for Students, Parents, and Teachers

Coventry High School Mission Statement

The mission of Coventry High School is to challenge our students to meet high academic and ethical standards in a safe and supportive environment of mutual respect. We are committed to providing our students with clear instruction and criteria to develop the knowledge, skills, character, and cultural awareness to become productive and responsible citizens.

Introduction

Schools must be sure that all students successfully complete a rigorous diploma program that gives them access to college or post-secondary training, whether immediately after high school or when and if they so choose.

*The Rhode Island High School Diploma System
RI Department of Education, 2005*

In accordance with the Rhode Island Department of Education's Diploma System mandate of 2003, all students are required to complete four major components to demonstrate acquired knowledge and skills in order to earn a diploma. Students must pass courses and earn required credits and show proficiencies in six core content knowledge and in applied learning skills in these areas. Coventry High School's core areas include English Language Arts, math, science, social studies, the arts, and physical education/health. In addition, technology proficiency must also be demonstrated.

Completing a rigorous diploma program gives students access to college or post-secondary training, whether immediately after high school or at some other time in their lives. With the labor market changing so drastically, today's high school graduates must have a strong literacy and numeracy foundation and be capable of problem-solving, decision-making, analytic reasoning, working teaming, communicating and interpreting information, and demonstrating responsibility.

Using the state's guidance, every high school has developed strategies for assessing proficiency in these applied learning skills in all six content areas. Coventry High School students, in addition to earning the required credits and participating in the state assessment program, will develop a graduation portfolio, design and present a Capstone Project, and earn an acceptable score on the state assessments (NECAP) in reading, writing, and math, to demonstrate proficiency of required knowledge and skills.

This ***Graduation by Proficiency*** guide is designed to give students and parents an overview of the requirements and expectations needed to graduate from Coventry High School. It will be a challenging and rigorous journey but the reward for undertaking a meaningful high school experience is incalculable and will undoubtedly give students a powerful start in whatever post-secondary plans they may choose.

Components of Coventry High School's Diploma System

I. Completion of 24 Academic Credits

The first requirement in order to graduate from Coventry High School is that all students must earn a minimum of 24 credits. The specific course credits needed to meet minimum graduation requirements are listed below. The remainder of the student's schedule is derived from elective classes listed in the *Program of Studies* book.

Course	Requirement	Note
English	4 credits	Taken every year
Math ¹	4 credits	Taken every year. See note 1 below.
Science	3 credits	
Social Studies	3 credits	Must pass America & the World 2 and 3
Physical Education/Health	2 credits	PE is taken once every year
World Language or Reading/Literacy	2 credits	Reading/Literacy by recommendation only
Computer/Technology Literacy	.5 credit	
Visual or Performing Arts	.5 credit	
Capstone Class ²	.5 credit	Taken in grade 10 or 11. See note 2 below.
Elective Classes	4.5-8.5 credits	

¹Seniors may choose to take a math-related course in their fourth year. A qualifying math-related course is indicated in the Program of Studies, and includes Accounting, several classes in the Science Department, and the Computer/Electronics Career and Technical Program.

²All students must take the Capstone Class as a required elective. Students enrolled in the Career and Technical Program are exempt from this requirement as they complete their Capstone project through the Career and Technical Center.

II. Graduation Portfolio

A graduation portfolio is the second PBGR requirement for all Coventry High School. In order to graduate from Coventry High School, students must maintain a *proficiency based portfolio* which is a collection of validated and non-validated tasks/student work. This work represents proficiencies met in six core areas (ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, the Arts, and Physical Education). The technology proficiency will be assessed through these areas. The portfolio can include work from any field of study.

For the creation of a final **graduation portfolio**, the student selects work from his or her *proficiency portfolio* which includes tasks from every class the student takes during the course of four years. This work must be linked to the learner expectations of Coventry High School. The **graduation portfolio**, which contains a summative reflection, must be submitted to the Graduation Portfolio Review Committee by the end of the first semester of the senior year. The Review Committee will make the determination if the student has met the learner expectations. Students must meet the requirements (tasks) of the Proficiency Based Portfolio before a Graduation Portfolio demonstrating the Coventry High School Learner Expectations can be assembled.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A CHS PROFICIENCY PORTFOLIO?

- Students begin building their proficiency portfolios in grade 9.
- A **minimum** number of **three** proficient tasks (two must be validated) are needed for all full year courses. A minimum number of **one** validated proficient task will be required for all semester courses. Teachers may administer more than three tasks for the proficiency portfolio, and students are encouraged to collect as many tasks as possible for their portfolio.
- Students may include any number of personal choice entries (piano recitals, Eagle Scout projects, volunteer work in the community, etc.) in their proficiency portfolios.
- A **minimum** of 50% of **all** entries must be validated. These entries have met the guidelines for rigor and relevance within each content area.
- A formative reflection is required and may be completed during advisory.

III. Capstone Project

The Capstone Project requires a student to focus in-depth on a core question of his or her choice. It plays an essential part in demonstrating that a student has met both Applied Learning Standards and Content Standards.

The Capstone Project provides the student with a forum for demonstrating that a student has achieved a *learning stretch*. The student will demonstrate his or her ability to analyze information, create new solutions, and implement his or her ideas.

There are four Applied Learning Standards that must be met in the Capstone Project. The Applied Learning Standards focus on:

- Problem Solving
- Using communication tools and techniques
- Using information tools and techniques
- Applying self-management.

Each student chooses how these standards are met through the Capstone Project. In addition to these standards, the students must also demonstrate competency in **at least one content area**.

The Capstone Project begins with students exploring topics of interest. The chosen topic is then explored by way of a core question that leads the student on a path of in-depth learning and research. Each student must organize and plan how to find answers to the core question. When the Capstone Project is completed, the student will present his or her findings to a review panel. The student will be guided throughout the process by his/her Capstone teacher, advisor, or CTE teacher.

The core question will lead to the creation of an identifiable product that can be judged on its merits in meeting the Applied Learning and Content standards selected by each student.

Depending on the final product, a core question will fit into one of three categories. These include:

- **INQUIRY** – poses a question and explores in-depth implications that bring understanding to a social, political, scientific, moral/ethical, or artistic condition.
- **PROBLEM SOLVING** – states a problem, researches its cause and effect, proposes a solution, implements it, and evaluates its effectiveness.
- **CAREER EXPLORATION** – selects a career and mentor to shadow and presents the career specifications. All CTE students will complete their Capstone project within their field of study.

IV. RI State Assessments (NECAP)

The New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) test serves as a measure of proficiency that is aligned to the student's coursework. A score of PARTIALLY PROFICIENT must be achieved in reading, writing, and math. Students receive their test results midway in their junior year. Students not earning an acceptable score on the NECAP may need to engage in additional support and further standardized assessment in order to show proficiency.

Students are ultimately responsible for the success of their graduation requirements. They must work closely with their Advisors and Capstone/CTE teachers for successful completion of Capstone Projects and Graduation Portfolios.

Appeals Process

Coventry High School provides students with multiple opportunities to be successful in fulfilling their Capstone Project and CHS Portfolio requirements. In the event that the parents or guardians do not agree with the decision of the panel of judges assembled to evaluate the Capstone Project and CHS Portfolio, they may appeal the decision in the following manner:

1. Within ten (10) days of being notified of their child's failure to meet the requirements of the Capstone Project or the CHS Portfolio requirements, parents or guardians will notify the principal of Coventry High School in writing of their request for a reevaluation. Supporting details must be provided.
2. The principal of Coventry High School will convene the Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements Steering Committee to review the complaint and will notify the parents/guardians and student of the date for a formal appeals meeting. (Students must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.)
3. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Steering Committee will render a decision. Within 48 hours, a formal letter explaining the committee's decision will be sent to the parents/guardians and student.
4. The parents/guardians will have five (5) days to appeal the decision to the Coventry Superintendent of Schools.

Coventry High School Learner Expectations

Academic

1. Reading

Read widely, attentively and on grade level for a variety of purposes, including academic, vocational, and leisure.

2. Writing

Write for a variety of purposes and audiences, creating suitable ways to communicate ideas.

3. Speaking

Use oral communication to share information, engage in conversations, build relationships, and promote understanding across disciplines.

4. Problem Solving

Define a problem, compile, interpret and organize the information, implement a strategy or plan of action to arrive at a logical conclusion.

Personal

5. Responsibility

Live by a personal code of good conduct by practicing the right behavior as individuals and in groups with maturity, integrity, courage and a concern for others while making the right choices.

6. Respect

Show tolerance and respect for self and others within the global and school communities.

Community/Career

7. Independence

Understand post secondary opportunities and/or careers that match to personal strengths.

8. Culture

Gain knowledge and understanding of American culture as well as other cultures.

9. Arts

Demonstrate skills and knowledge of one or more art forms that encompasses creating, performing, responding, and related technical components.

Coventry High School

40 Reservoir Road
 Coventry, RI 02816-6457
 Phone: 401-822-9499
 Fax: 401-822- 9492
 TTY: 1-800-745-5555

To Parents / Guardians and Students:

The administration requests that parents and students carefully read the Graduation by Proficiency Guidebook to become familiar with its contents. Within these pages is found an explanation of the expectations required for students to graduate from Coventry High School. The administration hopes that this information will be useful in providing the background needed to earn a diploma and guiding parents and students throughout the graduation process. Additional guidance can be found at <http://schools.coventryschools.net/hs/capstone/>

Graduation Portfolios, Capstone Projects, and NECAP test scores are the three state proficiency based graduation requirements (PBGR's) stipulated by Coventry High School for all students to achieve in order to graduate. In completing these components, students may be videotaped, filmed, photographed, or audio taped. Students will not be identified and these recordings are for the sole purpose of providing evidence of competencies achieved by Coventry High School students.

The appropriate use of computers is expected of all students, and the misuse of technology will result in disciplinary action and possibly legal action. The district's complete computer policy may be found at www.coventryschools.net.

Parents and students must sign below acknowledging that they have read and that they understand this handbook.

Student Signature

Date

Student Name (Please Print)

Parent / Guardian Signature

Date

Parent / Guardian (Please Print)

Advisory Teacher:

Advisory Room:

Please return this required Parent/Student Signature Form to your Advisor.