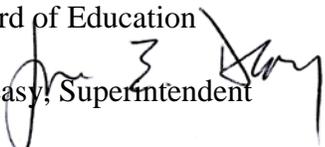


INTEROFFICE CORRESPONDENCE  
Los Angeles Unified School District  
Office of the Superintendent

**INFORMATIVE**

**TO:** Members, Board of Education **DATE:** March 16, 2012  
**FROM:** Dr. John E. Deasy, Superintendent   
**SUBJECT:** GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR CLASS OF 2016

**Background**

On June 14, 2005, The Board of Education of the City of Los Angeles passed the *Resolution to Create Educational Equity in Los Angeles through the Implementation of the A-G Course Sequence as Part of the High School Graduation Requirements*. This resolution stated that beginning in 2012 every student entering the ninth grade must complete the A-G course sequence in order to graduate from the Los Angeles Unified School District.

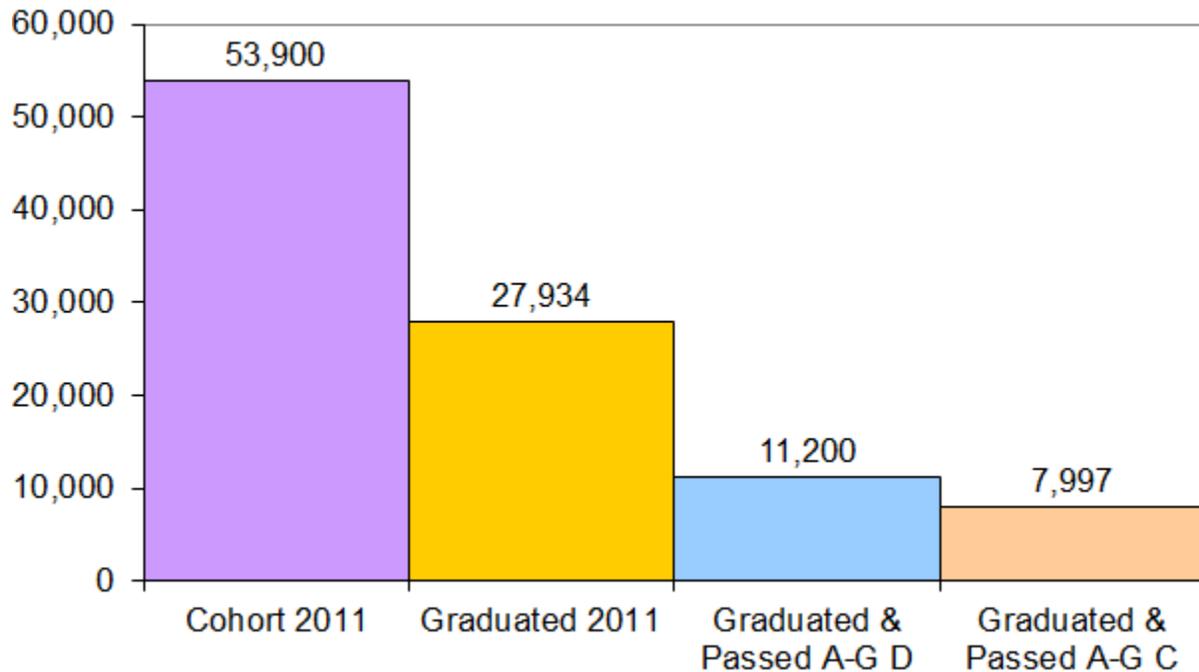
In addition, the resolution stated “. . . *that the implementation of the A-G course sequence as a graduation requirement will include the necessary learning supports, realignment and dedication of resources necessary beginning early in a student’s education so that they are prepared to successfully complete the A-G course sequence at all grade levels from K-12. Specific attention will be made at the critical transition years of 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades. These resources can be used to hire additional teachers and guidance counselors, reduce class size, lower counselor caseloads and institute District-wide outreach to parents and communities. The District will seek additional funding through legislation for needed resources.*”

The final directive in the resolution was to “. . . *establish an A-G implementation committee that collaborates with Communities for Educational Equity, employee and employer organizations, post-secondary institutions, and other stakeholders to incorporate community involvement in the development and implementation of the District’s strategy*”. This committee appears to have functioned through June 2008.

In 2011, I asked Dr. Aquino to convene an A-G task force to examine the consequences of requiring a “C” vs. a “D” as a passing grade for the class of 2016, the first class for which graduation will be dependent upon satisfying the A-G requirements.

The A-G Task Force, which consisted of teachers, principals, community members and parents, recommended that the District implement the A-G policy as originally approved and phase in the “C” requirement starting at the middle school level, as the data showed that moving to a “C” without providing the necessary instructional supports and resources would be devastating. Figure 1 demonstrates what the impact of implementing the A-G requirements with “C” as a passing grade would have been for the class of 2011.

**Figure 1: Impact implementing A-G requirements with a Passing Grade of “C” Would Have Had on Class of 2011**



The A-G Task Force then fleshed out the necessary learning supports and resources that would be required to phase-in the “C” requirement successfully:

- PR campaign to inform parents, students, and community (Pre-K-12)
- Articulation between HS, MS, and ES
- Data system that tracks students from ES to HS
- Credit recovery opportunities, including:
  - Summer school in middle school
  - Change of bell schedule, e.g. 8x2, 4x4
  - Before and/or after school credit recovery classes
- Summer Bridge programs
- Parent education and improved information system
- Career counselors at every high school
- Reduction in class size for intervention and/or core classes
- Support for implementation of master schedule
- In-house intervention during school day
- Time for teachers to collaborate on grade alignment and student work

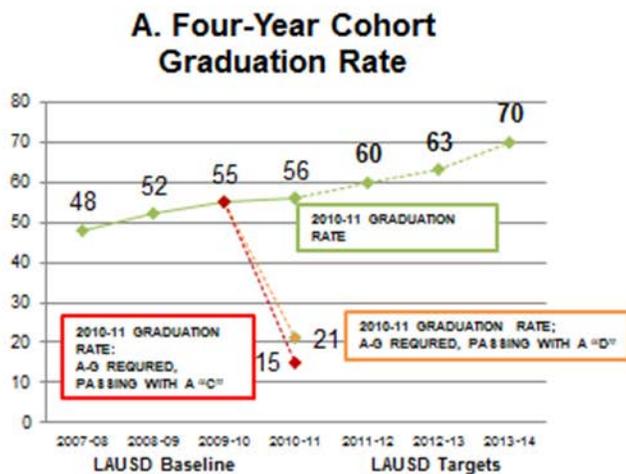
At the February 2, 2012 Executive Cabinet meeting, these recommendations were presented for discussion, as well as additional data that showed that the impact of implementing the A-G

requirements for graduation would be devastating whether the passing grade was a “D” or a “C”. Figure 2 shows this impact.

**Figure 2: Impact of A-G Implementation with a “D” or a “C” as Passing Grade**



## Goal 1: 100 % Graduation



*Evidence from our most recent graduating class suggests that moving to the A-G requirements without making any other changes to our requirements will likely lead to a substantial decline in our graduation rates.*

Research around what other California schools districts are doing as well as our own internal analysis of the difference between graduation requirements in LAUSD vs. those of the State led to the development of some additional options to create a safety net for students to prevent this predicted devastating drop in the graduation rate for the class of 2016. Figure 3 show the options discussed in that meeting.

**Figure 3: Graduation Policy Options for Class of 2016**

Policy Option	Projected Impact on Graduation Rates for the Class of 2016	Financial Implications	Implications for Schools
<b>1. Existing Policy with No Adjustments:</b> Move forward with the planned implementation of A-G as part of the graduation requirements. Make no other changes for class of 2016 such that a "D" (per existing policy) is sufficient to meet the graduation requirement, but phase in "C" with reduction in requirements in 2017.	<b>Substantial decline</b>  (The difference for the Class of 2011 would have meant going from a 56% graduation rate to a 21% graduation rate)	Revenue neutral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires an aggressive plan to support implementation for next school year's 9<sup>th</sup> graders.</li> <li>Limits flexibility schools have to implement A-G.</li> </ul>
<b>2. The Rigor, Depth and Flexibility Approach:</b> Require that courses are passed with a "C" or better to count for graduation AND reduce the required number of credits (include as requirements only those courses necessary to meet A-G and state minimums).	<b>Uncertain</b>  Providing more flexibility creates the opportunity to implement A-G in a way that maintains or increases the graduation rate while at the same time increasing rigor.	Revenue neutral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires an aggressive plan to support implementation for next school year's 9<sup>th</sup> graders.</li> <li>Provides substantial flexibility to schools to support implementation</li> </ul>
<b>3. Delay and Study:</b> Delay implementation of the A-G requirement for implementation with the Class of 2017, utilizing Class of 2015 requirements for the Class of 2016. The delay would be coupled with a clear timeline for further study, recommendation development and planning.	<b>No Change</b>	Revenue neutral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not, on its own, require substantial change to how schools work with next year's 9<sup>th</sup> graders.</li> </ul>

The outcome of the Executive Cabinet meeting was consensus around the Rigor, Depth, and Flexibility Approach as where the District *should* go; however many concerns were raised regarding the time to implement these changes successfully considering that 1) the graduation bulletin for the class of 2016 needs to go out no later than April, 2) this change would require Board action, and 3) it would also require noticing certain employees such as Health teachers that their services would no longer be required by the March 15<sup>th</sup> deadline.

The A-G Task Force recommendations were also presented to PEPAC and DELAC. DELAC members passed a motion endorsing a passing grade of "D" for now with a phase in of the "C" for the class of 2017, based on their concern regarding the short time frame to come up with a plan for credit recovery and the fiscal reality of the District, which severely limits its ability to provide summer school, before or after school intervention, or credit recovery. They were also concerned about the impact on English Learners and the sharp decrease in graduation rate. They felt very strongly that it was unconscionable to allow students to pass with a "D" knowing they would not be eligible for admission to the CSU or UC systems, but they felt it would be more egregious to implement a "C" requirement without the necessary supports in place. PEPAC members did not pass a motion due to a lack of quorum, but they endorsed DELAC's motion.

An on-line survey has also been implemented to collect feedback from all stakeholders on the A-G policy recommendations. The results of that survey will be shared once it closes on March 16<sup>th</sup>. Dr. Aquino, my team and I look forward to answering any questions you might have regarding this informative in preparation for the April Board Meeting.

### Recommended Actions

The following actions are recommended to move toward the District’s vision of graduating 100 percent of students college-prepared and career ready:

Recommended Action	Justification
Move forward with implementation of A-G Requirements for the Class of 2016 as originally adopted (passing grade of “D”)	Keeps A-G policy from being challenged
Develop and implement plan for instructional supports to prevent drastic drop in graduation rates for class of 2016.	Instructional supports necessary for success are not in place.
Develop communication campaign to ensure understanding that though “D” is passing, it does not meet entrance requirements for UC/CSU systems.	Ensure parental understanding of what future options exist for their children if they are passing with a “D”
<p>Starting with the Class of 2016:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eliminate the following course requirements as they are not required by the state or for A-G: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Applied Technology</li> <li>o Non- A-G Electives</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Reduce the number of credits required to graduate from 230 to 170.</li> </ol>	<p>This creates more room in a student’s schedule to make up failed courses. Current requirements make credit recovery within the school day nearly impossible. Given resources, additional credit recovery options (e.g. summer school) have become increasingly limited.</p> <p>Applied Technology courses are more likely to be taken in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of high school or later.</p> <p><b>Schools will continue to offer electives. While non-A-G electives will not count toward graduation, students who are on-track for A-G will have more room in their schedule than ever before to take elective courses.</b></p>
<p>Starting with the class of 2017:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Course requirements same as class of 2016 with the elimination of one additional course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Health</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Change the passing grade requirement from a “D” to a “C”</li> </ol>	<p>Health is the one course on the list to be eliminated that is typically taken by 9<sup>th</sup> grade students; eliminating it for the Class of 2016 does not allow for contractual obligation of noticing all Health teachers by March 15<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>All LAUSD graduates would be eligible to enroll in a four-year California public university.</p>

*\*District will revisit the requirements for graduation when resources are available to provide opportunities for intervention, summer school, and credit recovery for all students.*