



**THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234**  
Office of P-12

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## **FIELD ADVISORY**

**TO:** Superintendents of Public Schools, Directors of Charter Schools,  
Public School Administrators, Charter School Administrators, Coordinators  
of ELL programs

**FROM:** Angélica Infante-Green  
Deputy Commissioner for the Office of P-12 Instructional Support

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**SUBJECT:** Diploma Options for Puerto Rican students displaced by Hurricanes Irma  
or Maria

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, a considerable number of students from Puerto Rico were displaced and temporarily relocated to the United States. Many of these students have enrolled in New York State public schools. In March 2018 school administrators received a field advisory offering guidance on accessing the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) [Student Records Exchange System \(SRX\)](#) to facilitate the exchange of student records. Through SRX, school staff can access students' previous academic records and also provide updated information to be used by PRDE for those students who transfer back to Puerto Rico and those students who seek to earn a diploma from Puerto Rico for coursework completed in New York State, as described in this memo. A copy of the March 2018 can be found at: <http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/recent-natural-disasters-and-displaced-families-resources-guidance-school-districts>.

In order to facilitate the on-time graduation of students who have enrolled in New York State high schools as a result of the hurricanes, students in grades 10, 11 and 12 shall be offered the opportunity to complete either the New York State diploma requirements or the requirements to earn a diploma from Puerto Rico.

The attached document describes requirements students must meet to qualify for this option and procedures schools must follow to provide students with a Puerto Rico High School Diploma. Questions related to this process and the responsibilities of the New York State high school can be directed to [OBEWL@nysed.gov](mailto:OBEWL@nysed.gov).

## **ATTACHMENT A**

### **GUIDANCE FOR AWARDING STUDENTS DISPLACED FROM PUERTO RICO BY HURRICANS IRMA OR MARIA WITH A PUERTO RICO HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA**

The following are policies for schools to determine if students who transfer as a result of Hurricane Maria or Irma in grade 10, 11 or 12 are eligible to receive a Puerto Rico High School Diploma, and the procedures for awarding this diploma to eligible students.

#### **New York State Diploma Requirements and Flexibility for Transfer Students**

Detailed information about the New York State diploma requirements can be found at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/gradreq/intro.html>. In general, to earn a New York State diploma, students are required to complete 22 units of diploma credit distributed as outlined on the link above and pass one Regents examination each in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, social studies, and science. Students must also complete a pathway, which all require a fifth assessment with the exception of the CDOS pathway. One of these available pathways is in Languages Other Than English (LOTE). NYSED recently approved assessments for students to use this LOTE pathway in Spanish and three other languages. Information on these pathway assessments can be found at: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/multiple-pathways/>.

#### **Existing Exam Exemptions for Students Who Transfer to New York in Grade 11 or 12 to earn a New York State Diploma**

Students wishing to earn a New York State diploma are offered some exemptions to the existing graduation requirements based upon their grade level at entry.

Grade 11: Students who enter a New York State high school from outside the state in Grade 11 may be excused from the Regents examination in Global History and Geography and must pass the Regents examinations in ELA, science, US History, and mathematics. Such transfer students can meet the assessment requirements to earn a New York State diploma with only 4 assessments.

Grade 12: Students who enter a New York State high school in grade 12 from outside the state may be excused from the Regents examination in Global History and Geography and the Regents examination in science and must pass the Regents examinations in ELA, US History, and mathematics. Such transfer students can meet the assessment requirements to earn a New York State diploma with only 3 assessments.

#### **Existing Credit Exemptions for Students Who Transfer to New York State During High School and wish to receive a New York State High School Diploma.**

Students who transfer to a New York State High school at any time from outside the state may be excused from  $\frac{1}{4}$  credit in Physical Education for every semester they attended a high school outside of New York State.

## **Alternative Option for Displaced Students to Earn a Diploma from the Puerto Rican Department of Education**

Students who transfer as a result of Hurricane Maria or Irma in grade 10, 11 or 12 may elect to continue their high school studies in a New York State high school in pursuit of a diploma from Puerto Rico. In general, the following is required of students seeking this credential.

### **Eligibility**

Students may have the option to earn a Puerto Rico high school diploma if the student:

- 1) is enrolled in a public school in New York State;
- 2) was enrolled in a public school in Puerto Rico during the 2017-2018 school year;
- 3) has been displaced by Hurricane Irma or Maria; and
- 4) had attained the 10th, 11th or 12th grade in Puerto Rico by the time Hurricane Irma made landfall in September 2017 or Hurricane Maria made landfall in October 2017.

### **Requirements for Earning a Puerto Rico High School Diploma During the 2017-18 School Year**

A student in Grade 12 seeking to earn a high school diploma from Puerto Rico during the 2017-18 school year must complete a minimum of 18 credits in the 10th-12th grade courses listed below. PRDE has waived the normally required 20 hours of occupational experience and 40 hours of community service for the 2018 graduates.

The 18 credits required for a student to earn a Puerto Rico high school diploma must include the following:

- Spanish – 3.0 credits
- English – 3.0 credits
- Mathematics – 3.0 credits
- Social studies – 3.0 credits
- Science – 3.0 credits
- Physical Education – 1.0 credit
- Art – 0.5 credit
- Health – 0.5 credit
- Responsible Parenting – 0.5 credit (may also be satisfied with a Health Education or elective course)
- Vocational (CTE), Technology, Family Science, Agriculture or other elective – 0.5 credit.

There are no specific courses required for the credits in mathematics, English, science or social studies.

There are no requirements for a student to earn a minimum grade point average or satisfy standardized assessment requirements.

### **Requirements for Earning a Puerto Rico High School Diploma Beginning in the 2018-19 School Year**

Starting in the academic year 2018-19, a student seeking to earn a high school diploma from Puerto Rico must complete:

- a minimum of 24 credits in the 9th-12th grade courses listed below;
- 20 hours of occupational experiences (which may include mentoring, internship or work experience, or a combination thereof); and
- 40 hours of community service.

Occupational experience and community service hours must be tracked locally by schools and confirmed to PRDE through student records in SRX.

The 24 credits required for a student to earn a Puerto Rico high school diploma must include the following:

- Spanish – 4.0 credits
- English – 4.0 credits
- Mathematics – 4.0 credits
- Social studies – 4.0 credits
- Science – 4.0 credits
- Physical Education – 1.0 credit
- Art – 1.0 credit
- Health – 1.0 credit
- Responsible Parenting – 0.5 credit (may also be satisfied with a Health Education or elective course)
- Vocational (CTE), Technology, Family Science, Agriculture or other elective – 0.5 credit.

There are no specific courses required for the credits in mathematics, English, science or social studies. There are no requirements for a student to earn a minimum grade point average or satisfy standardized assessment requirements.

Schools are advised to meet with students and parents who might benefit from this option. In all cases, students meeting the eligibility criteria shall be given the option to earn either the New York State diploma or the Puerto Rico high school diploma. Schools shall notify the student and the parent in writing that if the student receives a diploma from Puerto Rico, their right to a free and appropriate public education in New York State will terminate. Such student will not be eligible to re-enroll to seek a New York State diploma.

### **Exit Codes Upon Program Completion**

Any student choosing this alternative option will not count in the denominator and/or adversely affect graduation rates in the New York State high school. These students should be coded as:

**Code 221 — Transferred to a school outside NEW YORK STATE with documentation:** This code is used when a student, parent(s), or guardian(s) initiates a transfer to a school outside New York State. Documentation should include a request for a transcript from a receiving school, a record of sending a transcript to the receiving school, or a written acknowledgement from the receiving school that the student has registered for work completed while enrolled in a NEW YORK STATE school.

Documentation of the use of this code for students exercising this option will include the record of the transfer of the transcript to PRDE as well as the acknowledgement of that receipt and the transmittal of the diploma from the PRDE to the New York State high school

This code should be used for all students returning to Puerto Rico including seniors who will receive their high school diploma from the Department of Education in Puerto Rico.

### **Process to request Puerto Rico High School Diploma for student**

PRDE created the following steps for New York State high schools to request Puerto Rico High School Diplomas for students who complete their coursework locally:

1. The New York State high school requests the student's transcript through SRX and validates that the student has completed all PRDE graduation requirements through review of the PRDE high school transcript, the New York State high school transcript, and any other applicable documents.
2. Upon verification, the New York State high school requests a Puerto Rico High School Diploma via the student's record in SRX. This request must be accompanied by the New York State high school transcript and any other additional documents that were used to verify the student's completion of PRDE diploma requirements.
3. PRDE will validate the completed requirements and send the diploma electronically to the requesting New York State high school.

### **Contact information for the Puerto Rico Department of Education:**

If you have students electing the option of receiving a PRDE diploma and require information not available on the SRX please contact the Puerto Rico Department of Education at: [info@de.gov.pr](mailto:info@de.gov.pr).

### **Contact information for the New York State Education Department:**

Questions related to this process and the responsibilities of the New York State high school can be directed to [OBEWL@nysed.gov](mailto:OBEWL@nysed.gov).