

IOWA CITY COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

CORE DIPLOMA

SEPTEMBER 22, 2026

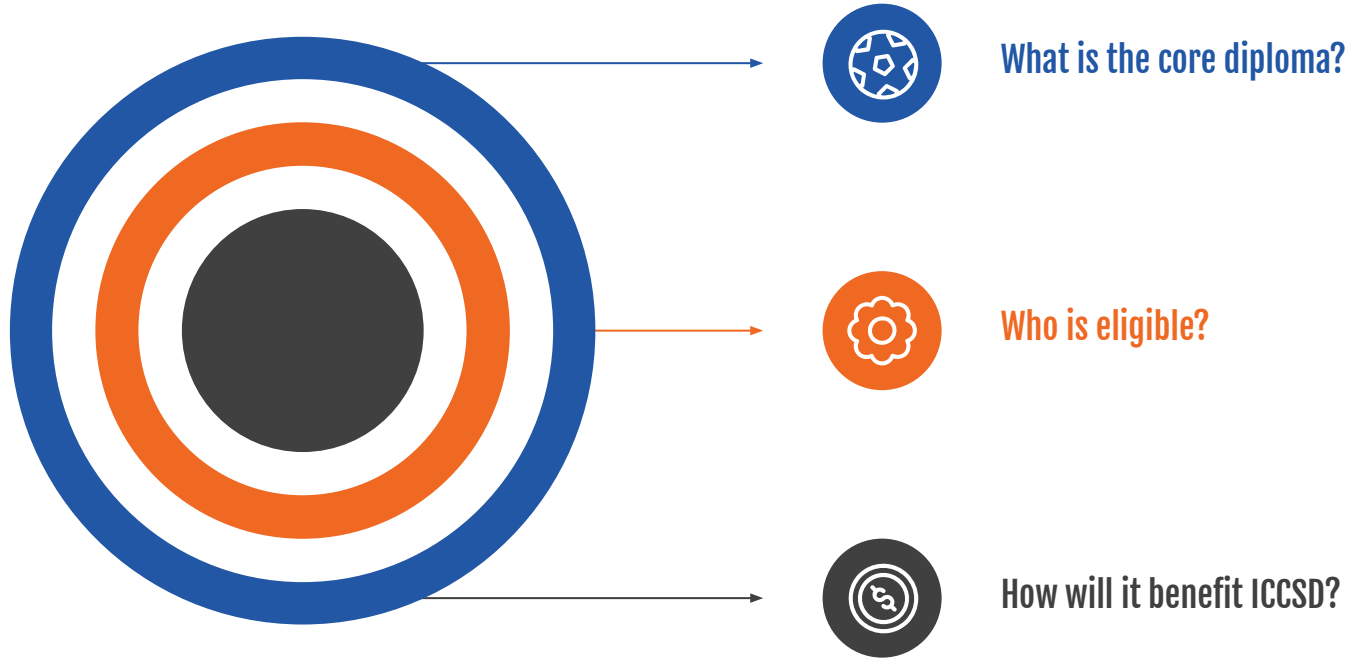


**IOWA CITY COMMUNITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

All In for All Kids

Objectives Slide Example

If we are successful today, participants will:



Purpose and Scope

The core diploma ensures students meet all Iowa core academic requirements while providing a rigorous, attainable route to graduation.

Consistent with Board Policy 604.4 - Programs For At-Risk Students “The board recognizes some students require additional assistance in order to graduate from the regular education program. The board will provide a plan to encourage and provide an opportunity for at-risk students to achieve their potential and obtain their high school diploma.

Target Population

Designed for students who cannot feasibly complete the full ICCSD 305-credit diploma due to unique educational histories, significant credit deficiencies, or age-related constraints.

Application Parameters

Students are not eligible for application until spring of sophomore year. This pathway is a carefully monitored support mechanism, not a general shortcut for early graduation.

Credit Requirements Overview

235-260

TOTAL CREDITS REQUIRED

Focusing on Essentials

This diploma pathway reduces overall elective credit expectations by 45 credits (requiring 40 elective credits instead of the of 85).

It maintains strict and full rigor in all essential core subjects, ensuring completion of all State-required academic content.

Core Subject Requirements Breakdown

Remains same for traditional and core diploma

Subject Area	Duration	Credits	Notes
English	4 years	60	English 9, 10, 11, 12
Mathematics	3 years	45	Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II/Mod Algebra II
Science	3 years	45	Earth & Space, Biology, Physical/Chemistry
Social Studies	3 years	45	U.S. & World History, Gov I/II, Economics
P.E. & Health	4 years / 1 tri	25	20 PE credits + 5 Health credits

Traditional & Core Diploma Comparison

Core remains the same for traditional and core diploma

Traditional Diploma	
Language Arts	60 credits
Science	45 credits
Earth and Space (15)	
Biology (15)	
Chemistry or Physical (15)	
Mathematics	45 credits
Social Studies	45 credits
American History (15)	
World History (15)	
US Government (10)	
Economics (5)	
Physical Education	20 credits
Health	5 credits
Electives	85 credits
Total	305 credits

Core Diploma	
Language Arts	60 credits
Science	45 credits
Earth and Space (15)	
Biology (15)	
Chemistry or Physical (15)	
Mathematics	45 credits
Social Studies	45 credits
American History (15)	
World History (15)	
US Government (10)	
Economics (5)	
Physical Education	20 credits*
Health	5 credits*
Electives	40 credits
Total	235-260 credits

Credits for students who qualify for a PE waiver and/or a Health waiver will not be added to elective requirements under the Core Diploma. Therefore, total credits for graduation will fluctuate based on waivers.

Maintaining Academic Rigor

- **State Approved:** This is a full State-approved diploma per the Iowa Department of Education (offered at other districts as well)
- **No Compromise:** The pathway is not less rigorous.. It simply limits elective requirements, allowing focus on core subjects
- **Inclusion:** Students earn an ICCSD diploma and participate fully in graduation ceremonies with their peers
- **Postsecondary Alignment:** Core diploma pathway aligns with students targeting workforce entry, apprenticeships, or community college. Can still lead to acceptance at a four-year institution.

The Application & Approval Process



1. Referral

Initiated and completed by a counselor, IEP case manager, or principal. Families are notified to discuss the option.



2. Academic Review

The Student Support Team reviews transcripts, attendance records, supports utilized, and alignment with postsecondary goals.



3. Final Approval

Requires endorsement by the counselor and principal, followed by final approval from the District Executive Director of Secondary Schools.

SST Evaluation Criteria

 **Academic Readiness** Demonstrated capability to meet ICCSD Core standards with appropriate, limited additional support.

 **Effort and Engagement** Active participation in interventions, credit recovery, or alternative programming, showing persistence and accountability.

 **Postsecondary Alignment** The Core Diploma must logically align with a clearly defined postsecondary plan (e.g., employment, vocational training).

 **Equity and Informed Consent** Ensuring the student and family fully understand the limitations and implications of the Core Diploma pathway.

Partnership and Ongoing Monitoring



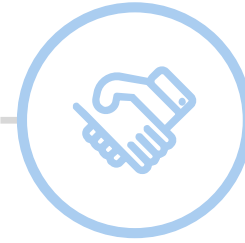
School Support

Student progress is reviewed continuously to ensure they remain on track for graduation.



Family Engagement

Transparent communication is required, including official approved/denial notifications, progress, and documenting informed consent



Goal Alignment

Continuous verification that the educational pathway directly supports the student's life after graduation.

Important Considerations

- **Higher Education Entrances:** Students interested in four-year colleges or specific technical schools must verify they meet institutional curriculum requirements.
- **NCAA Eligibility:** The Core Diploma requirements do not automatically meet NCAA athletic eligibility requirements.
- **Student Flexibility:** Students granted a Core Diploma are not bound to it; they may choose to pursue additional electives and complete the traditional diploma if their goals change.

Recommendation to the Board of Directors

Additional diploma option added to Board Policy 505.5 - Graduation Requirements

Students must successfully complete the courses required by the board and Iowa Department of Education in order to graduate.

It is the responsibility of the superintendent or designee to ensure that students complete grades one through twelve and that high school students complete 305 credits prior to graduation, ***unless student has been approved for the Core Diploma.*** The following credits will be required for graduation:

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The required courses of study will be reviewed by the board annually.

Prior to graduation, the district will advise students on how to successfully complete the free application for federal student aid.

Students will review their Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) annually to ensure post-secondary plans align with course selection and graduation requirements.

Graduation requirements for special education **and ELL** students ***must be in line with the traditional or core diploma and will*** include successful completion of four years of English, three years of math, three years of social studies, three years of science, four trimesters of physical education ***and one trimester of health.***

Students who complete a regular session in the Legislative Page Program of the general assembly at the state capitol will be credited ½ credit of social studies.

Students enrolled in a junior officer's training corp will receive 1/8th physical education credit for each semester the student is enrolled in the program.

Beginning with the school year starting July 1, 2026, students must receive a passing score on the civics test as set forth by the Iowa Department of Education and required by relevant law.

Recommendation to the Board of Directors

Language change to Board Policy 505.6 - Early Graduation

Generally, students will be required to complete the necessary course work and graduate from high school at the end of grade twelve. Students may graduate prior to this time if they meet the ~~minimum~~ **traditional diploma** graduation requirements stated in board policy.

A student who graduates early will no longer be considered a student and will become an alumnus of the school district. However, the student who graduates early may participate in commencement exercises.

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION