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**State Board of Education Resolution
To Approve Final Rulemaking Regarding High School Credit Flexibility
SR16-3**

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WHEREAS, District of Columbia law requires State Board of Education approval of high school graduation requirements;

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WHEREAS, the District is one of the few jurisdictions in the United States where the time-based Carnegie unit (120 hours of class or contact time with an instructor during the year) is the sole means for awarding course credit for a traditional high school diploma;

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WHEREAS, the opportunity gap remains massive in the District of Columbia, illustrated most recently by the 2015 Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career (PARCC) scores, which showed performance for subgroups of students differed by as much as 72 percentage points;

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WHEREAS, students who enter high school either unprepared to meet the District of Columbia's rigorous academic standards or already having acquired the knowledge and skills to demonstrate mastery must enroll in courses organized into standard Carnegie units without an option to pace their own learning;

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WHEREAS, the District of Columbia is the only jurisdiction in the country that requires students to enroll in Algebra I by ninth grade, regardless of their readiness;

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WHEREAS, high schools in the District of Columbia may not tailor their credit-bearing course offerings outside of the Carnegie unit to take advantage of logical synergies between academic material that would enhance student learning;

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WHEREAS, research indicates that academic outcomes and engagement improve when high school students are able to pace their own learning, choose how they acquire skills and knowledge, and determine how they provide evidence of proficiencies;

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WHEREAS, key features of competency-based education include student self-pacing and choice in skill and knowledge acquisition and demonstration of learning;

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WHEREAS, successful implementation of competency-based courses requires significant thought, preparation, and teacher support;

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WHEREAS, the State Board of Education convened a cross-city task force of 25 members representing teachers, principals, traditional and charter public schools, community groups, the business community, the Washington Teacher's Union, the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, and the Council of the District of Columbia from August 2015 to December 2015 to develop recommendations for high-school credit flexibility;

1 **WHEREAS**, the Task Force report stated that “(i)n the waiver, educational institutions must
2 describe for which course or series of courses the wavier applies, the method for determining
3 competency within those courses, and the level of performance or achievement that will
4 constitute mastery of state standards for each course or series of course that will not be using
5 Carnegie units”;

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7 **WHEREAS**, the Task Force recommended that “DCPS and PCSB shall submit evidence of the
8 progress and quality of implementation on each waiver to OSSE annually” and that this
9 “evidence shall be posted publicly and be reported annually to the State Board of Education”;

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11 **WHEREAS**, Task Force members “expressed support for appropriate review of the progress and
12 implementation of waivers, and expect that OSSE will analyze, evaluate and transparently share
13 with the public the information it collects from DCPS and PCSB to assess whether CBL is
14 improving outcomes for students”;

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16 **WHEREAS**, the majority of task force members agreed that creating alternative pathways to
17 earning credit beyond the Carnegie unit represented an important first step toward improving
18 academic outcomes by recognizing that not all students learn at the same pace nor best
19 demonstrate understanding of content based on 120 hours in a traditional classroom setting;

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21 **WHEREAS**, the task force’s report makes the following recommendations for earning high
22 school credit:

- 23 1. **Create a waiver process** for schools wishing to pursue competency-based learning;
- 24 2. Allow students to receive **credit for demonstrated knowledge** in world languages and
25 mathematics;
- 26 3. **Maintain Carnegie units** as the default means for earning credit where neither of the
27 two above conditions apply;
- 28 4. Consistent with the benefits of student self-paced learning associated with competency-
29 based models, **remove the requirement that students enroll in Algebra I by 9th grade.**

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31 **WHEREAS**, the State Board of Education passed a resolution on December 16, 2015 advising
32 the State Superintendent to consider the High School Credit Flexibility Task Force’s
33 recommendations as outlined in its report, and to initiate rulemaking to implement the
34 recommendations;

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36 **WHEREAS**, a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking was published in the *D.C. Register* on January
37 22, 2016, at 63 DCR 4 for a thirty (30) day public comment period;

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39 **WHERAS**, the proposed rule maintains the Carnegie Unit as the default means for earning credit
40 towards graduation, and creates a waiver process for schools desiring to pursue competency-
41 based learning;

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43 **WHERAS**, the proposed rulemaking requires students to enroll in Algebra I by 10th grade
44 unless the school is granted further flexibility to this requirement through a competency-based
45 waiver, while acknowledging that a specific three-course sequence is required for graduation
46 from high school;

1 **WHEREAS**, the State Board of Education held working sessions on January 6, 2016, February
2 3, 2016, March 2, 2016 and public hearings on December 16, 2015, January 20, 2016, February
3 17, 2016 to discuss the proposed rulemaking and receive public testimony;
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5 **WHEREAS**, the proposed rule was adjusted by the Office of the State Superintendent of
6 Education to reflect numerous comments received before February 22, 2016, including reserving
7 for further examination subsection 2203.7(b) in the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that
8 established an option for students to receive course credit by obtaining a minimum score on an
9 approved assessment;
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11 **WHEREAS**, the proposed rule offers a way for students to receive credit for demonstrated
12 knowledge in any required course;
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14 **WHEREAS**, the State Board of Education finds that the final rulemaking may assist students at
15 all levels of academic performance by eliminating barriers to meeting individual educational
16 needs and by promoting competency-based learning that ensures students advance with the
17 requisite knowledge to be successful;
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19 **NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the State Board of Education calls on OSSE,
20 consistent with the Task Force report, to establish a rigorous application and application process,
21 including development and provision of public, relevant rubrics that will ensure that waivers are
22 awarded only to programs that have reasonable plans for helping students to reach DC academic
23 standards and credible competency-based assessments that assure that students earn credit based
24 on genuine mastery of DC standards;
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26 **BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED**, that the State Board calls on OSSE to establish a process,
27 consistent with the Task Force report, through which both OSSE and the SBOE can effectively
28 monitor the effectiveness of waiver recipients in implementing their waivers and raising
29 students' achievement of DC standards; and
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31 **BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED**, on March 16, 2016, the State Board approves the final
32 rulemaking implementing the High School Credit Flexibility Task Force's recommendations.
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35 Date Adopted: March 16, 2016

Signed: _____

