

Act 155 FAQs

When is the High School Exit Exam eliminated as a requirement for high school graduation?

The exit exam is eliminated as a graduation requirement to receive a South Carolina High School Diploma beginning with the graduating class of 2015.

If I didn't pass the exit exam, can I still receive a South Carolina High School Diploma?

Yes, persons no longer enrolled in a public school that were denied graduation solely for failing to meet the exit exam requirements may petition their local school board to determine eligibility to receive a high school diploma under Act 155.

When did the exit exam requirement for high school graduation apply?

There are exit exam requirements for graduation going back to the graduating class of 1990. Persons who did not meet the exit exam requirements for the Basic Skills Assessment Program (BSAP) or the exit exam requirements under the current High School Assessment Program (HSAP) may now petition their local school board to receive a South Carolina High School Diploma.

What if I've moved from the school district where I went to high school?

You should still petition the school board of the district where you attended high school.

What if the high school I went to no longer exists or merged with another high school?

You would still petition the school board of the district where you went to high school.

What type of high school diploma will I receive if my school doesn't exist?

Once the petition has been approved by the local school board, a standard South Carolina High School Diploma will be ordered. The diploma will be a current diploma issued from the high school that currently serves the attendance area of where you went to high school.

What name will be used for the diploma?

Under current diploma guidelines, the name as it appears on the birth certificate will be used.

What requirements must be met for me to receive a diploma under Act 155?

You must have met all of the graduation requirements, except for passing the exit exam, for the year in which your class graduated.

How will the school boards know what requirements were in place at the time I went to high school?

The basic graduation requirements since 1990, including the number and types of credits, have been sent to all school districts by the South Carolina Department of Education.

Who will determine when all of the graduation requirements have been met?

The local school board will establish a procedure and process for considering the eligibility of the petitioner to receive a diploma under Act 155.

When will the South Carolina Department of Education accept petitions?

We will accept petitions from districts on behalf of students no longer enrolled in public school on an ongoing basis until **December 31, 2015**. We will send approved diploma petition requests for printing, however, diploma templates will need to be changed to reflect the new law and the elimination of the exit exam. A wait time of at least three to four weeks is expected.

Is there a deadline for petitioning the local school board?

You must petition the local school board by **December 31, 2015**.

What is the procedure in place to request a diploma under Act 155?

After you file a petition, the school board will determine your eligibility to receive a diploma. The South Carolina Department of Education orders the diploma.

How long will it take for me to receive a diploma once it's ordered?

The South Carolina Department of Education will work with the diploma printer to process the orders. It may take at least three to four weeks to complete. The diplomas will be sent to the school district for distribution to the petitioners.

Will diplomas granted under Act 155 affect graduation rates as reported for state and federal accountability?

No, the act specifically states that persons receiving diplomas under Act 155 will not be counted as graduates for determining graduation rates of schools and districts. 2014 students who have not passed HSAP during the school year but pass HSAP in the summer of 2014 will count for a high school's 2014 graduation rate.

Is there a deadline for the South Carolina Department of Education to receive diploma requests from local school boards?

The deadline for petitions to be filed with the local school board is December 31, 2015. Local boards are encouraged to submit any final petitions filed by this deadline as soon as possible to the Department.

What options are available to students in the graduating class of 2014?

Students in the graduating class of 2014 who have completed the required credits to graduate but have not passed the exit exam may take the summer HSAP. If they pass, these students receive a diploma under the current 2013-14 requirements. If these students do not pass or take the summer exit exam, they may petition for a diploma under Act 155 as soon as they are no longer enrolled in public school.

Will student transcripts be adjusted?

An official transcript will not be adjusted, but separate documentation should be attached to the transcript by the high school or district, indicating that the student received a high school diploma pursuant to Act 155.

Transcripts for students in the class of 2014 who received certificates during the May/June graduation, will reflect certificate, not diploma. If a student passes the summer HSAP, another transcript would be printed to reflect the diploma status. If the student did not take or pass the summer 2014 HSAP and petitioned for a diploma, the transcript would still indicate “certificate” and the school or district should provide documentation that the student received a high school diploma pursuant to Act 155.

What if I received a certificate but will be applying for scholarships?

As in the question above, an official transcript would reflect “certificate” but separate documentation could be added by the school or district with the transcript to indicate the student is eligible for a high school diploma pursuant to Act 155 of 2014.

How will students with IEPs be affected?

The Office of Special Education has outlined guidance regarding special education students. Please refer any questions to the Office of Special Education at (803) 734-8224.

Who should I petition if I attended a public charter school?

A student who attended a public charter school would petition the local school board that sponsored the public charter school – not the public charter school’s board.

A student who attended a public charter school in the South Carolina Public Charter School District (SCPCSD) would petition the SCPCSD board.

A student who attended a public charter school that was sponsored by a school district at the time of their attendance – with the public charter school then relocating to the SCPCSD – the student would then petition the SCPCSD for the Act 155 diploma.

How will the public be alerted to the availability of receiving high school diplomas through Act 155?

The South Carolina Department of Education is placing advertisements in all major newspapers across the state. Local school districts will also be establishing and communicating their procedures for receiving petitions.

Are districts required to search their records for all students who may not have passed the exit exam?

No. Individuals must petition their local school board using procedures established by the districts.

How do I contact my school district to file my petition with my local school board?

Please contact your school district using our [online district and school directory](#).