



Forrest Claypool
Chief Executive Officer

February 25, 2016

Dear CPS Families,

We're excited to announce some changes to the graduation requirements for CPS students – updates that will allow students to meet these requirements in a way that better prepares them for college and career. These changes will affect several areas of our high school curriculum, including the Arts, Civics and Service Learning, IB, and Career Education.

Beginning with next year's freshmen, CPS will add a Computer Science requirement to our high school curriculum, ensuring that all students develop the technology skills they'll need for success in the jobs of tomorrow. Experts estimate that by the year 2024, there will be 1 million job openings for people with computing skills, yet universities produced fewer than 40,000 computer science graduates last year – and we believe that elevating CS to a graduation requirement is the next logical step to prepare our students to compete in the 21st century job market.

These changes also affect Arts Education, as students will now be able to earn their 2 arts credits by focusing on just one discipline. For example – if your child is interested in music, she can earn her required Arts credits by taking two music courses, thereby delving deeper into the subject she most enjoys. Or, if she wants a broader arts experience, she could take one course in Music and the second in Dance, Theater, etc.

With Civics and Service Learning, students will now be required to take a minimum of 0.5 credits in a Civics or AP Government course. Additionally, the 40 hours of Service Learning now required for graduation will be replaced by projects connected to the classroom, allowing students to move beyond simply collecting service hours and instead use class time to address relevant issues and connect with their communities.

Finally, for students enrolled in International Baccalaureate (IB) programs, IB courses will now satisfy all requirements per content area. This means that IB students will have more flexibility to take the advanced, college-level courses that count toward their IB Diploma.

These changes were approved by the Board of Education during their February meeting and will go into effect next school year. In the coming months, CPS will work with principals to plan for these changes, so you can expect to hear updates from your school leaders as we get closer to the fall.

We thank you for your continued support, and hope you are excited by how these revised graduation requirements will support your children along their academic journey.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Forrest Claypool".

Forrest Claypool
Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janice K. Jackson".

Dr. Janice K. Jackson
Chief Education Officer

