

**DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION RULES GOVERNING
COMMUNITY SERVICE AND DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS**

Effective date:

1.00 AUTHORITY

1.01 The State Board of Education enacted these rules pursuant to its authority as set forth in Ark. Code Ann. §§ 6-16-1901 et seq.

2.00 DEFINITIONS

2.01 “Certify” means the process of a service agency or organization, and a student, verifying and submitting documentation required by a public school district to show that the student successfully completed community service hours.

2.02 “Community Service” means work that is done for the benefit and betterment of the community.

2.03 “Division” means the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education within the Arkansas Department of Education.

2.04 “Grade 9” as it relates to community service learning, begins on the first day after the last day of a student’s 8th grade year to include the summer immediately preceding the school year.

3.00 COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENT

3.01 Beginning with the graduating class of 2026-2027, a public high school student shall complete a minimum of seventy-five (75) clock hours of documented community service in grades nine through twelve (9-12) in order to graduate.

3.02 The community service required under this rule shall:

3.02.1 Be in programs or activities, either in Arkansas or outside of Arkansas, before, during, or after school hours, that meet the requirements established by these rules;

3.02.1.1 Community service hours completed, voluntarily or as required, for a grade, as part of a club or organization, or for honors or other recognition, without limitation, may also count for community service hours required for graduation, pursuant to these rules.

3.02.2 Be certified by the service agency, entity, or organization with which the student volunteers; and

3.02.3 Be completed in accordance with the policy adopted by the public school district board of directors or the governing body of an open enrollment public charter school regarding community service.

3.02.2.1 The school district policy in Section 3.02.2 must include:

3.02.2.1.a The process or criteria for determining whether community service counts towards the seventy-five (75) hours required;

3.02.2.1.b A process for student waivers; and

3.02.2.1.c Any preparation, action, or reflection components the board requires for a student to count community service toward the required hours.

3.02.2.2 Public school districts may allow students to count community service hours completed as a singular organized community service opportunity and routinely scheduled community service opportunities.

3.03 Community service organizations may include, without limitation:

3.03.1.1 Schools;

3.03.1.2 Churches;

3.03.1.3 Non-profit organizations;

3.03.1.4 Government offices; and

3.03.1.5 Other entities recognized by the public school district board of directors or open enrollment public charter school governing body.

3.04 Students transferring into a public school district after grade nine (9) or students graduating early, may receive a diploma provided that the minimum requirement for each year they attend the public school district is met.

3.04.1 The minimum number of community service hours for each grade level for transferring students and students graduating early shall be:

3.05.1.1 Fifteen (15) hours for students in grade nine (9);

3.05.1.2 Twenty (20) hours for students in grade ten (10);

3.05.1.3 Twenty (20) hours for students in grade eleven (11); and

3.05.1.4 Twenty (20) hours for students in grade twelve (12).

3.05 A public school district board of directors or the governing body of an open enrollment public charter school may grant a waiver of this requirement to individual students for extenuating circumstances, pursuant to its policy.

3.05.1 Extenuating circumstances justifying the need for a waiver may include, without limitation:

3.05.1.1 A major illness associated with a student or a family member of a student;

3.05.1.2 A student who is medically fragile or has an identified disability pursuant to IDEA that prevents them from completing the required number of hours;

3.05.1.3 Student homelessness or housing insecurity;

3.05.1.4 Notice to the public school district board of directors that the student is a major contributor to family income; or

3.05.1.5 Documentation, including without limitation an Individualized Education Program (IEP), that the student has extenuating circumstances that will prevent them from meeting the full community service requirements.

3.05.2 A public school district board of directors or the governing body of an open enrollment public charter school may consider paid employment and work-based service as community service hours for purposes of these rules, in lieu of granting a waiver to a student who is unable to complete the required community service hours.

3.08 School districts are responsible for maintaining a system to record student community service hours.

3.08.1 A public school district shall report to the Division annually, through the State's electronic transcript system, the number of community service hours obtained by each student and if a student was granted a waiver and the reason for the waiver.