



Research Brief

Research Services

Vol 2304
February 2024

Vanessa Gonzalez Hernandez, Ph.D.

SUMMARY OF 2022-2023 GRADUATES BY DIPLOMA TYPE

At a Glance

M-DCPS had 21,354 graduates in the 2022-2023 academic year. Ninety two percent of students achieved a standard diploma (24 credits). Some students opted for an international curriculum pathway, with 846 (4%) attaining an Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) diploma, and 436 (2%) obtaining an International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma

. An additional 468 (2%) students earned an Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL) 18-credit diploma.

Over a third of graduates (33%) earned the Superintendent's Diploma of Distinction for outstanding academics and community service. Florida's Scholar and Merit diploma designations were awarded to 4,656 (22%) graduates demonstrating academic strength and/or success in attaining career industry certifications. This year 3,601 (17%) students also earned the Florida Seal of Biliteracy, in Gold or Silver, demonstrating mastery of a foreign language.

DIPLOMA OPTIONS

In order to graduate from high school, students must successfully complete one of the following diploma options: (1) Standard diploma program with 24 credits; (2) Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) curriculum; (3) International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum; or (4) Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL) 18-credit option. Students also had the option of choosing a Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathway. However, no CTE diplomas were awarded in 2022-2023. This report will focus on the diploma types utilized in M-DCPS during the 2023-2024 academic year. In addition to one of these diploma types, students can earn additional designations provided at the District and State levels to highlight academic achievement, community service, or biliteracy. These additional designations include the Superintendent's Diploma of Distinction, Scholar and Merit designations, and the Florida Seal of Biliteracy. Earning one of these diplomas allows students to become college or career ready and be competitive upon graduation in applying to post-secondary education or joining the workforce.

Please note that the data presented on the 2022-2023 academic year graduates are based on the cohort of students who entered 9th grade in the 2019-2020 academic year, which was used to determine the Florida Department of Education 4-year graduation rate. In contrast, the previous issues of this annual report used the data that only included the

records of students who graduated by June of each academic year. That is, records of students graduating in the summer were not included in the previous reports. Therefore, comparisons between this and previous reports are not appropriate because this report may have higher numbers of students due to inclusion of summer graduations.

Standard Diploma

Below, are the requirements for a standard diploma for students entering 9th grade prior to the 2023-24 school year:

- Successfully complete 24 credits, an AICE curriculum, an IB curriculum, or the 18-credit ACCEL option
 - Credits can be obtained through equivalent, applied, or integrated courses or career education courses as defined in the Florida Statute, including approved internships.
 - The required credits include four in English Language Arts (ELA), four in mathematics, three in science, three in social studies, one in fine and performing arts, speech and debate, or practical arts, one in physical education, and eight electives. Credits in specific courses must be earned.
- Earn at least a cumulative 2.0 unweighted grade point average (GPA) on a 4.0 scale
- Attain passing scores on required statewide standardized assessments or concordant scores

There were 21,354 graduates in M-DCPS in the 2022-2023 academic year. The majority (92%) of students in M-DCPS earned a standard diploma. Table 1 shows the number and percentage of students by each of the diploma types, described herein.

Table 1
M-DCPS Graduates by Diploma Type, 2022-2023

	2022-2023*	
	Number of Students	Percent
Standard Diploma	19,602	92%
AICE	846	4%
IB	436	2%
ACCEL	470	2%
Total Graduates	21,354	100%

**Graduates include students who entered 9th grade in the 2017-2018 academic year.*

Students who participate in the AICE or IB curriculum and satisfy the other graduation requirements receive a standard diploma. In addition, if they satisfy specific requirements of Cambridge International Education or the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO), they can receive an AICE diploma or IB diploma.

Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) Diploma

Students who complete an AICE curriculum and pass course exams are eligible to receive

an AICE diploma. To receive the AICE diploma, students must achieve a minimum of seven credits in different subject groups. Students must:

- Complete at least one credit in each of the mathematics and science, languages, and arts and humanities subject groups
- Complete one credit in the compulsory course of Global Perspectives and Research
- Receive a score of A to E on all subject group examinations

Students who complete the AICE curriculum may earn up to 45 hours of college credit and qualify for the highest level of Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Award. In the 2022-2023 academic year, 1,206 students were eligible for an AICE Diploma. As seen in Table 2, 846 students, or 70% of all eligible students, were awarded an AICE Diploma.

Table 2
Number of Students Receiving Cambridge AICE Diplomas, 2022-2023

	Number of Students
Awarded AICE Diploma	846
Total Eligible	1,206

International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma

Students who complete an IB curriculum and take the IB exams are eligible to receive an IB diploma. To receive the IB diploma, students must meet the core requirements including:

- Extended Essay (EE), Theory of Knowledge (TOK), and Creativity, Activity, and Service (CAS) as core elements of the curriculum
 - EE is an independent, self-directed piece of research, finishing with a 4,000-word paper. TOK is a practice in which students are asked to reflect on the nature of knowledge, and on how we know what we claim to know. CAS requires students to take part in a range of experiences and at least one project that involves purposeful activities including creative pursuits, physical activities, and community service.
- Achieve a minimum of 24 points from the three Standard Level and three Higher Level Exams or two Standard Level and four Higher Level exams, one from each of the six subject groups
 - Subject groups include language and literature, language acquisition, individuals and societies, sciences, mathematics, and the arts.
- Demonstrate sufficient breadth in achievement across subjects and the core by meeting the particular requirements stated in articles of the IBO General regulations of the Diploma Programme

Students who successfully pass the IB assessments may earn up to 45 hours of college credit and qualify for the highest level of the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Award. In the 2022-2023 academic year, 519 students were eligible for the IB Diploma. As seen in Table 3, 436 students, or 84%, were awarded the IB diploma.

Table 3
Number of Students Receiving an IB Diploma, 2022-2023

	Number of Students
Awarded IB Diploma	436
Total Eligible	519

Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL)

Students who complete an ACCEL curriculum will receive a standard diploma. Students with above grade level performance on statewide standardized assessments, at least a 3.0 GPA, acceptable attendance and conduct, and letters of recommendation from teachers and/or counselors are eligible for ACCEL options at their school. ACCEL options for eligible students include whole-grade and mid-year promotion, subject-matter acceleration resulting in the promotion or acceleration taking place within the same school or to a new school, and virtual instruction in higher grade-level subjects. Students may also take End-of-Course (EOC) assessments, Advanced Placement (AP), or College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams and receive credit for the corresponding high school course if they pass the EOC assessment, also known as the Credit Acceleration Program. Additional ACCEL options include enriched and advanced academic coursework and programs, flexible grouping, combined classes, self-paced instruction, industry certifications, work-related internships or apprenticeships, curriculum compacting, advanced-content instruction, and telescoping curriculum.

Students are required to obtain at least a 2.0 cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale. Students are not required to complete physical education but are required to take three elective courses. Table 4 displays the number of students awarded an ACCEL diploma in 2022-2023.

Table 4
Number of Students Receiving an ACCEL Diploma, 2022-2023

	Number of Students
Awarded ACCEL Diploma	468
Total Graduates	21,354

DIPLOMA DESIGNATIONS

Superintendent's Diploma of Distinction

Students can earn the Superintendent's Diploma of Distinction by meeting the following requirements:

- Complete an academically rigorous program of study, including at least four Honors, AP, IB, AICE, International Studies (IS), and/or dual enrollment courses
- Complete at least 75 hours of community service

- Earn a 3.5 weighted GPA by the end of the first semester of senior year, with final grades no lower than a C

Table 5 indicates the number of students awarded the Superintendent's Diploma of Distinction in the 2022-2023 academic year.

Table 5
Number of Students Receiving the Superintendent's Diploma of Distinction, 2022-2023

	2022-2023*
	Number of Students
Diploma of Distinction	7,477
Total Graduates	21,354

**Graduates include students who entered 9th grade in the 2017-2018 academic year.*

In addition to the standard 24-credit high school diploma program requirements, students are eligible to receive one or both of the additional State designations on their diploma. Students entering 9th grade in the 2018-2019 school year must meet a set of requirements for a Scholar and/or Merit designation.

Scholar Diploma Designation

To earn the Scholar designation, students must meet the following requirements:

- Pass Geometry, Biology 1 and US History End-of-Course (EOC) assessments
 - Students are exempt from this requirement for Biology I or US History if they are enrolled in an AP, IB, or AICE or dual enrollment course, take the respective examinations, and achieve the minimum score to earn college credit.
- Earn at least one credit in each of the following courses: Algebra 2 or an equally rigorous course; Statistics or an equally rigorous mathematics course; Chemistry or Physics; and a course equally rigorous to Chemistry or Physics
- Earn two credits in the same world language
- Earn at least one credit in AP, IB, AICE, or a dual enrollment course

Industry Scholar Diploma Designation

Students achieve the Industry Scholar Diploma Designation by attaining one or more industry certifications set forth by Florida Statute 1003.492, in addition to the 24-credit standard high school diploma requirements. The industry certification must be within an industry that addresses critical local or statewide economic need, is included in the State's workforce system's targeted occupation list or be identified as emerging.

Table 6 indicates the number of students graduating with diploma designations (Scholar, Industry, or both) in the 2022-2023 academic year. Over 4,000 students earned a designation on their diploma. Of these, a higher percentage of students were awarded the Industry Scholar Diploma Designation in 2022-2023.

Table 6
Number of Students Receiving Diploma Designations, 2022-2023

	2022-2023*	
	Number of Students	Percent
Total Designations	4,656	22%
Industry	3,047	65%
Scholar	1,100	24%
Both	509	11%
No Designation	16,698	78%
Total Graduates	21,354	100%

**Graduates include students who entered 9th grade in the 2017-2018 academic year.*

FLORIDA SEAL OF BILITERACY PROGRAM

Biliteracy is defined by Florida Statute 1003.432 as achieving a high level of competency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in one or more foreign languages in addition to English. A foreign language is defined as a language other than English, which includes American Sign Language, classical languages, and indigenous languages. The Biliteracy Seal is designated on the high school diploma as either Gold, with the highest level of competency, or Silver, with the second-highest level of competency.

In order to achieve the Silver Seal of Biliteracy, students must achieve one of the following requirements:

- Earn at least four foreign language credits in the same foreign language with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale
- Achieve a minimum qualifying score on a world language assessment, including SAT, CLEP, IB, AP, AICE, and other standardized assessments as described in Florida Statute
 - For languages that are not tested on nationally recognized examinations, students may provide maintenance of a portfolio of language performance at the Advanced Low level or higher based on the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) Proficiency Guidelines of 2012 in the modes of communication appropriate for that language.

In order to achieve the Gold Seal of Biliteracy, students must achieve all of the Silver requirements listed above, as well as meet both of the following requirements:

- Achieve a level 4 or higher on the statewide, standardized grade 10 English Language Arts (ELA) assessment (this is only for the Gold Designation)
- Achieve the highest qualifying score on a world language assessment, including SAT, CLEP, IB, AP, AICE, and other standardized assessments as described in Florida Statutes.

Table 7 indicates the number of students awarded a Florida Seal of Biliteracy in the 2022-

2023 academic year. Over 3,000 students earned a seal in the 2022-2023 academic year. The majority of seals earned met requirement for the Gold designation.

Table 7
Number of Students Receiving the Florida Seal of Biliteracy, 2022-2023

	2022-2023*	
	Number of Students	Percent
Total Seals	3,601	17%
Gold Seal	2,991	83%
Silver Seal	610	17%
No Seals	17,753	83%
Total Graduates	21,354	100%

**Graduates include students who entered 9th grade in the 2017-2018 academic year.*

Summary

In summary, the majority of M-DCPS graduates achieved a standard diploma, while 8% earned an AICE, IB, or ACCEL diploma. Additionally, over a third of graduates earned the Superintendent's Diploma of Distinction recognizing academic excellence and community service. Twenty-two percent of graduates earned the State Industry Scholar Diploma Designations and 17% of students earned a Florida Seal of Biliteracy recognizing mastery of a foreign language.

Students have options in the type of diploma they receive upon completion of high school. Each option has a set of requirements that must be met. Additionally, students are recognized for achievements and performance in academics, community service, and literacy in foreign languages. These diploma types and designations reflect positively on students when applying to post-secondary education or entering the workforce.