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### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine the scope of the "core of common learnings" of Florida high school graduates as reflected in graduation requirements and to report provisions made by local school authorities through special programs of study to meet the needs of groups of pupils with similar abilities and ambitions.

### Procedure

Questionnaires were sent to principals of the 312 comprehensive public high schools in Florida which had graduating classes in the spring of 1958. Each principal was asked to indicate the number of years of study in grades 9-12 required in each subject field for graduation regardless of whether the requirements were set by the state, county, or individual school.

Reports were received from 310 of the 312 schools. The two schools which did not report were very small schools having a combined enrollment of 264 students in grades 9-12. The program of studies in one other school was of such nature that it was not adaptable to analysis in the usual way due to a possible choice by students of major and minor fields of study in high school. Statistics in this report are based upon information received from the 309 principals who returned complete and usable questionnaires and enrollment data in the files of the State Department of Education.

### Results

Three basic types of programs of study were available in the public comprehensive high schools in the state. They were as follows:

1. The general high school program
2. The college preparatory program
3. Vocational programs -- with various vocational objectives

Programs under such titles as "Liberal" and "Rigid Academic" were reported by some schools. The analyses of such programs are presented in this paper since the number of pupils involved was relatively small.

All schools reported a general high school program. One hundred eighty-six schools report this as the only type of program offered. Some kind of special college preparatory program for college-bound pupils was reported by 123 schools, or about 40 percent of the total. Seventy-nine schools reported programs designed for the preparation of students for various vocations.

-- The 312 schools in the state which offered the school diploma ranged in size of total enrollment in from 20 to 3,259. The median enrollment was 235,  $Q_1$  and  $Q_3$  was 577. These indicate that many of the schools have very small enrollments in the top four grades of high school.

Considerable freedom is afforded local school authorities to prescribe graduation requirements which go beyond the minimum units set by State Board Regulations. More than one-half of the 20 to 24 units required for high school graduation is left to local determination.

The State Board of Education sets minimum requirements for graduation from high school and emphasizes the responsibility of the local school authorities for the development of additional requirements consistent with the needs of the pupils and the purposes of the school.

Minimum Requirements for High School Graduation -- It shall be the duty of the principal and the faculty to develop requirements for graduation consistent with the needs of the pupils and the purposes of the school. Such requirements shall be consistent with policies established by the county board and shall be approved by the county board. Requirements for graduation shall include the following for grades 9-12.

Subject	Minimum Required Units
English . . . . .	3
Homemaking (for girls) . . . . .	1
Mathematics . . . . .	1
Physical Education . . . . .	2
Science . . . . .	1
Social Studies (In Social Studies one shall be American History, or American History and Government) . . . . .	2

There shall be no substitution for the above basic minimum requirements (1).

State accreditation standards further provide that a minimum of 20 units and a maximum of 24 units shall be required for graduation from a high school (2). In addition to the basic minimum requirements for each pupil, state standards require that advanced courses

in certain areas and comprehensive programs in many areas shall be available in each high school (3).

Of the 309 schools reporting, 18 reported no graduation requirements applicable to all students beyond the minimum state requirements. The 18 schools were located in 13 counties. Only 2 of the 18 were Negro schools. Enrollments in grades 9-12 in schools which reported no local requirements for all students totaled 9,297, or 5.3 percent of the total enrollment in these grades in public high schools in the state.

Most of the schools which set no requirements for high school graduation for all students beyond the minimum required by the State Board of Education were schools of medium size with 12 of 18 such schools enrolling between 250 and 1,000 students in the last four years of high school.

All schools reported graduation requirements for the general high school program. The percentage of seniors affected by requirements in excess of state requirements is shown in Figure 1.

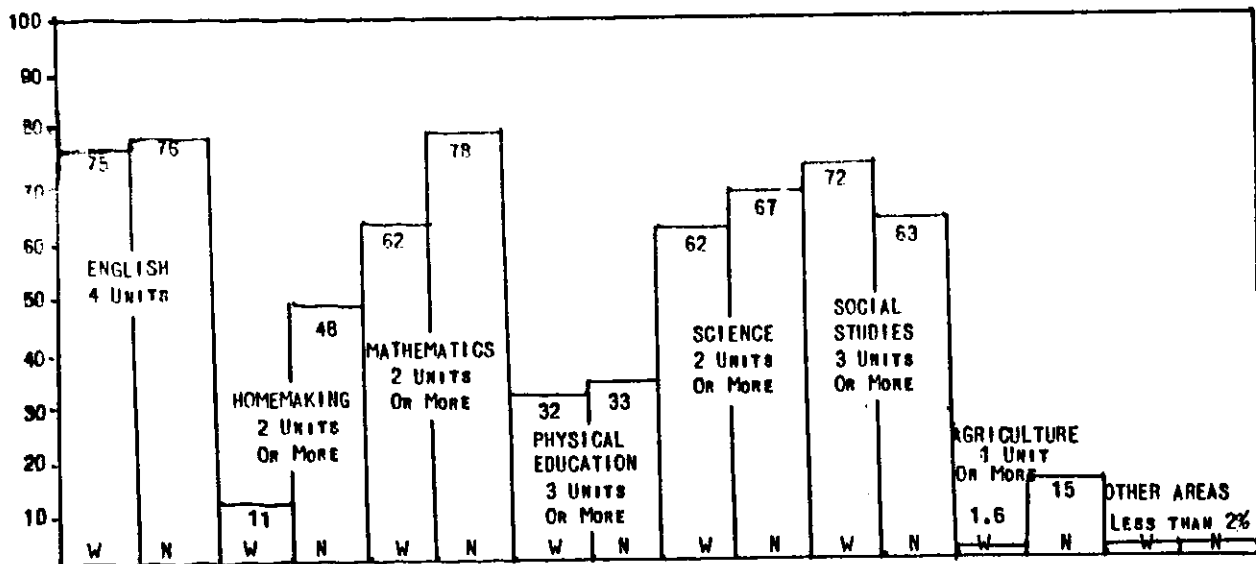


FIG. 1.—PERCENTAGES OF FLORIDA SENIORS ENROLLED IN SCHOOLS IN WHICH ALL STUDENTS WERE REQUIRED TO EXCEED STATE MINIMUM GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS IN CERTAIN AREAS.

College preparatory program: -- Special college preparatory programs were available to students in 123 of the 312 schools which had graduating classes in 1957-58. These 123 schools enrolled approximately 50 percent of the white and 40 percent of the Negro pupils in grades 9-12 in the state. The median high school enrollment was 517,  $Q_1$  was 200 and  $Q_3$  was 980. Therefore, enrollments in most of the schools which provided college preparatory programs were larger than the median enrollment of the total group of high schools in the state.

Students who will eventually go to college were, of course, enrolled in other schools as well: therefore, requirements for graduation from the general program apply to college preparatory students enrolled in schools which provided no special college preparatory program.

For purposes of this section of this report graduation requirements for the general program were considered to be requirements for college preparatory students in those schools which had no special program for college preparatory students. The graph below shows the percentage of high school seniors enrolled in schools where graduation requirements in various subject areas for college preparatory students were higher than the state minimum.

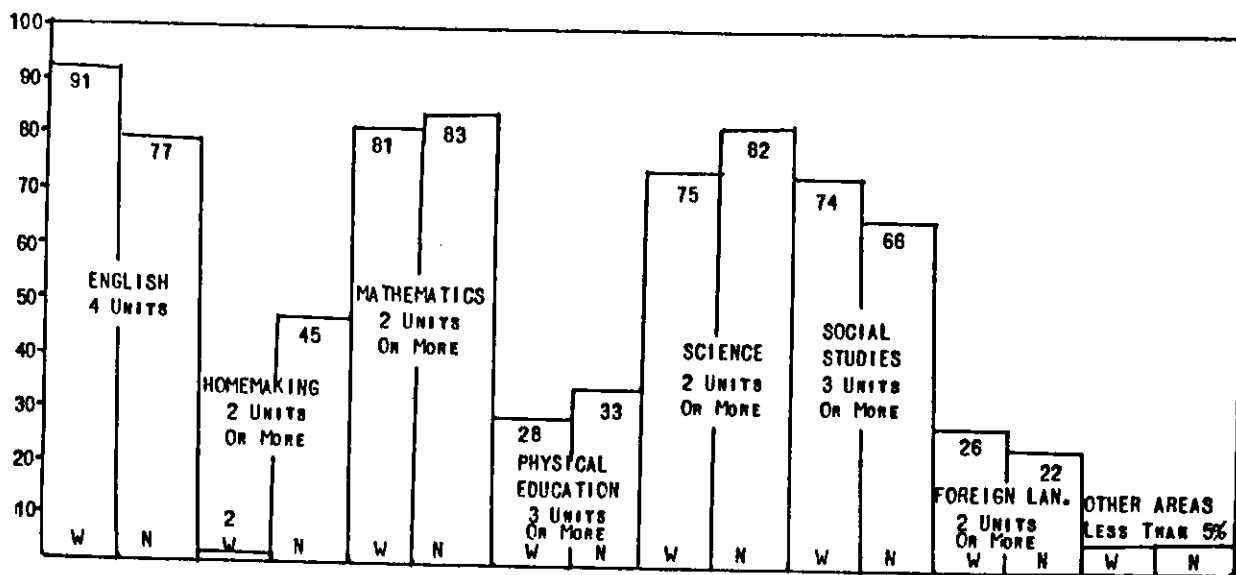


FIG. 2.—PERCENTAGES OF FLORIDA SENIORS ENROLLED IN SCHOOLS IN WHICH COLLEGE PREPARATORY STUDENTS WERE REQUIRED TO EXCEED STATE MINIMUM GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS IN CERTAIN AREAS.

Vocational programs: -- Vocational programs designed for the preparation of students for various vocations were available in 79 of the 310 schools reporting. Of these 79 schools, 77 also provided special programs for college preparatory students. Some of the schools provided curricula leading to more than one vocation -- for example, business training, agriculture, and trades.

The schools which offered vocational programs ranged in size from 50 to more than 2,500 students in grades 9-12. The median enrollment was 626 students,  $Q_1$  was 242 and  $Q_3$  was 1,251. These indicate that approximately three-fourths of those schools which offered vocational programs were larger than the median of the 312 schools.

Schools which offered vocational programs contained 48.3 percent of the white and 30.1 percent of the Negro high school seniors in the state. Of those graduates of Florida public schools in the spring of 1958, 13,684, or 45.1 percent of the total, had an opportunity to choose between a general high school, a college preparatory, or a vocational preparatory program in high school.

### Conclusions

1. Approximately 48 percent of the white and 30 percent of the Negro high school seniors were enrolled in schools where at least three kinds of programs leading to a high school diploma were available. The programs were:
  - a. General high school program
  - b. College preparatory program
  - c. Vocational program--with various vocational objectives
2. Approximately 67 percent of the white and 48 percent of the Negro high school seniors were enrolled in schools where both a general high school program and a college preparatory program were available.
3. Although 60 percent of all schools offered only a general program, such schools contained less than 37 percent of the high school seniors in the state.
4. Approximately 98 percent of all pupils in grades 9-12 in Florida were enrolled in schools in which local requirements for graduation exceeded those set by the State Board of Education.
5. Schools in which four years of study were required in each of two or more areas were in general very small schools.
6. The facts reported seem to indicate that local school authorities have recognized and accepted the responsibility that rests upon the individual school and county officials to go beyond the minimum state requirements in providing the kind of education best suited to the needs and purposes of the students they serve.

### Footnotes

1. Standards for Accreditation of Florida Schools (Tallahassee: Florida State Department of Education, Amended March, 1957), p. 29.
2. Ibid., p. 30.
3. Ibid., pp. 12-24.