

**Western Mountains Regional School Unit No. 99
East High School**

Graduation Requirements

Awarding a high school diploma based on the accumulation of credits earned for passing courses has been a longstanding practice in American high schools, but this system has not ensured that students meet high academic standards and demonstrate proficiency. Consequently, many graduates leave high school unprepared to succeed in postsecondary education and modern careers.

To ensure that all students graduate from our schools with the knowledge, skills, and work habits they will need in adult life, the Western Mountains Regional School District has adopted a proficiency-based system of teaching, learning, promotion, and graduation. Beginning with East High School Class of 2018, all students will need to demonstrate achievement of all cross-curricular and content-area graduation standards before receiving a high school diploma. These new graduation requirements will ensure that each student provides evidence that they have achieved expected learning standards, and acquired the knowledge, skills, and work habits that will prepare them for postsecondary education and modern careers.

The district's proficiency-based diploma system also requires our schools and educators to provide the interventions, support systems, and personalized-learning pathways that each student needs to meet the expected standards and graduate college and career ready.

A. Communicating Graduation Requirements

To ensure that every student and family has the information and resources they need to appropriately plan and sequence the student's educational decisions, our schools, educators, and staff will clearly and consistently communicate—prior to entering high school and throughout the student's educational career—the graduation standards and diploma requirements that must be met to earn a high school diploma.

The Superintendent, through the high school principal or other designee, shall be responsible for ensuring that accurate, up-to-date information concerning all graduation standards and diploma requirements are (1) readily available to all incoming students and their families in the spring preceding the start of each school year, and (2) published on the district and high school websites. A detailed guide to graduation standards, academic expectations, and diploma requirements will be disseminated to all incoming ninth-grade students at the time of course selection. This policy will also be referenced in each edition of the high school student handbook and on the district and high school websites.

As soon as it is practical and feasible, the Board expects the Superintendent or designee to inform all students and their families of any modifications made to the district's graduation requirements, which extends to all applicable changes in relevant state law, rules, or regulations.

The Board has approved the following schedule of minimum requirements for graduation, which encompasses minimum graduation requirements specified by the state and described in relevant laws, rules, and regulations. The Board is aware that current law and regulations are subject to change.

B. Academic Requirements for Graduation

For the East High School classes of 2013–2017, the following graduation requirements remain in effect:

NOTE: School districts list here their present graduation requirements, by class, as a transitional policy that will be phased out beginning with the Class of 2018.

Commencing with the Class of 2018, all students attending East High School must meet the following graduation requirements:

B1. All students will demonstrate that they have achieved proficiency in the content-area graduation standards of the Maine Learning Results. Meeting the standard entails demonstrating proficiency in each of the following content areas prior to graduation:

1. English Language Arts
2. Mathematics
3. Social Studies
4. Science and Technology
5. Health Education and Physical Education
6. Visual and Performing Arts
7. World Languages
8. Career and Education Development

The East High School administration, faculty, and staff will develop and apply a set of graduation standards and performance indicators that align with the content-area standards of the Maine Learning Results.

To satisfy graduation requirements, all students must be engaged in proficiency-based educational experiences in the content areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science and Technology in each year of their secondary school program. The standards of Career and Education Development may be embedded and addressed in other content-area learning experiences.

B2. All students will demonstrate that they have achieved proficiency in the cross-curricular Guiding Principles of the Maine Learning Results.

The Guiding Principles state that each Maine student must leave school as:

1. A clear and effective communicator
2. A self-directed and lifelong learner
3. A creative and practical problem solver
4. A responsible and involved citizen
5. An integrative and informed thinker

The East High School administration, faculty, and staff will develop and apply a set of graduation standards and performance indicators that align with the cross-curricular standards of the Guiding Principles of the Maine Learning Results.

B3. All students will complete a capstone project, through which students will demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and work habits by conducting in-depth research, using technological applications, producing a high-quality exhibition of learning, and presenting their research and findings to a review panel.

B4. All students will complete and submit at least one application to a postsecondary educational institution, training program, or other certified learning experience, such as the military, that will provide them with continued opportunities for academic, career, and personal growth.

B5. While most students will satisfy graduation requirements over the course of a four-year academic program, students may also satisfy East High School's graduation requirements during a period of time that is either accelerated or lengthened, based on their distinct learning needs. All students are expected to develop a Personal Learning Plan with assistance from counselors, teachers, and/or administrators that allows them to meet expected standards at the pace and with the support they need.

C. Multiple Pathways

East High School offers all students multiple learning options that allow students to demonstrate proficiency on expected learning standards, earn academic credit, and satisfy graduation requirements. East High School also encourages its students to explore a broad range of learning experiences, including outside-of-school options.

To pursue outside-of-school learning options, students must describe their learning experiences in a Personal Learning Plan, including how the experience satisfies both graduation requirements and expected cross-curricular and content-area standards.

Learning options may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Academic courses offered by the school
2. Dual enrollment or early college courses
3. Career and technical education programming
4. Online or blended learning options
5. Alternative or at-risk programming
6. Apprenticeships, internships, field work, or exchange experiences
7. Independent studies or long-term projects
8. Adult education

D. Transfer Students

For students who transfer to East High School from another state, country, school, program, or home-schooling situation, including educational programs that are not aligned with East High School's cross-curricular and content-area graduation standards, the Principal shall evaluate the value of the student's prior educational experiences and determine to what degree the student has met the school's graduation requirements. After enrolling in East High School, these students will need to satisfy all assessment, proficiency, and graduation requirements in the appropriate subject areas, as determined by the Principal. The Superintendent will ultimately determine whether these students are eligible to receive a diploma.

E. Home-Schooled Students

For home-schooled students wishing to receive a diploma from East High School, the Principal shall evaluate the value of the student's prior educational experiences and determine to what degree the student has met the school's graduation requirements. After enrolling in East High School, these students will need to satisfy all assessment, proficiency, and graduation requirements in the appropriate subject areas, as determined by the Principal. A home-schooled student must have attended East High School for a minimum of two (2) years or four (4) semesters to be eligible for a diploma.

F. Students Receiving Special-Education Services

Students who successfully meet East High School's cross-curricular and content-area graduation standards, as specified in the goals and objectives of their Individualized Education Plans (IEP), will be awarded diplomas.

G. Delayed Awarding of Diplomas

If a student leaves high school to attend an accredited, degree-granting institution of higher education, the student may, upon satisfactory completion of the freshman year, be awarded a high school diploma, provided that the student has notified the Principal at the time of the early admission.

H. Extended Study

Students are eligible for extended years of study to complete the school's graduation requirements if they have not reached the age of 20. Students eligible for extended years of study may be referred to adult education or other programs and resources.

I. Participation in Graduation Ceremony

A student must complete all Board requirements for a high school diploma to participate in graduation exercises.

Legal Reference

20-A M.R.S.A. § 4722-A (as revised) Proficiency-Based Diploma Standards
Ch. 127 § 7 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rule) (as revised)

Cross References

IK: Assessment of Student Learning
IKA: Grading and Reporting System
IKC: Transcripts
IHCDA: Dual Enrollment and Early College
IKD: Academic Recognition
IKE: Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration
IKFF: Multiple Pathways

Approved: 00/00/0000

NOTE: While this policy is written to align with State of Maine graduation requirements and standards, the language and general format can be adapted for other states.

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