

Department of Education High School Diploma Covid 19 Student Eligibility Information Sheet

In June of 2021 the Maine State Legislature passed [LD 325](#), which addressed the disruption to education that COVID-19 has had on Maine students. The resulting [updates to statute](#) allows for a student to apply to the Maine Department of Education for a State of Maine Diploma. The COVID-19 provision in statute sunsets on September 1, 2023.

This information sheet is intended to provide all those involved (Superintendents, Administrators, School Counselors, Parents, etc...) with the information they need to know in order to direct and to assist students who may not meet local district requirements for graduation yet may meet the requirements for a Maine DOE Diploma. This is referencing those students impacted by COVID-19.

FAQ's

What is a Department of Education High School Diploma? The Maine DOE Diploma is a High School Diploma intended for students who have had a disruption to their education as defined by state statutes. There are several qualifying requirements, however, any student who is unable to obtain a locally awarded diploma due to a significant interruption of education resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and civil emergency during the student's secondary school education history is eligible to apply.

When would a student consider applying for a DOE Diploma? Once a 4th year student determines they are not able to meet the local credit requirements for high school diploma and have had a significant disruption to their education due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they should consider the possibility of the Maine DOE Diploma. (Please see [Maine Diploma - Educational Disruption \(COVID-19\)](#) for requirements.) However, the actual application process would not begin until after the end of their 4th year.

How are students who decided to do a 5th year (or beyond) impacted? Students who do not meet the requirements for a DOE Diploma at the end of their 4th year, may continue, however, once they meet the requirements they are eligible immediately to apply and do not have to complete the 5th year.

Does a DOE High School Diploma limit a student's post secondary options? The Maine DOE Diploma is a high school diploma and is accepted by branches of the military and any other profession requiring a high school diploma. Postsecondary educational institutions consider many factors when determining acceptance - Maine's community colleges have assured that they will recognize the Maine DOE Diploma.

What are the Requirements for a DOE Diploma?

- 4 Years of English
- 2 Years of Social Studies/History (to include US History, American Government, Civics and personal finance)
- 2 Years of Science (to include 1 year of Lab Science)
- 2 Years of Math
- 1 Year of Visual/Performing Arts

What must a student do to apply for a DOE Diploma?

All students who attended high school in Maine during the COVID-19 civil emergency (March 2020-June 2021) are eligible to apply. This means that the application does not include having to document/prove the impact that the COVID-19 civil emergency had on the student. [Click here for the Online Application](#).

Besides providing information about the applicant (name, address, email, school, etc), the application also needs an uploaded letter verifying that the student has met all of the requirements necessary to earn the Maine DOE Diploma. This letter is provided by the local SAU after doing a transcript review after the student's 4th year. A representative of the SAU should review the applicant's transcripts to ensure courses completed meet the minimum requirements under 20-A MRS §4722.

The SAU representative should then draft a letter on school/district letterhead stating and verifying the following:

- The applicant is unable to meet the diploma requirements in your local school district due to the significant interruption of education resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and civil emergency.
- The applicant's transcripts demonstrate meeting the requirements under 20-A MRS §4722 for a Maine Department of Education Diploma.
- The applicant has completed their 4th-year as a secondary school student.

How does a student applying for a DOE Diploma impact the local school district?

Once a student is awarded a Maine DOE Diploma, the local SAU is notified to update their records. Once awarded, the student is no longer eligible to earn a diploma from their local SAU. In terms of data, the local SAU **DOES NOT** count as a dropout for the local school district and if the Maine DOE Diploma is awarded prior to the uploading of four year cohort graduation data, the student would be counted as a four year graduate for the local SAU.

