

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Before entering high school, students need to know the standards for attaining a high school diploma in order to plan an appropriate, sequential educational program to meet that goal.

RSU 56 has a proficiency-based system of learning which means that the awarding of a diploma will be contingent on the demonstration of proficiency on identified [Graduation Benchmark Standards](#) as well as earning course credits as outlined below.

The Superintendent, through the high school principal or other designee, shall be responsible for providing accurate information concerning the requirements for completion of studies at Dirigo High School to incoming students and their parents/guardians prior to the start of their ninth grade school year. A summary of this policy will be disseminated to all incoming ninth-grade students at the time of course selection. A summary of this policy will also be included in the high school handbook.

The Board has approved the following schedule of minimum requirements for graduation, which includes minimum requirements specified by the State of Maine. The Board is aware that current law and regulations are subject to change. The Board expects the Superintendent/designee to inform students and parents/guardians as soon as practicable of any additional state-imposed standards that must be met before students may be awarded a high school diploma.

II. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS

The awarding of a diploma from Dirigo High School will be contingent on the demonstration of proficiency in the identified Graduation Benchmark Standards as well as the successful completion of credits as outlined below. The student must also fulfill any other requirements specified in this policy.

A. Meet the cross-cutting performance standards set forth in the Guiding Principles of the Maine Learning results.

A student graduating from Dirigo High School is expected to be a:

- Clear and effective communicator;
- Self-directed and lifelong learner;
- Creative and analytical problem solver;
- Responsible and involved citizen; and an
- Integrative and informed thinker.

B. Successfully complete a minimum of 22 credits as follows:

1. English Language Arts: 4 credits

2. Mathematics: 3.5 credits
 3. Science and Technology: 3.5 credits
 4. Social Studies: 3.5 credits
 5. Fine Arts (art, music, industrial arts, culinary arts, drama, etc.): 1 credit
 6. Health and Physical Education: 1.5 credits
 7. Cougar Paw: 1 credit (.25 per year)
 8. Service: .5 credits
 9. Future Perspectives: .5 credits
 10. World Language: .5 credits
 11. Electives: 2.5 credits
 12. Senior Tri Fold/Portfolio: P/F
- C. The student must demonstrate computer skills according to the school unit's standards for Computer literacy, proficiency, and performance.
- D. The student must engage in an educational experience relating to English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology in each year of secondary schooling.

III. MULTIPLE PATHWAYS TO THE AWARDING OF A PROFICIENCY-BASED DIPLOMA

RSU 56's high school educational curriculum is designed to enable students to satisfy graduation requirements in four years through a sequence of learning experiences providing opportunities to gain and demonstrate proficiency in all of the content areas of the Learning Results and in the cross-content Guiding Principles of the Maine Learning Results.

Students may also opt to pursue a high school diploma by accessing multiple additional pathways including:

- Career and technical education
- Alternative education programs
- Apprenticeships, internships, and/or fieldwork
- Career academies
- Advanced placements
- Online courses
- Adult education
- Dual enrollment or early college
- Gifted and talented programs
- Independent study
- Exchange programs
- Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO)

Each pathway must provide a quality learning experience comparable in rigor to RSU 56's own

educational offerings.

In order to pursue one or more of the multiple pathways, a student must have a Personal Learning Plan detailing how the pathway will provide exposure to the content standards of the Learning Results and how the student will demonstrate proficiency in meeting the standards. The personal learning plan must be approved by the Guidance Counselor and Principal (or designee).

IV. STUDENTS RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

All secondary students must achieve the minimum requirements as established pursuant to Maine law. A student with a disability, as defined in 20-A-MRSA §7001 (B) who satisfies the local diploma requirements in a manner specified by the student's IEP must be awarded a high school diploma.

V. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS APPLICABLE TO THE AWARDING OF A DIPLOMA FROM DIRIGO HIGH SCHOOL

A. Transfer Students

For students who transfer to Dirigo High School from another state or from an educational program that is not required to be aligned with the content standards of the system of Maine Learning Results, the Dirigo High School principal or designee shall determine the value of the student's prior educational experience towards meeting graduation requirements.

B. Home-schooled Students

For home-schooled students wishing to receive a diploma from Dirigo High School, the principal or designee shall determine the value of the student's prior educational experience toward meeting graduation requirements. A home-schooled student must have attended Dirigo High School for a minimum of two semesters in order to receive a Dirigo High School diploma.

C. Delayed Awarding of Diplomas

A student who leaves Dirigo High School to attend an accredited, degree-granting institution of higher education may upon satisfactory completion of the freshmen year be awarded a high school diploma.

D. Early Awarding of Diplomas

A student who has met the State's and Board's diploma requirements in fewer than four years of high school may be awarded a diploma.

E. Extended Study

Students are eligible for extended years of study to complete the requirements of a diploma if they have not reached the age of 20 at the start of the school year. Students eligible for extended years of study may be referred to adult education or other resources suitable to young learners.

Extended study for students with disabilities shall be specified in the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

F. Certificate of Completion

The Board may provide a certificate of completion to a student who leaves school having completed four years attendance as a full-time high school student and who has earned the required experiences but has not met Maine Learning Results proficiency standards that may be mandated by the State.

G. Participation in Graduation Ceremony

A student must complete all Board requirements for a high school diploma or certificate of completion in order to participate in graduation exercises.

H. Honors and Awards at Graduation

In order to be eligible for honors or awards based wholly or in part on academic achievement (e.g. valedictorian, salutatorian), a student must have been enrolled full time at Dirigo High School for a full year prior to graduation. Students who do not meet this enrollment requirement will not be "ranked" for the purpose of determining eligibility for graduation honors, awards, or scholarships.

(Note: "Honors" at graduation is a different issue than "honor roll" or "class rank," which may have different eligibility requirements and may be addressed in other board policies.)

Legal References: 20-A MRSA § 4722; 5161-5165; 697(4); 7007 (1-B); 8402; 8404 Ch. 127 § 7 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rule)

Cross Reference: IHCD A Post Secondary Enrollment Options

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