**GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

All students are expected to complete a rigorous course of study as enrolled students of Central High School. Although individual students and their parents may pursue special interests by making certain course selections, a core of knowledge is considered essential for the purpose of attaining a comprehensive education. The Central High School diploma requirements are designed to include coursework that prepares students to be able to demonstrate achievement in the Maine state standards to include Maine’s Guiding Principles. In addition to credit accumulation, RSU 64 has adopted a proficiency-based system of teaching and learning, ensuring students have the opportunity to graduate college, career, and life ready.

The District’s diploma system is designed to provide the interventions, support systems, and personalized-learning pathways that each student needs to meet the expected standards and graduate.

**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**

1. The student must successfully complete a total of 21 credits. Of those 21 credits, students must complete the following:

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| --- | --- |
| English – 4 credits (English I, II, III, & IV) | Physical Education – 1 credit |
| Mathematics – 3 credits | Health – ½ credit |
| Science – 3 credits (Physical Science, Biology, & an elective) | Fine Arts – 1 credit |
| Social Studies – 3 credits (US History & two electives) |  |

1. The student must demonstrate computer proficiency. Students who fail to demonstrate computer proficiency by the end of grade 8 must do so before they are eligible to receive a high school diploma.
2. The student must complete a minimum of 20 hours of documented community service.

The RSU 64 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. Instruction will be provided on each, and assessments that have been aligned to the standards will determine the level of understanding and performance of each student on each performance indicator and standard. In addition to information relative to the progress of students toward credit accumulation, student performance on standards will be communicated via the quarterly report card.

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

All students will demonstrate their learning with respect to the Guiding Principles by meeting academic, civic, and social expectations developed through the core values, beliefs, and learning expectations (CVBLE). This will be evidenced in a senior culminating/capstone project. The senior capstone will promote student reflection on their high school learning experiences and their own role in these experiences. In doing so, students are encouraged to recognize and celebrate their personal growth, and identify traits and qualities that contributed to this success, as well as those that hindered it. Through completing the senior capstone, students will also identify ways in which their high school experiences have prepared them for college, career and community.

All students must complete a minimum of 20 documented hours of community service.

While most students will satisfy graduation requirements over the course of a four-year academic program, students may also satisfy Central 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 parents, guardians, counselors, teachers, and/or administrators that allows them to meet expected standards at the pace and with the support they need.

**C. Multiple Learning Options**

Central High School offers all students multiple learning options that allow students to demonstrate achievement of expected learning standards, earn academic credit, and satisfy graduation requirements. Central 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 graduation requirements.

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
9. Exchange programs
10. Project based learning opportunities

**D. Other Academic Credit**

Students may enroll in approved adult education courses or approved independent study courses in order to earn up to a maximum of three (3) elective or make-up credits to be accepted for graduation credit. These courses will not count for completion of core requirements for English, math, science, social studies, fine arts or health unless the course is being taken to make up a course that the student completed but failed.

Students who cannot attend the regular Central High School day program due to a diagnosed illness that prevents attendance may receive credit toward a Central High School diploma through approved independent study. Credit approval may be granted by the Central High School principal for such study, if the study is part of an individual education plan or medical accommodation plan developed through Central High School. There is no maximum number of allowable credits toward graduation in such cases. The student must still demonstrate proficiency through satisfactory performance on local assessments.

Enrolled students wishing to earn elective or make-up credits through independent study or adult education must have such study approved by the Central High School principal in advance of the student’s enrollment in the program.

In unusual circumstances, the Central High School principal may approve up to two (2) of the twenty-one (21) credits required (elective or core) for graduation, for alternative work, independent study or other alternative study provided that the individual student has completed all of the state minimum requirements for a high school diploma.

**E. Transfer Students**

For students who transfer to Central High School from another state, country, school, program, or home-schooling situation, including educational programs that are not aligned with Central High School’s 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 Central High School, these students will need to satisfy all assessment 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.

**F. Home-Schooled Students**

For home-schooled students wishing to receive a diploma from Central High School, the Principal shall evaluate the value of the student’s prior educational experiences based on a student’s body of evidence and determine to what degree the student has met the District’s graduation requirements. After enrolling in Central High School, these students will need to satisfy all assessment and graduation requirements in the appropriate subject areas, as determined by the Principal. A home-schooled student must have attended Central High School for a minimum of one (1) year or two (2) semesters (to include their senior year) to be eligible for a diploma.

**G. Students Receiving Special-Education Services**

Students receiving special education services who successfully meet Central High School’s graduation requirements will be awarded diplomas.

The IEP team will discuss and document at each annual/triennial IEP meeting the student’s progress toward meeting all diploma requirements.

**H. 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.

**I. 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.

**J. Participation in Graduation Ceremony**

A student must complete all requirements for a high school diploma in order to participate in graduation exercises. Also, students must be in compliance with the RSU 64 Code of Conduct as outlined in Board policy.

**K. Recognition of Academic Achievements**

While RSU 64 seeks to recognize all student academic achievements upon graduation, and makes every effort to do so in a balanced manner at various events, the recognition of Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be reserved for students who have completed 3.5 years at Central High School.  These awards will be determined by reviewing the academic standing of seniors who have completed a minimum of eighteen (18) credits at the end of the seventh semester and who are on track to meet required graduation requirements. No third year bona fide senior will be eligible for any honor parts delivered during commencement exercises. Only seniors in attendance the entire second semester of their senior year will be considered for any of the honor parts.

**Legal References**

20-A M.R.S.A. Ch. 207-A § 4511, sub-§3 Accreditation Requirements (as revised 4/19/2016)

20-A M.R.S.A. Ch. 207-A § 4722-A Proficiency-Based Diploma Standards and Transcripts (as revised 4/19/2016)

20-A M.R.S.A. Ch. 207-A § 6209, sub-§3-A Transcripts (as revised 4/19/2016)

Ch. 127 § 7 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rule) (as revised)

**Cross References**

Adopted: October 28, 2019