

NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BLOCK ISLAND SCHOOL

High school graduation marks certification by the Block Island School that a student completed the necessary obligations and demonstrated the necessary proficiency to earn a high school diploma.

Proficiencies shall be based on each student's overall proficiency in the six core academic areas: English language arts, math, science, social studies, the arts, and technology. These six core content areas shall be aligned to state adopted standards and locally adopted national standards for those content areas for which there are no state standards. The requirements for a Block Island School diploma shall be as set by the New Shoreham School Committee and published annually in the Student Handbook. Such requirements shall be consistent with Rhode Island Board of Regents Regulations.

Each student's Individual Learning Plan shall include post-secondary planning based on the student's interests and capacities. The school shall provide access to resources and guidance that assist families in making decisions on post-secondary choices.

The determination of the effectiveness of this policy and the overall school program shall be determined by outcomes. It is the responsibility of the administration to work with the community in determining the outcomes to be included in effectiveness determination, consistent with the values of the community.

A. Requirements

The requirements for graduation and a Block Island School diploma shall be based on a conjunctive review of three sources of evidence, each of which must be fulfilled:

1. Completion of required coursework credits, both in total and for specific subjects. Course requirements for graduation include 23 Carnegie credits; and meeting proficiency in comprehensive course assessments undertaken during grades 9-12.
2. State assessments as described in this policy.
3. A senior project which demonstrates deep content knowledge and applied learning proficiencies through academic products and oral presentations. The rigor and standards required for successful completion are described in the Senior Project Handbook.

B. Proficiency Demonstration

The purposes of proficiency graduation and this policy are (1) to assure that graduates possess the knowledge and skill intended and (2) to describe the manner in which proficiency is demonstrated. To these ends, the following principles are adopted:

1. Every student will be required to demonstrate proficiency in each student learner outcome through multiple opportunities.
2. Ways in which students may demonstrate proficiency include:
  - a. State assessment
  - b. Coursework that is aligned to state approved content and applied learning standards
  - c. Senior project

- d. Comprehensive Course Assessment (CCA) to be given two times per core course during each school year of high school.
3. Access to instruction designed to get students to proficiency is central to the achievement of proficiency. To that end, all Block Island students shall have access to a rigorous curriculum and instruction aligned to state approved and other appropriate standards.
4. Proficiency graduation is based on mutual, shared accountability. Students must participate in and complete their programs, CCAs, senior project, and required Carnegie Units.

#### C. Demonstration Timeline

All requirements must be met prior to the date set for graduation. The high school administration including guidance shall communicate to families and students as to the progress towards completion of requirements. The senior project shall have its inception at any time following completion of junior year coursework and before the commencement of school in September. This process, which includes being assigned a mentor, will provide timeline benchmarks. The mentor and student shall design benchmarks together and submit them to the Principal or otherwise designated faculty member for approval before the process begins.

#### D. Measurement of Proficiency

The determination of which students do and do not meet graduation requirements shall be based on a fair and reliable system. Students who believe that they have been improperly denied a diploma may utilize the school system's appeal procedure through administrative steps to the Principal, Superintendent, School Committee, and Commissioner of Education.

Coursework completion shall be as recorded on the student transcript as determined by success in meeting proficiencies.

#### E. Role of State Assessments

Commencing with the graduating class of 2014, state assessment results shall be included on each student's permanent high school transcript. Students shall demonstrate proficiency on state assessments as required by the Board of Regents. Any student not meeting the required level of proficiency on the grade 10 state assessments shall be placed on a progress plan that details the supports provided to assist the student in reaching the required level of proficiency. Students with a PLP or IEP shall have the progress plan incorporated into those documents. Students not meeting required scores may:

1. Retake the assessment under provisions established by the Board of Regents;
2. If, after retaking the state assessment, a student does not meet the required level of achievement the student may demonstrate graduation readiness through successful completion of a Regents-approved alternative assessment. Such test may be taken prior to the state assessment retake, but not considered until after the retake.
3. Students who do not demonstrate required proficiency on the state assessments may also meet graduation standards through progress between the two state assessment administrations (grades 11 and 12). Such progress shall be of a degree as required by the Board of Regents.
4. The Rhode Island Alternative Assessment (RIAA) cannot be used to demonstrate proficiency required for graduation. The families of students qualifying for the RIAA shall be so notified.

5. If a student has fully completed the testing sequence and is unable to demonstrate graduation readiness through the state assessment or a Regents-approved testing alternative, the student shall be considered for a waiver of the state assessment portion of the graduation requirements. The superintendent shall create a process to assure that all such cases are reviewed. The superintendent shall grant waivers in all such cases where the evidence warrants. A waiver shall be granted only for those students for whom: (1) there is clear evidence of academic content mastery and (2) the student has completed the sequence of testing requirements set forth in this section unless circumstances prohibited such (such as enrollment after test administration). Waivers to graduation standards are not permitted under this process, only waivers to the method of demonstration. The granting of waivers is subject to appeal under this policy.
5. Should the mandated role of the state assessments in graduation determination be removed or reduced by state policy change or other means, then this section of the policy (*E. The Role of State Assessments*) shall become null and void. No greater or more rigorous use of the state assessment in determining graduation eligibility shall be applied than is required.

#### F. Transfer Students

Students entering Block Island School with less than two years of work necessary prior to graduation may request to graduate under the provisions of their former high school subject to comparability of standards. Such demonstration of comparability shall be the responsibility of the student and family and subject to the approval of the Principal and Superintendent. Individual cases that may not be addressed by this policy may be addressed on a case by case basis subject to the approval of the Principal and Superintendent.

#### G. Special Education and English Language Learners (ELL)

For students with IEP's, individual accommodations and modifications to PBGR process may be developed on a case by case basis in accordance with the student's IEP. No student, ELL or with an IEP, shall be denied full access and opportunity to curriculum due to modifications provided in their support plans. ELL students may also be provided with a specifically designed program that modifies the PBGR process. These modifications will be agreed upon by the ESL teacher, Principal, and the Superintendent. Any modifications made shall be to the PBGR process only; graduation requirements and standards may not be modified. Students with appropriate modifications who meet all requirements for graduation except the state assessment score shall be granted a ***Certificate of Completion*** at the end of their program. Students receiving such certificates may be full participants in the graduation ceremony.

#### H. Implementation Timeline

Block Island School has primary responsibility to communicate the mandates stated in this policy to the students and community at large. Each and every senior shall have access to support for the successful completion of proficiencies needed to graduate through the guidance department, mentors, and specifically designated faculty. The student, however, is ultimately accountable for completion of all requirements.

#### I. Notice of Potential Failure To Graduate

Following the close of the junior year, the parents of students who are deemed to be at risk of not graduating shall be notified of their status, the reason(s) therefore, and invited to school to discuss what is required for successful completion. Additionally, on or about May 20 of the senior year, if a student is in danger of not graduating for any reason, the parents/guardians and

students will be notified and the opportunity to meet and discuss the student's program. Support and interventions will be provided.

#### J. Regents Commended Diploma

Students who meet specific criteria shall be awarded a Regents Commended Diploma, such recognizing a level of achievement that exceeds requirements and demonstrates excellence. In order to be awarded a Regents Commended Diploma, a student shall:

1. Score as proficient or higher in the most recent administration of reading, mathematics, and science state assessments;
2. Earn a GPA of 3.0 or higher through grades 9-12; and
3. Score a "3" in all components of the Senior Project.

#### K. Appeals Process

Graduation decisions under this policy are subject to appeal through administrative channels. Decisions by staff members are appealed to the principal(s). Decisions of the principal(s) are appealed to the superintendent. Decisions of the superintendent are appealed to the School Committee. Where graduation fast approaches, appeal steps may be combined and/or appeals, up to but not including the School Committee, heard informally. All appeal decisions must be in writing and consistent with state requirements. No appeal may waive or change a graduation requirement of the district or state.