

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 adopted a proficiency-based system of learning consistent with Maine law, which means that after January 1, 2021, the awarding of a diploma will be contingent on the demonstration of proficiency in the content areas and Guiding Principles and the Learning Results rather than simply an accumulation of credits.

To be awarded a high school diploma from the RSU 56 schools, students graduating in the classes of 2021 and beyond must demonstrate proficiency in the content areas identified in Maine's system of Learning Results, meet the cross-content performance standards set forth in the Guiding Principles of the Learning Results, and fulfill all additional requirements set by the Board.

Students graduating in the classes of 2018-2020 must meet the credit and other graduation requirements specified in this policy.

A student who would have graduated with the class of 2020 and would have been awarded a diploma at commencement but for his/her failure to earn sufficient credits or meet other requirements set forth by Board policy will have until December 31, 2020 to fulfill the graduation requirements applicable to the class of 2020.

The Superintendent, through the high school principal or other designee, shall be responsible for making accurate information concerning the state certified standards-based diploma requirements or certificate of completion of studies at RSU 56 Dirigo High School available 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.

I. DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS GRADUATING IN THE CLASSES OF 2018, 2019 OR 2020.

- A. Students who anticipate graduating in the classes of 2018, 2019, or 2020, must meet the following minimum requirements in order to be awarded a high school diploma. The student must successfully complete a minimum number of credits as follows:

The student must successfully complete a total of
23 credits for students graduating in 2018,
22.5 credits for students graduating in 2019 and
22 credits for students graduating in 2020 and beyond.

1. English Language Arts: 4 credits
2. Mathematics: 3.5 credits
3. Science and Technology: 3.5 credits
4. Social Studies: 4 credits in 2018, 3.5 credits in 2019 and beyond
5. Fine Arts (art, music, industrial arts, culinary arts, drama, etc.): 1 credit
6. Health and Physical Education: 1.5 credits
7. World Languages: recommended, not required
8. Cougar Paw: 1 credit (.25 per year)
9. Service: .5 credits
10. Future Perspectives: .5 credits
11. Electives: 3.5 credits in 2018 and 2019, 3.0 credits in 2020
12. Senior Trifold/Portfolio: P/F

- B. The student must demonstrate computer skills according to the school unit's standards for computer literacy, proficiency and performance.

II. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS GRADUATING IN THE CLASS OF 2021 AND BEYOND

In accordance with Maine law and RSU 56's proficiency based system of learning, after January 1, 2020, the awarding of a diploma from Dirigo High School will be contingent on the demonstration of proficiency in the content areas of Maine's system of Learning Results and meeting the cross-content performance standards of the Guiding Principles of the Learning Results. The student must also fulfill any other requirements specified in this policy.

Students who anticipate graduating in the Classes of 2021 and beyond must meet the following requirements in order to be awarded a high school diploma.

- A. Demonstrate proficiency in meeting standards in the following content areas of the Learning Results. Meeting standards entails demonstrating proficiency for each reporting standard within the content area.

English Language Arts (**Starting in the year 2021 and beyond**)
Mathematics (**Starting in the year 2021 and beyond**)
Science and Technology (**Starting in the year 2021 and beyond**)
Social Studies (**Starting in the year 2021 and beyond**)
Health and Physical Education (**Starting in the year 2022 and beyond**)
Visual and Performing Arts (**Starting in the year 2022 and beyond**)
World Languages (**Starting in the year 2022 and beyond**)
Career and Education Development (**Starting in the year 2022 and beyond**)

B. Meet the cross-cutting performance standards set forth in the Guiding Principles of the Maine Learning results. (**Starting in the year 2021 and beyond**)

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.

C. 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: not required in 2021, .5 credits in 2022 and beyond
11. Electives: 3.0 credits in 2021, 2.5 in 2022 and beyond
12. Senior Trifold/Portfolio: P/F

D. The student must demonstrate computer skills according to the school unit's standards for Computer literacy, proficiency and performance.

E. 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 field work
- Career academies
- Advanced placements
- Online courses
- Adult education
- Dual enrollment or early college
- Gifted and talented programs
- Independent study
- Exchange programs

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

Students who achieve proficiency in the content standards of the Maine Learning Results and Guiding Principles, as specified in the goals and objectives of their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) will be awarded diplomas.

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.)

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