

## **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.

The Superintendent, through the high school principal or other designee, shall be responsible for making accurate information concerning diploma requirements available to incoming students and their parents prior to the start of their ninth grade school year, and as soon as practicable when there is of any change in District requirements or State-imposed standards that must be met before students may be awarded a high school diploma. A copy of this policy will be disseminated to all incoming ninth grade students at the time of course selection. This policy will also be included in every edition of the high school student handbook.

The Sanford School Department's instructional program is aligned with the content standards of Maine's System of Learning Results. A diploma from Sanford High School signifies that the graduate has completed the requirements described in Maine Law and School Committee policy and that he/she is ready to enter a postsecondary educational program or a career as a clear and effective communicator, a self-directed and life-long learner, a creative and practical problem solver, a responsible and involved citizen and an informed and integrative thinker.

The School Committee has approved the following schedule of minimum requirements for graduation, which includes minimum requirements specified by the State of Maine. The School Committee is aware that current law and regulations are subject to change.

### **I. DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS**

Students must meet the following minimum requirements in order to be awarded a Sanford High School diploma.

**A. Credits:** The student must successfully complete a total of 27 credits. Of these credits, 11 (eleven) must be those specified by the State of Maine, and additional credits required by the School Committee as follows:

- English Language Arts – 5 credits;
- Mathematics – 4 credits
- Social Studies and History - 4 credits
- Science, including at least one year of laboratory study – 4 credits
- Fine Arts, which may include art, music – 1 credit;
- Health – 1/2 credit;
- Physical Education, including personal fitness – 1 credit;
- Personal Finance – 1 credit

During a student's senior year, they must be enrolled in senior English and civics.

The remaining credits may be selected by the student based upon the student's interests, abilities, and post- graduation plan.

**B. Community Service:** In addition to the State requirements, the student must meet the following graduation requirement established by the School Committee: 20 hours of community service.

## **II. ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF EARNING CREDITS**

Sanford High School offers students a variety of learning options that allow students to demonstrate expected learning standards, earn academic credit, and satisfy graduation requirements.

Sanford High School's curriculum is designed to enable students to satisfy graduation requirements in four years through a sequence of educational (learning) experiences/courses providing opportunities to gain and demonstrate proficiency in all of the content areas of the Learning Results and in the Guiding Principles. Students may also meet graduation requirements through alternative activities that provide a quality learning experience comparable in rigor to Sanford High School's own educational course offerings.

Some possible alternative activities:

- Early college/dual enrollment courses
- Career and technical education programming
- Online/virtual learning
- Apprenticeships, internships and/or field work
- Work to Learn
- Extended Learning Opportunities (ELO's)
- Exchange programs
- Independent study
- Alternative education/"At Risk" programming
- Adult education

In order to pursue one or more of the alternative learning options, a student must have an Approved Personal Learning Plan (PLP) detailing how the pathway will provide exposure to the Content Area Graduation Standards. The Personal Learning Plan must be approved by the Counseling Department Chair.

## **III. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS APPLICABLE TO THE AWARDING OF A DIPLOMA FROM SANFORD HIGH SCHOOL**

- **Transfer and Home-schooled Students:** For students who transfer to Sanford High School from another state or from an educational program that is not required to meet the content standards of the system of Learning Results, the Sanford High School principal shall determine the value of the student's prior educational experience towards achieving the standards.

- Students Receiving Special Education Services: Students who successfully meet the content standards of the Learning Results, as specified in the goals and objectives of their Individualized Education Plans (IEP), will be awarded diplomas.
- Early Awarding of Diplomas: A student who has met the State’s and the School Committee’s diploma requirements in fewer than four years of high school may be awarded a diploma by following an application process.
- Certificate of Attendance; The School Committee may provide a student who leaves School without meeting the standards of the Learning Results with a Certificate of Attendance, provided that the student has attended for two years and received a minimum of ten credits as a full-time student. This certificate acknowledges participation in the educational program for a specific period of time and includes a record of the student’s course credits and Learning Results proficiency.
- 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 twenty 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.
- Participation in Graduation Ceremony: A student must complete all requirements for a high school diploma in order to participate in graduation exercises. Additionally, the student must be in compliance with the Sanford Code of Conduct.
- Rank at Graduation: In order to be ranked at graduation (e.g., valedictorian, salutatorian, “Top 10”), a student must have been enrolled full time at Sanford High School for the two semesters preceding their date of graduation.

Legal Reference: Cross Reference:

20-A M.R.S.A. § 4502(8), 4722, 6209 Ch. 127 § 7 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rule)

IHCDA – Post-Secondary Enrollment Options

ILA – Testing and Assessment of Students

Adopted: September 8, 2003

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