GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

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

RSU No. 5 is in the process of implementing proficiency-based teaching and learning and transitioning, over a period of five years, from traditional graduation requirements to proficiency-based diploma requirements.

These new graduation requirements will require that students demonstrate proficiency – provide evidence – that they have achieved expected learning standards, and acquired the knowledge, skills, and work habits that will prepare them for postsecondary education and viable careers.

When fully implemented, these new diploma requirements will require students to demonstrate that they have met the expectations associated with the content standards and Guiding Principles of the Maine Learning Results.

I. DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS GRADUATING IN THE CLASS OF 2018

A. As a minimum for graduation from high school, students graduating in the Class of 2018 must have completed successfully a total of 22 one-year course equivalents (credits) at the secondary level (grades 9 through 12).

Of these credits, twelve and one-half (12 ½) required credits are specified by the State of Maine. They are:

1. English - 4 credits;
2. Social Studies and History, including one year of American History and Government - 2 credits;
3. Mathematics - 2 credits;
4. Science, including at least one year of laboratory study - 2 credits;
5. Fine Arts, which may include art, music, forensics or drama - 1 credit;
6. Health - 1/2 credit; and
7. Physical Education - 1 credit.

B. In addition, the Board requires the following nine and one-half (9 ½ credits):

1. One year of a world language – 1 credit;
2. A third year of math – 1 credit;
3. A third year of social studies – 1 credit;
4. Two additional years of science – 2 credits;
5. One-half of the P.E. credit must be Foundations of Fitness

6. Four and one-half elective credits.

C. Elective credits may be selected by the student based upon the student’s interests, abilities, and the requirements of the field that the student plans to enter upon graduation.

In order for a student to participate in graduation, the student must have successfully completed all of the above-listed requirements.

**Alternative Means of Earning Credits**

A student who is deficient in these requirements or wishes to meet these requirements through alternative means may earn and apply credits toward graduation in accordance with the provisions of this section.

A student who wishes to meet a credit requirement through an alternative method must have prior written approval as specified through this section. A student may earn credits with prior written approval from his/her guidance counselor and the high school principal as follows:

A. Course work offered through RSU No. 5 Adult Education;
B. Credit obtained through summer school classes;
C. Credit obtained through distance learning/virtual courses;
D. Advanced courses not offered at Freeport High School at a post-secondary institution;
E. Credits obtained through independent study monitored by a Freeport High School teacher; or
F. Or any other academic program approved by the high school guidance and administration.

A student who has failed a course in the above-listed requirements may, with prior approval, receive credit for that course through a successful completion of a post-graduate course, a state approved Adult Education course(s) or a state-approved summer school program. Credit for a marked course may also be received for a correspondence course approved by the High School Principal in advance of registration. The student may participate in the next regular graduation ceremony following successful completion of the requirements.

A student who is granted early admission to an accredited college or university may use college course work for graduation and may thereby graduate with his/her class upon successful completion of the course(s) needed for graduation if he/she requests and is granted permission from the high school principal to do so. A course being used to meet high school graduation requirements must meet minimum high school contact hour requirements and the high school’s course outcome requirements.

**Middle School Students Earning High School Credit**

Middle School students successfully completing high school level courses offered at the high school and taught by high school staff or through a program approved by the high school administration in consultation with appropriate department head will be given one (1) credit (experience) toward graduation.
Veterans of World War II, the Korean Conflict and Vietnam War Era

The School Board recognizes that Maine law provides that a secondary school may award a high school diploma, provided that certain requirements are met, to a person who left secondary school prior to graduation to serve in the Armed Forces during World War II or in the Korean Conflict, or in the Armed Forces during the Vietnam era (February 28, 1961-May 7, 1975). The Board authorizes the Superintendent to develop and implement procedures regarding applications for diplomas, including timelines, and for determining whether veterans have met the criteria established by law. The Superintendent may also determine the time and manner in which a veteran’s diploma may be presented.

II. DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS GRADUATING IN THE CLASS OF 2019 AND 2020

A. As a minimum for graduation from high school, students graduating in the Class of 2019 and Class of 2020 must have completed successfully a total of 24 one-year course equivalents (credits) at the secondary level (grades 9 through 12).

Of these credits, twelve and one-half (12 ½) required credits are specified by the State of Maine. They are:

1. English - 4 credits;
2. Social Studies and History, including one year of American History and Government - 2 credits;
3. Mathematics - 2 credits;
4. Science, including at least one year of laboratory study - 2 credits;
5. Fine Arts, which may include art, music, forensics or drama - 1 credit;
6. Health - ½ credit; and
7. Physical Education - 1 credit.

B. In addition, the Board requires the following eleven and one-half (11 ½) credits:

1. One year of a world language – 1 credit;
2. Two additional years of math – 2 credits;
3. An additional one and a half years of social studies – 1 ½ credits;
4. Two additional years of science – 2 credits;
5. One-half of the P.E. credit must be Foundations of Fitness
6. Five elective credits – 5 credits

Elective credits may be selected by the student based upon the students’ interests, abilities, and the requirements of the field that the student plans to enter upon graduation.
In order for a student to participate in graduation, the student must have successfully completed all of the above-listed requirements.

Alternative Means of Earning Credits
A student who is deficient in these requirements or wishes to meet these requirements through alternative means may earn and apply credits toward graduation in accordance with the provisions of this section.

A student who wishes to meet a credit requirement through an alternative method must have prior written approval as specified through this section. A student may earn credits with prior written approval from his/her guidance counselor and the high school principal as follows:

A. Course work offered through RSU No. 5 Adult Education;
B. Credit obtained through summer school classes;
C. Credit obtained through distance learning/virtual courses;
D. Advanced courses, not offered at Freeport High School, at a post-secondary institution;
E. Credits obtained through independent study monitored by a Freeport High School teacher; or
F. Or any other academic program approved by the high school guidance and administration.

A student who has failed a course in the above-listed requirements may, with prior approval, receive credit for that course through a successful completion of a post-graduate course, a state approved Adult Education course(s) or a state-approved summer school program. Credit for a marked course may also be received for a correspondence course approved by the High School Principal in advance of registration. The student may participate in the next regular graduation ceremony following successful completion of the requirements.

A student who is granted early admission to an accredited college or university may use college course work for graduation and may thereby graduate with his/her class upon successful completion of the course(s) needed for graduation if he/she requests and is granted permission from the high school principal to do so. A course being used to meet high school graduation requirements must meet minimum high school contact hour requirements and the high school’s course outcome requirements.

Middle School Students Earning High School Credit
Middle School students successfully completing high school level courses offered at the high school and taught by high school staff or through a program approved by the high school administration in consultation with appropriate department head will be given one (1) credit (experience) toward graduation.

Honors and Awards at Graduation
Student academic achievements will be grouped within numerical bands and utilized to identify, report and reward individual accomplishments for purposes of graduation. These bands will include four honor bands, which will identify those graduating seniors who at the end of the 7th semester have a grade point average of:
III. DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS GRADUATING IN THE CLASS OF 2021 AND BEYOND

Beginning on July 1, 2020, the awarding of a diploma from Freeport High School will be contingent on the demonstration of proficiency with the phase in of the content areas outlined in section B below in of Maine’s system of Learning Results and meeting the cross-content performance standards of the Guiding Principles of the Maine Learning Results, rather than the accumulation of credits. The student must also fulfill any other requirements specified in this policy and set forth by the school as noted in the Program of Studies.

The transition to proficiency-based diploma requirements will begin with the Class of 2021 and will be completed with the Class of 2025.

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, school administrators 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/high school principal will 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 RSU No. 5’s website. A detailed guide to graduation standards, academic expectations, and diploma requirements will be disseminated to all incoming ninth-grade students prior to the time for course selection. This policy will also be referenced in each edition of the high school student handbook and on the RSU No. 5’s website.

B. Diploma Requirements for the Graduating Classes of 2021-2025

For the transition years outlined below, all students must be engaged in educational experiences relating to the core content areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology in each year of their secondary schooling.

By the end of the 2024-2025 school year, students will also have engaged in educational experiences related to the other content areas of the Learning Results: Career and Educational Development;
World Languages; Visual and Performing Arts; and Health, Wellness and Physical Education. RSU No. 5 administration 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.

The standards of Career and Education Development may be embedded and addressed in other content-area learning experiences.

B1. All students will demonstrate that they have achieved proficiency in cross-curricular Guiding Principles of the Maine Learning Results.

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

RSU No. 5 administration and staff will develop and apply a set of graduation standards and performance indicators that align with the cross-curricular standards of the Guiding Principles of the Maine Learning Results.

B2. Phase in of content area diploma requirements from the 2020-2021 school year to the 2024-2025 school year:

1. Commencing with the Class of 2021, in order to receive a high school diploma, students must demonstrate proficiency in meeting the state standards in the four content areas of:

   a. English Language Arts
   b. Mathematics
   c. Science and Technology*
   d. Social Studies

2. Commencing with the Class of 2022, in order to receive a high school diploma, students must demonstrate proficiency in meeting the state standards in the content areas of:

   a. English Language Arts
   b. Mathematics
   c. Science and Technology*
   d. Social Studies
   e. At least one additional content area of the student’s choice
3. Commencing with the Class of 2023, in order to receive a high school diploma, students must demonstrate proficiency in meeting the state standards in the content areas of:

a. English Language Arts
b. Mathematics
c. Science and Technology*
d. Social Studies
e. At least two additional content areas of the student’s choice

4. Commencing with the Class of 2024, in order to receive a high school diploma, students must demonstrate proficiency in meeting the state standards in the content areas of:

a. English Language Arts
b. Mathematics
c. Science and Technology*
d. Social Studies
e. At least three additional content areas of the student’s choice

For a Career and Technology Education (CTE) students in the graduating Class of 2024 and all graduating classes thereafter, the student must demonstrate proficiency in meeting state standards in the content areas of English language arts, mathematics, social studies and at least 3 additional content areas of the student’s choosing and satisfactorily complete their CTE program plus the guiding principles. E.g. May receive a state license or national certification. (Chapter 207 §4722-A. Proficiency-Based Standards and Transcripts)

5. Commencing with the Class of 2025 and all graduating classes** thereafter, in order to receive a high school diploma, students must demonstrate proficiency in meeting state standards in the content areas of:

a. English Language Arts
b. Mathematics
c. Science and Technology*
d. Social Studies
e. Health, Wellness and Physical Education
f. Visual and Performing Arts
g. World Languages
h. Career and Education Development
*Career and Technical Education (CTE) students must show proficiency in their individual industry standards and satisfactorily complete their CTE program plus the guiding principles.

C. Multiple Pathways

RSU No. 5’s high school educational program is designed to enable students to satisfy graduation requirements in four years through a sequence of courses, learning experiences or integrated equivalents 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 Learning Results.

Students will participate in a series of courses and/or learning experiences through which they will demonstrate proficiency in each of the following areas:

1. Engage in courses and/or learning experiences in the content areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology in each year of their high school program.

2. Engage in at least three and a half courses and/or learning experiences in the content area of Social Studies during their high school program.

3. Engage in at least one course and/or learning experience in the content area of Visual and Performing Arts during their high school program.

4. Engage in at least one course and/or learning experience in the content area of World Languages during their high school program.

5. Engage in at least one course and/or learning experience of Health and two courses of Physical Education during their high school program.

6. Engage in courses that integrate the Guiding Principles into other content areas of the Maine Learning Results.

7. Engage in learning experiences that address the Career and Education Development standards.

Students must be enrolled in the equivalent of at least 6 full year courses in each of their high school years or learning experiences defined through a Personal Learning Plan, (PLP) approved by both the high school guidance department and administration.

Examples of other pathways may include:
- Early college/dual enrollment courses
- Career and technical education programming
- Online/virtual learning
- Apprenticeships, internships and/or field work
- Community service
- Exchange programs
- Independent study
Alternative education/“At Risk” programming
Adult education

Each pathway must provide a quality learning experience comparable in rigor to the school unit’s own course offerings.

In order to pursue one or more of the multiple/alternative pathways, a student must have a Personal Learning Plan detailing how the pathway will provide exposure to the content standards and Guiding Principles of the Learning Results and how the student will demonstrate proficiency in meeting the Guiding Principles as well as the content area standards. The Personal Learning Plan must be approved by the guidance counselor and/or other qualified faculty member/s, and the principal.

Middle School students demonstrating proficiency on RSU No. 5 high school level performance indicators and standards as measured by RSU No. 5 scoring criteria and assessments or through a program approved by the high school administration will be credited those standards and experiences toward graduation.

D. Early Awarding of Diplomas (all classes)
A Freeport High School student who fulfills all course experience requirements and demonstrates proficiency in all required areas as approved by the guidance counselor and/or other qualified faculty member/s and the principal may be awarded a high school diploma, as determined by the principal. The superintendent will ultimately determine whether a diploma will be awarded.

E. Transfer Students (all classes)
For students who transfer to Freeport High School from another state, country, school program, or home-schooling situation, including educational programs that are not aligned with Freeport High School’s cross-curricular and content-area graduation standards, the school counselor and 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 Freeport High School, these students will need to satisfy all assessment, proficiency, 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 (all classes)
For home-schooled students wishing to receive a diploma from Freeport High School, the principal shall evaluate the value of the student’s prior educational experiences and determine to what degree the student has met Freeport High School’s graduation requirements. After enrolling in Freeport High School, these students will need to satisfy all assessment, proficiency, and graduation requirements in the appropriate subject areas, as determined by the principal.

G. Students Receiving Special-Education Services (all classes)
A student with a disability, as identified in 20-A MRSA §7001(1-B), who achieves proficiency as required in 20-A MRSA §4722-A(1), may meet the requirements and become eligible for a diploma by demonstrating proficiency in state standards established in the system of Learning Results.
through performance tasks and accommodations that maintain the integrity of the standards as specified in the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) by the student’s IEP team pursuant to the requirements of Chapter 301.

**H. Delayed Awarding of Diplomas (all classes)**
A student who leaves Freeport 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 (all classes)**
Students are eligible for extended years of study to complete the 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 (all classes)**
A student must complete all School Board requirements for a high school diploma in order to participate in graduation exercises.

**K. Honor and Awards at Graduation**
Student academic achievements will be grouped within numerical bands and utilized to identify, report and reward individual accomplishments for purposes of graduation. These bands will include three Honor Bands, which will identify those graduating seniors who at the end of the 7th semester have a Grade Point Average of:

- **Summa Cum Laude** (with highest honors): a minimum GPA of 3.75
- **Magna Cum Laude** (with great honors): a minimum GPA of 3.50
- **Cum Laude** (with honors): a minimum GPA of 3.25

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA § 4502(8), 4722, 6209  
Ch. 127 § 7 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rule)

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