

Policy: IKF

Graduation Requirements / Graduation by Proficiency

Awarding a high school diploma based on the accumulation of credits earned for passing courses has been a longstanding practice in American high schools, but this system has not ensured that all students meet high academic standards and demonstrate proficiency. Consequently, many graduates leave high school unprepared to succeed in postsecondary education and modern careers.

To ensure that all students graduate from our schools with the knowledge, skills, and work habits they will need in adult life, the Kittery School Department has adopted a proficiency-based system of teaching, learning, promotion, and graduation. Beginning with the Traip Academy graduation cohort of 2018, all students will need to demonstrate achievement of all content-area graduation standards before receiving a high school diploma. These new graduation requirements will ensure that each student provides evidence that s/he has achieved learning standards, and acquired the knowledge, skills, and work habits that will prepare him/her for postsecondary education and modern careers.

The district's proficiency-based diploma system also requires our school system to provide the interventions, support systems and personalized-learning pathways that each student needs to meet the standards and graduate college and career-ready.

A. Communicating Graduation Requirements

To ensure that every student and family has the information and resources they need to appropriately guide the student's educational decisions, our 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 available to all incoming students and their families. This policy will be referenced in each edition of the online high school student handbook and on the district and high school websites.

As soon as it is practical and feasible, the School Committee 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.

B. Academic Requirements for Graduation

For the classes of 2015–2017, the following graduation requirements remain in effect:

Total Credits Required: 24

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| English 4 credits | Fine Arts 1 credit |
| Mathematics 3 credits | Physical Education 1 credit |
| Science 3 credits | Health 1 credit |
| Social Studies 3 credits | 40 hours of community service |
| | Demonstration of Computer Proficiency |
| | Career Exploration ½ credit |

NOTE: Credit requirements listed above are minimum requirements. Students are strongly encouraged to take additional courses in areas of special interest and in preparation for post secondary schooling. Students must complete the required number of credits and may select from the elective offerings found in the current Program of Studies.

Beginning in the fall of 2014, all first year students entering Traip Academy must meet the following graduation requirements:

B1. All students will demonstrate that they have achieved proficiency in the content-area graduation standards of the Maine Learning Results. Meeting the standard entails demonstrating proficiency in competencies identified in each of the following content areas prior to graduation:

1. English Language Arts
2. Mathematics
3. Social Studies
4. Science and Technology
5. Health and Physical Education
6. Visual and Performing Arts
7. World Languages
8. Career and Education Development

The Traip Academy administration and faculty will develop and apply a set of graduation competencies and learning targets that align with the content-area standards of the Maine Learning Results. The locally-identified competencies may be embedded in and addressed across the content-area learning experiences.

To satisfy graduation requirements, all students must be engaged in proficiency-based educational experiences in the content areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, and Science/Technology in **each year** of their secondary school program.

B2. Capstone projects which demonstrate proficiency must be completed and presented by all students. Students will demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and work habits by conducting in-depth research, using technological applications, producing a high-quality exhibition of learning, and presenting their research and findings to a review panel.

B3. While most students will satisfy graduation requirements over the course of a four-year academic program, students may also satisfy Traip Academy's graduation requirements at either an accelerated or lengthened pace, based on their distinct learning needs.

C. Multiple Pathways

Traip Academy offers all students multiple learning options to demonstrate proficiency of learning standards and satisfy graduation requirements. Traip Academy also encourages its students to explore a broad range of learning experiences, including expanded learning opportunities.

To receive pre-approval from administration for the opportunity to pursue expanded learning opportunities, students must work with the Expanded Learning Opportunities Coordinator. He/she must outline learning experiences/expectations in a plan, including how the anticipated experience will satisfy both graduation requirements and cross-curricular and content-area competencies.

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, including service learning projects
8. Adult education courses

D. Transfer Students

For students who transfer to Traip Academy from another state, country, school, program, or home-schooling situation, including educational programs that are not aligned with Traip Academy's cross-curricular and content-area graduation standards, the Principal, in consultation with the appropriate content teacher(s) 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 Traip Academy, 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.

E. Students Receiving Special-Education Services

Students who successfully meet Traip Academy's content-area graduation standards, as specified in the goals and objectives of their Individualized Education Plans (IEP), will be awarded diplomas.

F. Delayed Awarding of Diplomas

If a student leaves high school prior to the completion of all School Committee requirements for a high school diploma 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.

G. 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.

H. Participation in Graduation Ceremony

A student must complete all School Committee requirements for a high school diploma to participate in graduation exercises. If extenuating circumstances exist an appeal may be made to the Superintendent, whose decision is final.

Legal Reference: 20-A M.R.S.A. § 4722-A (as revised) Proficiency-Based Diploma Standards
Ch. 127 § 7 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rule) (as revised)

Cross References: IKAB: Report Cards/Progress Reports
IHCDA: Post-Secondary Enrollment Options
IKE: Progress Through The Grades

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