

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 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 and will also be included in every edition of the high school student handbook.

The school unit's instructional program is aligned with the standards of Maine's system of Learning Results. A diploma from Mt. Blue High School signifies that the graduate has completed the requirements described in Maine law and Board 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.

Students earn credits toward graduation through successful completion of courses/ learning experiences as specified in this policy.

For the duration of the school year, students must be enrolled in the equivalent of 6 credit bearing courses to be considered a full-time student.

The Board has approved the following schedule of minimum requirements for graduation, which includes requirements specified by the State of Maine.

The Board expects the Superintendent/designee to inform students and parents as soon as practicable of any additional State-imposed standards that must be met before students may be awarded a high school diploma.

- I. Academic Requirements for a Mt.Blue Regional School District Diploma
 - A. Credit Requirements
 1. The student must successfully complete a total of 24 credits. Students must achieve a minimum cumulative course score of 60 and meets-partially meets on all content standards.
 - a) Academic Benchmarks by year
 - (1) 6 Credits at the end of the freshman year;
 - (2) 12 Credits at the end of the sophomore year; and
 - (3) 18 Credits at the end of the junior year.
 2. Student grade-level status will be assessed at the end of each year.

Students who have not met their credit benchmarks will meet with a school counselor to create a plan to meet the following year's benchmarks.

3. Students entering their fourth year of high school should have attained eighteen credits. If students do not have eighteen credits by the end of their junior year, they must meet with their school counselor to be assisted in the creation of a graduation plan and submit it to the principal for approval.
- B. The student must successfully complete a total of 24 credits.
1. English Language Arts: (4) credits to include Grades 9, 10, 11, one-half English elective at any time and during their senior year, either British Literature, Senior Seminar, or Technical English.
 2. Mathematics: (3) credits.
 3. Social Studies: (3.5) credits to include American history, government, and economics.
 4. Science: (3) credits to include Earth Science, Biology, and at least one-half credit each of Chemistry and Physics. Earth Science may be replaced with another full-year science class for students in the Chinese Dual-Diploma Program.
 5. Visual and Performing Arts: (1) credit.
 6. Health: (.5) credits.
 7. Physical Education: (1.5) credits.
 8. Career and Educational Development: (.5) credits.
- C. The remaining courses/learning experiences may be selected by the student based on his/her interest, satisfaction of course prerequisites, and requirements of the field that he/she plans to enter upon graduation.

II. MULTIPLE PATHWAYS: ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF EARNING CREDITS

- A. Students may also opt to earn credits toward a high school diploma through multiple additional pathways including:
1. Early college/dual enrollment courses
 2. Career and technical education programming
 3. Online/virtual learning
 4. Apprenticeships, internships, and/or field work
 5. Community service
 6. Exchange programs
 7. Independent study
 8. Alternative education
 9. Adult education

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

In order to pursue one or more of the multiple/alternative pathways (excluding CTE Programming, early college/dual enrollment courses, and alternate education), a student must have a plan detailing how the pathway will provide exposure to the content standards of the Learning Results and/or the Guiding Principles and how the student will demonstrate achievement of the standards. The plan must be approved by the School Counselor, Department Coordinator (as necessary), and Principal.

III. STUDENTS RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

All secondary students must achieve the content standards of the parameters for essential instruction of the system of Learning Results and graduation requirements established pursuant to Maine law. A student with a disability, as defined in 20-A MRSA § 7001(1-B) who satisfies the local diploma requirements in the manner specified by the student's IEP must be awarded a high school diploma.

IV. STUDENTS IN DUAL ENROLLMENT CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

A secondary student who has satisfactorily completed his/her junior and senior years in a dual enrollment career and technical education program formed pursuant to 20-A MRSA §6971-6975 may be eligible to receive a high school diploma from Mt. Blue High School, although the student may not meet the graduation requirements of 20-A MRSA §4722.

V. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS APPLICABLE TO THE AWARDING OF A DIPLOMA FROM MT. BLUE HIGH SCHOOL

This section applies to all students, in all graduation classes.

A. Transfer Students

For students who transfer to Mt. Blue 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 Learning Results, the Mt. Blue High School Principal shall determine the value of the student's prior educational experience towards meeting graduation requirements.

B. Home-schooled Students

For previously home-schooled students wishing to receive a diploma from Mt. Blue High School, the Mt. Blue High School Principal shall determine the value of the student's prior educational experience toward meeting graduation credit requirements. A homeschooled student must have attended Mt. Blue High School for a minimum of 2 semesters in their final year in order to receive a Mt. Blue High School diploma.

C. Delayed Awarding of Diplomas

A student who leaves Mt. Blue High School to attend an accredited, degree-granting institution of higher education 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.

D. Early Awarding of Diplomas

A student who has met the State's and the Board's diploma requirements in fewer than four years of high school will 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 IEP.

F. Participation in Graduation Ceremony

A student must complete all Board requirements for a high school diploma in order to participate in graduation exercises.

G. Honors and Awards at Graduation

In order to be eligible for honors or awards based wholly or in part on academic achievement a student must have been enrolled full time at Mt. Blue High School during the year preceding 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.

Students will be given the following honors at graduation based on cumulative weighted GPA:

- Summa Cum Laude: cumulative GPA of 98.0-100
- Magna Cum Laude: cumulative GPA of 95.0-97.99
- Cum Laude: cumulative GPA of 90.0-94.99

Students will be recognized at graduation per their Latin Honors distinction. Top Students will be defined as students with a weighted cumulative GPA of 95.0 and higher at the end of the third quarter. Valedictorian and Salutatorian will also be recognized per end of school year cumulative weighted GPA.

- H. Any student graduating early in January, and whose status places them as a Top Student will be recognized as such at graduation in the spring.

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

Cross Reference: IHCDA – Post-Secondary Enrollment Options

Adopted: August 4, 2020
Revised: May 25, 2021