

**RSU #16** (Mechanic Falls, Minot, Poland)(msm,cm)✓

**Policy Code:** IKF

**Adopted:** January 2005

## **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

**Revised:** ~~June 2016, October 2018, May 2019~~ November 2020

To ensure that all students graduate from our schools with the knowledge, skills, and work habits they will need in adult life, RSU 16 has adopted a proficiency-based system of teaching, learning, promotion, and graduation. These graduation requirements will ensure that each student provides evidence that they have achieved expected learning standards, and acquired the knowledge, skills, and work habits that will prepare them for postsecondary education and modern careers.

The district's proficiency-based diploma system also requires our schools and educators to provide the interventions, support systems, and personalized-learning pathways that each student needs to meet the expected 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 plan and sequence the student's educational decisions, our schools, 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 (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 district and high school websites. A detailed guide to graduation standards, academic expectations, and diploma requirements will be disseminated to all incoming ninth-grade students at the time of course selection. This policy will also be referenced in each edition of the high school student handbook and on the district and high school websites.

As soon as it is practical and feasible, the Board 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.

The Board has approved the following schedule of minimum requirements for graduation, which encompasses minimum graduation requirements specified by the state and described in relevant laws, rules, and regulations. The Board is aware that current law and regulations are subject to change.

### **B. Requirements for Graduation**

The Board believes that there are a number of experiences that are important for students to complete in order to be awarded a diploma.

Academic Requirements:

All students attending Poland Regional High School must meet the following academic requirements in order to receive a diploma.

The Poland Regional High School administration, faculty, 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. Courses will be developed to ensure all students have access to the graduation standards. Students will earn course credits by demonstrating proficiency in the graduation standards assigned to each course. Students must demonstrate proficiency, and therefore earn course credit in the following areas:

- a. Four credits of English and meet the graduation standards through English II.
- b. Three and a half credits of social studies and meet the graduation standards of Global Studies, a US History survey course (1607- present), and comparative government and economics.
- c. Meet the graduation standards through Math 4.

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- d. Four credits in science and meet the graduation standards in physical science, biology and chemistry.
- e. One credit or approved educational experience in the content area of Visual and Performing Arts.
- f. One credit of physical education and one-half credit of health and meet the fitness plan standard.
- g. One credit or approved educational experience in the content area of Technology.
- h. Successful completion of Roundtable in each year of their high school experience to demonstrate competency in the content area of Career and Education Development and to include evidence of digital literacy during their high school program.
- i. Earn a minimum of 24 academic credits to be eligible for a diploma.

#### **Other Requirements for Graduation:**

- a. Assessments: Students must participate in all state and federally required assessments. Any exceptions to this must be pre-approved by the Principal.
- b. Learning Expectations: All students will demonstrate that they have achieved proficiency in the cross- curricular Learning Expectations (as aligned with the Guiding Principles of the Maine Learning Results).
- c. Capstone Projects: All students will complete a sophomore and senior capstone project, through which students will demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and work habits by conducting research, using technology, producing a high-quality exhibition of learning and sharing of their progress toward meeting the school-wide learning expectations, and successfully presenting their findings to a review panel.
- d. Post-secondary Applications: All students will complete at least one application to a postsecondary educational institution, training program, certified learning experience, or the military, that will provide them with continued opportunities for academic, career, and personal growth.
- e. Personal Learning Plans: All students are expected to develop a personal learning plan with assistance from school counselors, teachers, and/or administrators that allows them to meet expected standards and other graduation requirements. All students will share their personal learning plan and goals at their student led conferences. While most students will satisfy graduation requirements over the course of a four-year academic program, students may also satisfy Poland Regional High School's graduation requirements during a period of time that is either accelerated or lengthened, based on their distinct learning needs.

#### **C. Multiple Pathways**

Poland Regional High School offers all students multiple learning options that allow students to demonstrate proficiency on expected learning standards, earn academic credit, and/or satisfy graduation requirements. Poland Regional High School

Learning options may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Academic courses offered by the school
- b. Academic courses offered by other public schools
- c. Dual enrollment or early college courses
- d. Career and technical education programming
- e. On-line or blended learning options
- f. Alternative or at-risk programming
- g. Apprenticeships, internships, field work, or exchange experiences
- h. Independent studies or long-term projects
- i. Approved Adult Education courses

To pursue outside-of-school learning options, students must describe their learning experiences in a personal learning plan, including how the experience satisfies both graduation requirements and expected school-wide learning expectations and content-area standards. The plan must be approved by the student's school counselor and principal.

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**D. Transfer Students**

For students who transfer to Poland Regional High School from another state, country, school, program, or home- schooling situation, including educational programs that are not aligned with Poland Regional High School’s cross- curricular and content- area graduation standards, the 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 Poland Regional 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.

**E. Home-Schooled Students**

For home-schooled students wishing to receive a diploma from Poland Regional High School, the 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 Poland Regional High School, these students will need to satisfy all assessment, proficiency, and graduation requirements in the appropriate subject areas, as determined by the Principal. A home-schooled student must have attended Poland Regional High School for a minimum of two (2) years or four (4) semesters to be eligible for a diploma.

**F. Students Receiving Special Education Services**

Students who successfully meet Poland Regional High School’s cross-curricular Learning Expectations and content- area graduation standards, through performance tasks and accommodations that maintain the integrity of the standards at the proficiency level specified in the goals and objectives of their Individualized Education Plans (IEP), will be awarded diplomas. Students who meet graduation requirements in IEP goals focused on Function Life Skills will be eligible for a diploma.

**G. Delayed Awarding of Diplomas**

If a student leaves high school to attend an accredited, degree-granting institution of higher education, the student may, upon satisfactory completion of the first year, be awarded a high school diploma, provided that the student has notified the Principal at the time of the early admission.

**H. 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 at the start of the school year. Students who remain enrolled beyond four years may be enrolled in only those content areas in which they need to demonstrate proficiency or successfully earn credits.

Students eligible for extended years of study may be referred to adult education or other programs and resources.

**I. Participation Graduation Ceremony**

Students who have completed all School Board requirements for a diploma, or are foreign exchange students, may participate in graduation exercises.

**SIGNATURE BLOCK:**

RSU 16 School Board

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Mary Martin, Chair

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Joe Parent., Vice Chair

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Amber Lyman

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