

IKF - Graduation Requirements

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

Maine State Law, Chapter 466, enacted in July 2018, allows local school units two options in providing secondary school diplomas. The Board of Directors reviewed the two options and determined to base the diploma requirements for MSAD # 35 on the option that meets what is known as the Credit-based diploma law. The Board of Directors has chosen to meet this option as it provides the greatest flexibility for all our students to receive a high quality educational experience that maximizes their growth intellectually towards independence as well as prepare them for college and/or career. The Board of Directors recognizes the value of having curricula based on standards that are consistent with State and Federal guidelines put forth in the Maine Learning Results and Guiding Principles, Common Core, and Next Generation Science standards. Thus, all students are provided opportunities to demonstrate a minimum level of proficiency and effective work habits needed for success in awarding of a Marshwood High School diploma. Additional expectations may be put forth by the Board of Directors consistent with community education values.

The Superintendent, through the high school principal, 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 year or at anytime there is a change in graduation requirements affecting current students. This policy will be included in the high school student handbook.

The Board has approved the following as the minimum requirements for any student to receive a Marshwood High School diploma.

Marshwood High School Diploma Requirements

A. The student must successfully demonstrate proficiency of standards and demonstrate acceptable work habits in all required coursework for graduation. Successful completion for a required, standards based course means the student met proficiency in the standards assessed and received a passing grade for the course. Successful completion of the required, standards based courses also demonstrates proficiency in the standards of the Guiding Principles which are embedded in these courses' curricula. Thus, students receiving a diploma will be:

1. Clear and effective communicators
2. Self-directed and lifelong learners
3. Creative and practical problem solvers

4. Responsible and involved citizens
5. Integrative and informed thinkers.

Required, standards based courses a student must successfully complete are (total 21 credits):

1. English and Language Arts: 4 credits to include 3 credits of English I, English II, and English III/AP Language & Literature, and 1 elective credit.
2. Mathematics: 3 credits to include at least Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II or Algebra I , Geometry and alternative math equivalent.
3. Science and Technology: 3 credits to include Freshmen Science, Chemistry, and Biology
4. Social Studies: 3 credits to include World History, United States History, and American Citizenship
5. Health and Physical Education: 0.5 credit to include Health and 1.0 credit to include a Physical Education elective course. Beginning with the Class of 2027: 1.0 credit of Health, 0.5 credit of Physical Education, and 0.5 credit of Physical Education elective course.
6. Visual and Performing Arts: 1 credit to include a standards based course
7. 5.5 credits of elective courses across any content area. Beginning with the class of 2027: 5.0 credits of elective courses across any content area.
8. Career and Postsecondary Education to include: participation in advisory and school counseling programs.

B. Students must complete and document fifty hours of community service.

C. Should the state mandate testing in one or more subject areas, students will need to participate in all such tests as a requirement of graduation.

D. Other Local Considerations:

1. Students may obtain elective course credits through studies at the Marshwood Adult Education Program only with the approval of the Director of Adult Education, School Counselor, and the Principal
2. Elective course credits may be obtained through accredited correspondence/online courses and requires prior approval of the School Counselor and Principal
3. Advanced or enrichment courses may be taken at approved colleges or universities or any other secondary schools and requires prior approval of the School Counselor and Principal
4. Independent Study Programs may be used for elective course credit on a pass/fail basis and requires prior approval of content area by the Team Leader, School Counselor and Principal
5. External credits/courses that are to be used as a required, standards base course requires prior written approval from the Principal.

E. The Principal has the ability to review a student's transcript and make individual determinations regarding completion of graduation requirements. This will be managed on a case by case basis. Students should review the Marshwood High School Program of Studies for complete information on courses and credits.

F. Additional Considerations Applicable to the awarding of a Marshwood High School Diploma:

1. Transfer Students: For students who transfer to Marshwood High School from another state or from an educational program that is not required to meet the content standards of the Maine Learning Results, the Marshwood High School principal shall determine the value of the student's prior educational experience towards achieving the standards in a manner consistent with State law and applicable Board policies.
2. 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 may be awarded a diploma. A student must obtain approval from the principal in advance of a decision to graduate early.
3. Delayed Awarding of Diplomas: At the Superintendent's discretion, a student who leaves Marshwood 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 when they have met all graduation requirements.
4. 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 adult learners.
5. Students with Disabilities: Decisions regarding a special education student's eligibility for graduation will be made by the student's IEP team. The IEP team will consider the student's progress towards their IEP goals, credits earned, and progress towards proficiency-based standards, among other factors as determined appropriate by the IEP team.
6. Participation in Graduation ceremony: With the exception of paragraph D above, students must complete all requirements for a Marshwood High School diploma and/or complete their learning prior to turning twenty years old or through the school year in which they turn twenty to participate in graduation exercises.

Legal References:

20-A MRSA § 4502(8), 4722, 6209

Ch. 127 § 7 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rule)

Cross References:

ILA - Student Assessment

IK - Evaluation of Student Achievement

Policy Revised: October 7, 1998; August 25, 2004; February 25, 2009; June 21, 2017; October 18, 2017; April 24, 2019; April 28, 2021; March 15, 2023; January 3, 2024; February 12, 2025

