

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.

MSAD 8 is implementing a proficiency-based system of learning as required by Maine law. After July 1, 2020, contingent on Department of Education approval of the Vinalhaven School unit's schedule for implementation, the awarding of a diploma will be contingent on the demonstration of proficiency in *ALL* of the content areas and Guiding Principles of Maine's system of Learning Results rather than the accumulation of credits.

To be awarded a high school diploma from Vinalhaven School, students graduating in the Class of 2021 and beyond will need to demonstrate proficiency in the eight content areas identified in Maine's system of Learning Results, meet the cross-content performance standards set forth in the Guiding Principles of the Learning Results, and fulfill all additional graduation requirements set by the School Committee.

Students graduating in the Classes of 2015-2020 must meet the credit and other graduation requirements specified in this policy.

A student who would have graduated with the Class of 2020 and have been awarded a diploma at commencement but for his/her failure to earn sufficient credits or meet other requirements set by School Committee policy will have until June 30, 2020 to fulfill the graduation requirements applicable to the Class of 2020.

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. A copy of this policy will be disseminated to all incoming ninth grade students at the time of course selection. This policy will also be included in every edition of the high school student handbook.

The School Committee has approved the following schedule of minimum requirements for graduation, which includes minimum requirements specified by the State of Maine. The School Committee is aware that current law and regulations are subject to change.

The School Committee 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. DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS GRADUATING IN THE CLASSES OF 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 OR 2020.

Students who anticipate graduating in the Classes of 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 or 2020 must meet the following minimum requirements in order to be awarded a high school diploma.

A. The student must successfully complete a total of 21 credits. Of these credits, 12 ½ (twelve and one-half) must be those specified by the State of Maine. They are:

1. English/language arts – 4 credits;
2. Mathematics – 2 credits;
3. Social studies and history, including one year of American history and government – 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. The student must demonstrate computer skills according to the school unit's standards for computer literacy, proficiency, and performance.

C. In addition to the State requirements, the student must meet the following additional credit requirements established by the School Committee:

1. Math – 1 additional credit(s);
2. Science – 1 additional credit(s);
3. Social Studies– 1 credit(s);
4. Knowledge Quest 1 credit
5. Computer 1 credit
6. Career Aspirations 1/2 credit
7. Electives 3 credits

- D. The remaining credits 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.

ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF EARNING CREDITS

A student who is deficient in these requirements or wishes to meet these requirements through alternative means may earn and apply up to 3 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 in this section.

A student who makes up deficiencies may participate in the next regular graduation ceremony following successful completion of all graduation requirements.

- A. A student may earn up to NA credits through the _____ High School Adult Education Program. The student must have prior written approval from the Director of Adult Education, Guidance Counselor, Department Chair and Principal.
- B. A student may obtain credits through summer school in classes that he/she completed at NA _____ High School but did not pass. The student must obtain prior written approval from the Guidance Counselor, Department Chair and Principal.
- C. A student may earn up to 2 credits through distance learning/virtual courses provided 1) the course is approved in advance by the Guidance Counselor, Department Chair and Principal and 2) progress is monitored by a member of the High School's professional staff.
- D. Advanced courses or courses not available at Vinalhaven_ School may be taken at other secondary schools, through Early College or at approved postsecondary institutions with the approval of the Guidance Counselor and Principal.
- E. A student may earn up to 1 credits through independent study approved by the Guidance Counselor, Department Chair and Principal and monitored by the teacher(s) of the subject(s) to which the independent study is related.

II. DIPLOMA REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS GRADUATING IN THE CLASS OF 2021 AND BEYOND

Contingent on Department of Education approval of the Vinalhaven School Department's schedule for implementation of proficiency-based diploma requirements after July 1, 2020, the awarding of a diploma from Vinalhaven School will be contingent on the demonstration of proficiency in all eight content areas of Maine's system of Learning Results and meeting the cross-content performance standards of the Guiding Principles of the Learning Results. Students will also need to fulfill all additional graduation requirements set by the School Committee.

Vinalhaven School's high school educational program will be designed to enable students to satisfy graduation requirements in four years through a sequence of educational courses 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 following a traditional pathway will:

- A. Engage in courses in the content areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology in each year of their high school program.
- B. Engage in at least 3 courses that result in 3 (three) academic credits in the content area of social studies during their high school program. (year long courses equal 1 credit while semester courses equal 1/2 credit)
- C. Engage in at least one course in the content areas of visual and performing
- D. Engage in at least 1 course of world languages during their high school program.
- E. Engage in at least 1 health and career aspirations course and 1 physical education course during their high school program.
- F. Engage in at least 1 computer course and in the four year Knowledge Quest program equal to 1 credit.
- G. Engage in at least 2 elective courses.
- H. Engage in educational experiences that integrate career and education development into other content areas of the Learning Results.

Students following a traditional pathway must be enrolled in the equivalent of six full year courses or integrated equivalents in each of their high school years.

Students may also opt to pursue a high school diploma through multiple additional pathways including:

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 educational experience (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 of the Learning Results and/or the Guiding Principles and how the student will demonstrate proficiency in meeting the standards. The personal learning plan must be approved by the Guidance Counselor, a representative of the high school teachers, and Principal.

STUDENTS RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

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), as specified by the goals and objectives of the student’s individualized education plan (IEP) will be awarded a diploma.

INFORMING STUDENTS AND PARENTS

The Superintendent/designee will inform students and parents as soon as practicable of any State-imposed proficiency standards/requirements that must be met before students may be awarded a high school diploma, but prior to the start of the class cohort's 9th grade school year.

III. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS APPLICABLE TO THE AWARDING OF A DIPLOMA FROM VINALHAVEN SCHOOL

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

A. Transfer Students

For students who transfer to Vinalhaven 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 and Common Core, the Vinalhaven 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 Vinalhaven School, the Vinalhaven School Principal shall determine the value of the student's prior educational experience toward meeting graduation credit requirements. A home schooled student must have attended Vinalhaven School for a minimum of 2 semesters immediately prior to graduation in order to receive a Vinalhaven School diploma.

C. Delayed Awarding of Diplomas

A student who leaves Vinalhaven 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.

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D. Early Awarding of Diplomas

A student who has met the State's and the School Committee's diploma requirements in fewer than four years of high school may 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 Individualized Education Plan.

F. Certificate of Completion

The School Committee may provide a certificate of completion to a student who leaves school having completed four years attendance as a full-time high school student who has earned/completed the required credits or courses/learning experiences but has not met proficiency standards that may be mandated by the State.

G. Participation in Graduation Ceremony

A student must complete all School Committee requirements for a high school diploma or certificate of completion in order to participate in graduation exercises.

H. Honors and Awards at Graduation

In order to be eligible for honors or awards based wholly or in part on academic achievement (e.g., valedictorian, salutatorian, class speaker, "Top 10"), a student must have been enrolled full time at Vinalhaven 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.

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

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Cross Reference: IHCDA – Post-Secondary Enrollment Options

Adopted: April 15, 2015_____