

## **Western Mountains Regional School Unit No. 99 East High School**

### **Graduation Requirements**

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 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 Western Mountains Regional School District has adopted a proficiency-based system of teaching, learning, promotion, and graduation. Beginning with East High School Class of 2018, all students will need to demonstrate achievement of all cross-curricular and content-area graduation standards before receiving a high school diploma. These new 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. Academic Requirements for Graduation**

For the East High School classes of 2013–2017, the following graduation requirements remain in effect:

**NOTE:** School districts list here their present graduation requirements, by class, as a transitional policy that will be phased out beginning with the Class of 2018.

Commencing with the Class of 2018, all students attending East High School 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 each of the following content areas prior to graduation:

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

The East 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.

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 and Technology in each year of their secondary school program. The standards of Career and Education Development may be embedded and addressed in other content-area learning experiences.

**B2.** All students will demonstrate that they have achieved proficiency in the cross-curricular Guiding Principles of the Maine Learning Results.

The Guiding Principles state that each Maine student must leave school as:

1. A clear and effective communicator
2. A self-directed and lifelong learner
3. A creative and practical problem solver
4. A responsible and involved citizen
5. An integrative and informed thinker

The East High School administration, faculty, and staff will develop and apply a set of graduation standards and performance indicators that align with the cross-curricular standards of the Guiding Principles of the Maine Learning Results.

**B3.** All students will complete a capstone project, through which 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.

**B4.** All students will complete and submit at least one application to a postsecondary educational institution, training program, or other certified learning experience, such as the military, that will provide them with continued opportunities for academic, career, and personal growth.

**B5.** While most students will satisfy graduation requirements over the course of a four-year academic program, students may also satisfy East High School's graduation requirements during a period of time that is either accelerated or lengthened, based on their distinct learning needs. All students are expected to develop a Personal Learning Plan with assistance from counselors, teachers, and/or administrators that allows them to meet expected standards at the pace and with the support they need.

### **C. Multiple Pathways**

East High School offers all students multiple learning options that allow students to demonstrate proficiency on expected learning standards, earn academic credit, and satisfy graduation requirements. East High School also encourages its students to explore a broad range of learning experiences, including outside-of-school options.

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 cross-curricular and content-area standards.

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
8. Adult education

### **D. Transfer Students**

For students who transfer to East High School from another state, country, school, program, or home-schooling situation, including educational programs that are not aligned with East 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 East 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 East 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 East 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 East 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 East High School's cross-curricular and content-area graduation standards, as specified in the goals and objectives of their Individualized Education Plans (IEP), will be awarded diplomas.

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

## **I. Participation in Graduation Ceremony**

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

## **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**

IK: Assessment of Student Learning  
IKA: Grading and Reporting System  
IKC: Transcripts  
IHCDA: Dual Enrollment and Early College  
IKD: Academic Recognition  
IKE: Promotion, Retention, and Acceleration  
IKFF: Multiple Pathways

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**NOTE:** While this policy is written to align with State of Maine graduation requirements and standards, the language and general format can be adapted for other states.

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## **Western Mountains Regional School Unit No. 99 East High School**

### **Grading and Reporting System**

The purpose of the Western Mountains Regional School Unit grading policy is to establish a set of guiding principles that all district educators will use to establish a system of grading that fairly, clearly, accurately, and consistently communicates student learning progress and achievement.

#### **A. Communicating the Grading System**

To ensure that every student and family has the information and resources they need to understand and appropriately plan a 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—all important and relevant information related to the grading systems used in East High School.

The Superintendent, through the Principal or other designee, shall be responsible for ensuring that accurate, up-to-date information concerning the East High School grading system is (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 grading and reporting practices will be disseminated to all incoming ninth-grade students and their families at the time of course selection. This policy will also be referenced in each edition of the 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 grading system.

## **B. Academic Grading**

All grading and reporting practices at East High School will reflect the following design characteristics:

1. The primary purpose of the grading system shall be to fairly, clearly, accurately, and consistently communicate learning progress and achievement to students, families, postsecondary institutions, potential employers, and other relevant stakeholders and audiences.
2. The grading system shall be designed to ensure that students, families, teachers, counselors, advisors, and support specialists have the detailed information they need to make important decisions about a student's education.
3. The grading system will measure, report, and document student proficiency against a set of clearly defined cross-curricular and content-area graduation standards developed by the administration, faculty, and staff of East High School.
4. The grading system will measure, report, and document academic progress and achievement separately from habits of work, character traits, and behaviors.
5. The grading system will ensure consistency and fairness in the assessment of learning, and in the assignment of scores and proficiency levels, across students, teachers, assessments, learning experiences, content areas, and time.
6. The grading system shall not be used as a form of punishment.

## **C. Habits of Work Grading**

All grading and reporting practices for habits of work, character traits, and behaviors at East High School will reflect the following design characteristics:

1. The East High School administration, faculty, and staff will develop and apply a common set of Habits of Work standards, and related scoring criteria, that teachers will use to grade students on work habits, character traits, and/or behaviors.
2. The Habits of Work grading system will measure, report, and document habits of work, character traits, and behaviors separately from academic progress and achievement. A student achieving a high level of academic proficiency may demonstrate a low level on Habits of Work proficiency, and vice versa.
3. Habits of Work will be monitored over the duration of a learning experience and scores, as measured and determined using common assessment methods and scoring criteria, will be reported for each student at the end of a term or grading period.
4. The Habits of Work grading system will ensure consistency and fairness in the assessment of work habits, and in the assignment of scores and proficiency levels, across students, teachers, assessments, course, learning experiences, content areas, and time.
5. Habits of Work grades shall be communicated using the same performance levels used for academic reporting.
6. Habits of Work grades shall not be used as a form of punishment.

## **D. Grading Assessments**

East High School will employ a consistent system of grading that reports student learning progress and achievement across two aligned categories on a 4-point scale that aligns Proficiency Levels with Proficiency Descriptions.

Using rubrics and scoring guides, individual assessments will be scored in accordance with the following Proficiency Levels and Proficiency Descriptions:

Proficiency Levels	Proficiency Descriptions
4.0	Exceeds Proficiency
3.5	Proficient
3.0	Proficient
2.5	Partially Proficient
2.0	Partially Proficient
1.0	Insufficient Evidence

## **E. Grading Courses and Learning Experiences**

Aggregate proficiency scores on graduation standards shall be derived through a common and consistently applied process that is collaboratively developed by the administration, faculty, and staff at the school and approved by the Principal.

Aggregate Proficiency Levels and Proficiency Descriptions for (1) academic courses and other learning experiences defined in the district's Multiple Learning Pathways policy and (2) student achievement of each graduation standard shall be rounded to a single decimal point and reported in accordance with the following categories:

Proficiency Levels	Proficiency Descriptions
3.6–4.0	Exceeds Proficiency
3.0–3.5	Proficient
2.0–2.9	Partially Proficient
1.0–1.9	Insufficient Evidence

## **F. Changes to the Grading System**

The school administration, faculty, and staff, under the leadership of the Principal, may modify the reporting system based on the evolving needs of students, teachers, families, and other stakeholders, but the Proficiency Levels shall remain fixed, and will continue to measure, report, and document student proficiency against a set of clearly defined and consistently applied cross-curricular and content-area standards.

## **G. Grade Point Average**

East High School will employ a consistent system of grading, scoring, and aggregating proficiency that will produce a rolling and cumulative Grade Point Average for each student. The Grade Point Average will be reported on the official East High School transcript and will be used to determine Latin honors in accordance with the following categories of academic distinction described in the district Academic Recognition policy:

*Summa Cum Laude* (with highest honors): a minimum GPA of 3.9

*Magna Cum Laude* (with great honors): a minimum GPA of 3.7

*Cum Laude* (with honors): a minimum GPA of 3.5

## **Legal Reference**

None

## **Cross References**

IK: Assessment of Student Learning

IKC: Transcripts

IKD: Academic Recognition

IKFF: Multiple Pathways

**Approved:** 00/00/0000

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