GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The School Committee recognizes the need to establish minimum standards for the awarding of a high school diploma that are consistent with State law and regulations and with community educational values and expectations.

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.

Madawaska School Department 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 Madawaska School Department 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 Madawaska High 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.

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 16 credits in order to receive a state diploma. 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 1 year of laboratory study – 2 credits;
5. Fine arts, which may include art, music, forensics or drama – 1 credit;
6. Health –½ credit;
7. Physical education –1 credit and

B. The State also requires that students demonstrate computer skills according to the school unit’s standards for computer literacy, proficiency, and performance or by the awarding of a credit in computer proficiency.

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

1. Mathematics – 2 additional credits;
2. Social studies and history, including one year of American history and government – 1 additional credit;
3. Science - 1 additional credit;
4. Fine arts, which may include art, music, forensics or drama – 1 additional credit;
5. Health –½ additional credit;
6. Physical education – 1 additional credit
7. Modern and classical languages – 1 credit
8. Personal Career Management – 1 credit
9. Computer Literacy – 1 credit

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 which will include 3 additional credits.

ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF EARNING CREDITS

Please refer to Policy IKFD

STUDENTS RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Students who achieve proficiency in meeting the content standards of the Learning Results as specified in the goals and objectives of their Individualized Education Plans (IEP), will be awarded diplomas.

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

Contingent on Department of Education approval of the Madawaska School Department’s schedule for implementation of proficiency-based diploma requirements after July 1, 2020, the awarding of a diploma from Madawaska High 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.

Madawaska High School’s educational program will be designed to enable students to satisfy graduation requirements in four years through a sequence of educational (learning) experiences/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 educational experiences 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 educational experiences in the content area of social studies during their high school program.

C. Engage in at least one educational experience in each of the content areas of visual and performing arts during their high school program.

D. Engage in at least 1 educational experience in world languages during their high school program.
E. Engage in at least 3 health and physical education experiences during their high school program.

F. 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 6 full year learning experiences/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 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 AWARDBING OF DIPLOMAS

A. Transfer Students: For students who transfer to Madawaska 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 Madawaska High School Principal shall determine the value of the student’s prior educational experience towards meeting graduation requirements.

B. Home-schooled Students: For any home-schooled student wishing to receive a diploma from Madawaska High School, the Principal shall determine the value of the student’s prior educational experience toward meeting graduation credit requirements. A home-schooled student must have attended Madawaska High School for a minimum of 2 semesters [OR: taken a minimum of 6 courses at Madawaska High School] immediately preceding graduation in order to receive a Madawaska High School diploma.

C. Delayed Awarding of Diplomas: A student who leaves Madawaska 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.

Any student who wishes to receive a high school diploma in accordance with this paragraph shall notify the high school principal or Superintendent well before graduation so that there is ample time for evaluation of the request and, if approved, for preparation of the diploma and planning for the student’s participation in the graduation ceremony, if the student desires to do so.

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: A student is eligible for extended years of study to complete the requirements of a diploma if he/she has not reached the age of 20 at the start of the school year. A student 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 of
attendance as a full-time high school student who has earned/completed the required credits or courses/learning experiences but has not met Learning Results 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 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 Madawaska High School for 2 years immediately 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 REFS.: 20-A M.R.S.A. § 4722
Ch. 127 § 7 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rules)

CROSS REF.: IK – Student Achievement
IKFD – External Credit Options

MANUAL UPDATE: June 1994

REVISED: October 13, 1999 School Committee Meeting
REVISED: School Committee Meeting
March 21, 2000 School Committee Meeting
April 25, 2001 School Committee Meeting
December 12, 2001 School Committee Meeting
September 17, 2002 School Committee Meeting

REVISED: May 22, 2006 School Committee Meeting
Newly Adopted: August 9, 2005 School Committee Meeting
May 7, 2012 School Committee Meeting
REVISED: October 8, 2012 School Committee Meeting
REVISED: November 17, 2014 School Committee Meeting

Madawaska Public Schools, Madawaska, Maine