



Belmond-Klemme
Community School District

CORE DIPLOMA HANDBOOK

ACADEMIC PATHWAYS

Think. Learn.

Grow. www.bkcsd.org

Belmond-Klemme Community Schools Educational Philosophy

Vision

Our students are the key to the 21st Century—becoming life-long learners, responsible citizens, and caring individuals.

Mission Statement

The Belmond-Klemme Community School District is committed to excellence and life-long learning for ALL.

Our Belmond-Klemme Foundation of Beliefs

- ❖ **Academic excellence is paramount**
- ❖ **All students can and will learn**
- ❖ **The communities of the school district will work together to promote a safe and positive learning environment**
- ❖ **All students will be treated in a fair and equitable manner**
- ❖ **The education system will challenge students of all ability levels to be their best**
- ❖ **Learning is a lifelong journey**

Belmond-Klemme Community Schools Core Diploma Philosophy

The Core Diploma option allows students with particularly challenging life circumstances the opportunity to advance their academic and career goals without reducing the level of rigor expected of all students.

Academic Pathways: Core Diploma

Belmond-Klemme Community Schools is committed to providing a core diploma graduation pathway for students to acknowledge the life circumstances and obstacles they face in accessing their postsecondary goals. The BKCSD Core Diploma Option promotes rigorous academic, career, and technical pursuits for high school students by meeting the Iowa Department of Education Graduation Requirements.

Required Credits for DMPS Core Diploma Graduation

REQUIREMENTS	UNITS OF CREDIT
Social Studies REQUIRED: US History, US Government, World History and a .5 additional credit in a social studies elective	3.0
English REQUIRED: 4.0 credits in English to include English 9 and English 10 and 2.0 credits in English electives	4.0
Mathematics REQUIRED: 3.0 credits in mathematics to include Algebra 1 or Algebra 1A and Algebra 1B	3.0
Science HIGHLY RECOMMENDED: Biology, Chemistry, Anatomy	3.0
Physical Education REQUIRED: Students must be enrolled in physical education while in high school	1.0
Electives REQUIRED: Financial Literacy, Health, and an additional 3.0 credits of electives	4.0
TOTAL	18.0

Iowa Department of Education Requirements

Chapter 12 Matrix *Each school or school district must require the following as part of its graduation requirements: 1) one-half unit of United States government, 2) one unit of American History, and 3) student participation in physical education for one-eighth unit in each semester of enrollment in high school.*

Iowa Code section 256.7 (26)

The requirements for high school graduation for students in school districts and accredited nonpublic schools shall include four years of English and language arts, three years of mathematics, three years of science, and three years of social science. Any additional graduation credits or units are locally determined.

*Financial Literacy – **SF 475** requires all students, beginning with the graduating class of 2020, to complete one-half unit of financial literacy as a high school graduation requirement.*

281 IAC Chapter 49

The school district shall report annually to each student enrolled in grades 9 through 12, and, if the student is under the age of 18, to each student's parent or guardian, the student's progress toward meeting the goal of successfully completing the core curriculum and high school graduation requirements adopted by the state board of education pursuant to 281—Chapter 12 and toward achieving the goals of the student's career and academic plan.

Core Diploma Application Process

STEP:	DESCRIPTION:	PERSONS ACCOUNTABLE:
Step 1: Students Referred to Tier 2 Team	Students will be nominated by staff for consideration of a CORE diploma using the MTSS Tier 2 Referral. Consultation with the student must occur prior to the recommendation, and the recommendation must include a summary of the consultation with the student regarding their interest and reasoning for pursuing a CORE diploma.	Staff making recommendation and student
Step 2: Tier 2 Team Review	Tier 2 Team reviews the nomination and will either: 1-Invite the student to complete the application in writing (email or letter) along with attaching the application 2-Deny the application in writing (email or letter) along with explanation of reason of denial Tier 2 Team must make a parent/guardian contact and register that contact in IC prior to sharing the application with the student to obtain verbal agreement if student is under 18	Tier 2 Team and Student
Step 3: Student Application	Requesting student must complete the application with an emphasis on their post-secondary plans. Written parent/guardian permission is included in the application. Copies of application must be received by the building principal, high school counselor and other designees.	Student and Parent/Guardian
Step 4: Counselor Review	An academic plan is created by the High School Counselor for the remainder of the student's high school career. A parent/guardian contact must be made and recorded in IC where the academic plan is shared if the student is under 18.	High School Counselor
Step 5: District Review	The district leadership team (including, but not limited to) consisting of the Superintendent,	District leadership team led by High School Principal

	Building High School Principal, High School Counselor and two classroom teachers review the nomination, application, and academic course plan to determine if approval/denial of a CORE diploma.	
Step 6: Approval/Denial Notification	Approval/Denial notification will be sent to the student, initial referring staff member, and parent/guardian (if student is under 18) in writing (either email or letter) and noted in IC.	High School Principal or Designee

Who is a strong Core Diploma candidate?

Data Screener

As an At-Risk team, please consult the MTSS Screener for High School students determined at risk of not graduating due to high core credit deficiencies and the MTSS Tier 2 Nomination form to make recommendations for student consideration of a Core Diploma.

MTSS - Tier 2 Referral form

The following form is asking that you report actual, observable behavior of a student. Your observations are very important in helping secure the appropriate assistance for the student.

Student _____ Grade Level _____ Date _____
 Subject _____
 Referring Teacher _____
 Parent/Guardian Contacted: No _____ Yes _____ Date Contacted _____

Please check the areas of concern and return to the Student Success Coordinator. This can be filled out electronically, the form needs to be copied and returned before using and returning. This form can also be printed and filled out by hand and returned to the At-Risk Coordinators

Choose and explain the areas of concern. Some may not apply.

School Performance & School Attendance	
___ Drop in grades/achievement	___ Frequently absent
___ Incomplete work	___ Frequently Tardy
___ Not turning in work	___ Frequent visits to nurse/office
___ Lack of motivation, apathy	___ Always asking to leave class
	___ Leaves early often

Explanation of behavior _____
 What classroom interventions have been utilized to address this behavior? _____

Please use this screener and nomination tool as a guide in determining if the Core Diploma is a viable and appropriate pathway for the students you would like to consider for a referral.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can any adult refer a student for a Core Diploma?

No, it must be a school staff mentor, teacher, counselor, or administrator; not a family member.

2. What type of diploma does the student earn?

Core Diploma students will earn a Belmond-Klemme Community School Diploma, matching a regular diploma and can still walk with their school and class.

3. Does the Core Diploma align to our district mission?

The Core Diploma aligns with the BKCS D School Board governance policies Code 101, Code 505.2, and 604.4. It is also aligned with the district's MTSS and Equity Frameworks and will help us sustain reengagement with our at-risk students.

4. Is the Core Diploma less rigorous?

No, the pathway *is not less rigorous* and does not shut any doors for students. This is a full Iowa State Approved Diploma per the Iowa Department of Education. The BKCS D Traditional Diploma pathway goes beyond the state requirement and is designed for students to compete within the four-year College/University application process.

5. Can the Core Diploma serve as an early graduation pathway?

No, the diploma option *does not expedite graduation rates*; it acknowledges students' postsecondary pathway that is meaningful for *them*. It also *does not replace* the traditional pathway. All students will be coached and encouraged to finish the traditional diploma.

6. Is BKCS D the only district offering a Core Diploma?

No, BKCS D is not leading the way on the Core Diploma Option i.e. many districts across Iowa have already provided this option for years.

7. What if a student is granted a Core Diploma, but wants to stay in school longer? Students who meet the Core Diploma Option are *not bound to this pathway*. They can choose to pursue another year of electives to finish the traditional diploma option if that is *their* goal.

8. Does a Core Diploma impact college acceptance?

There is nothing on the student's diploma to indicate a Core Diploma Pathway. It does not impact NIACC or FASFA applications, but any students interested in a four-year college would need to meet the specific curriculum entrance requirements for those schools.

9. Does the Core Diploma impact technical school acceptance?

Any students interested in a technical school (Job Corps, Iowa School of Beauty, etc.) would need to meet the specific curriculum entrance requirements for those schools.

10. Does the Core Diploma impact military recruitment?

It is highly recommended that as part of the referral process, students and their mentors research the specifics of each military field to determine exactly what the entrance requirements are.

APPENDIX:

[MTSS Screener-Early Warning System](#) (Must Request Access due to Confidentiality)

[MTSS Tier 2 Nomination Form](#)

[CORE Diploma Application](#)