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## **613 GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

***[Note: The requirements set forth in this policy govern the graduation standards that Minnesota public schools must require for a high school diploma for all students.]***

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to set forth requirements for graduation from the school district.

### **II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

The policy of the school district is that all students entering grade 9 in the 2012-2013 school year and earlier must satisfactorily complete, as determined by the school district, all credit requirements, all state academic standards, or local standards where state standards do not apply, and successfully pass graduation examinations, as required, in order to graduate. For students entering grade 9 in the 2013-2014 school year and later, the school district's policy is that students must demonstrate, as determined by the school district, their satisfactory completion of the credit requirements and their understanding of academic standards on a nationally normed college entrance exam. The school district must adopt graduation requirements that meet or exceed state graduation requirements established in law or rule.

### **III. DEFINITIONS**

- A. "Academic standard" means: (1) a statewide adopted expectation for student learning in the content areas of language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, or the arts, or (2) a locally adopted expectation for student learning in health, the arts, career and technical education, or world languages.
- B. "Credit" means a student's successful completion of an academic year of study or a student's mastery of the applicable subject matter, as determined by the school district.
- C. "Section 504 Accommodation" means the defined appropriate accommodations or modifications that must be made in the school environment to address the needs of an individual student with disabilities.
- D. "Individualized Education Program" or "IEP" means a written statement developed for a student eligible by law for special education and services.
- E. "English language learners" or "ELL" student means an individual whose first language is not English and whose test performance may be negatively impacted

by lack of English language proficiency.

- F. “GRAD” means the graduation-required assessment for diploma that measures the reading, writing, and mathematics proficiency of high school students.

#### **IV. TEST ADMINISTRATOR**

The Curriculum & Assessment Director shall be named the school district test administrator. Said person shall be in charge of all test procedures and shall bring recommendations to the school board annually for approval.

#### **V. GRADUATION ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Students enrolled in grade 8 through the 2009-2010 school year are eligible to be assessed under:

1. the graduation-required assessment for diploma (GRAD) in reading, mathematics, or writing under Minn. Stat. § 120B.30, Subd. 1(c)(1) and (2) and Subd. 1 (d)(2012) as follows:
  - a. for reading and mathematics:
    - i. obtaining an achievement level equivalent to or greater than proficient as determined through a standard setting process on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments in grade 10 for reading and grade 11 for mathematics or achieving a passing score as determined through a standard setting process on the GRAD in grade 10 for reading and grade 11 for mathematics or subsequent retests;
    - ii. achieving a passing score as determined through a standard setting process on the state-identified language proficiency test in reading and the mathematics test for English language learners or the GRAD equivalent of those assessments for students designated as English language learners;
    - iii. achieving an individual passing score on the GRAD as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 (504A) plan;
    - iv. obtaining an achievement level equivalent to or greater than proficient as determined through a standard setting process on the state-identified alternate assessment or assessments in grade 10 for reading and grade 11 for mathematics for students with and IEP; or
    - v. achieving an individual passing score on the state-identified

alternate assessment or assessments as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an IEP; and

- b. for writing:
  - i. achieving a passing score on the GRAD;
  - ii. achieving a passing score as determined through a standard setting process on the state-identified language proficiency test in writing for students designated as English language learners;
  - iii. achieving an individual passing score on the GRAD as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an IEP or 504 plan; or
  - iv. achieving an individual passing score on the state-identified alternate assessment or assessments as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an IEP
- c. Students enrolled in grade 8 in any school year from the 2005-2006 school year to the 2009-2010 school year who do not pass the mathematics GRAD under V.A.1., above, are eligible to receive a high school diploma if they:
  - i. complete with a passing score or grade all state and local coursework and credits required for graduation by the school board granting the students their diploma;
  - ii. participate in district-prescribed academic remediation in mathematics; and
  - iii. fully participate in at least two retests of the mathematics GRAD test or until they pass the mathematics GRAD test, whichever comes first.
- 2. the WorkKeys job skills assessment;
- 3. the Compass college placement test;
- 4. the ACT assessment for college admission;
- 5. the armed services vocational aptitude test; or
- 6. the school district may substitute a score from an alternative, equivalent assessment to satisfy the requirements of this paragraph.

- B. Students enrolled in grade 8 in the 2010-2011 or earlier school year are eligible to be assessed under:

1. the GRAD in reading, mathematics, or writing under Minn. Stat. § 120B.30, Subd. 1(c)(1) and (2)(2012) as follows:
  - a. for reading and mathematics:
    - i. obtaining an achievement level equivalent to or greater than proficient as determined through a standard setting process on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments in grade 10 for reading and grade 11 for mathematics or achieving a passing score as determined through a standard setting process on the GRAD in grade 10 for trading and grade 11 for mathematics or subsequent retests;
    - ii. achieving a passing score as determined through a standard setting process on the state-identified language proficiency test in reading and the mathematics test for English language learners or the GRAD equivalent of those assessments for students designated as English language learners;
    - iii. achieving an individual passing score on the GRAD as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an IEP or 504 plan;
    - iv. obtaining an achievement level equivalent to or greater than proficient as determined through a standard setting process on the state-identified alternate assessment or assessments in grade 10 for reading and grade 11 for mathematics for students with an IEP; or
    - v. achieving an individual passing score on the state-identified alternate assessment or assessments as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an IEP; and
  - b. for writing:
    - i. achieving a passing score on the GRAD;
    - ii. achieving a passing score as determined through a standard setting process on the state-identified language proficiency test in writing for students designated as English language learners;
    - iii. achieving an individual passing score on the GRAD as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an IEP or 504 plan; or
    - iv. achieving an individual passing score on the state-identified alternate assessment or assessments as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an IEP.

2. the WorkKeys job skills assessment;
3. the Compass college placement test;
4. the ACT assessment for college admission;
5. the armed services vocational aptitude test; or
6. the school district may substitute a score from an alternative, equivalent assessment to satisfy the requirements of this paragraph.

C. For students enrolled in grade 8 in the 2012-2013 school year and later, students' state graduation requirements, based on a longitudinal, systematic approach to student education and career planning, assessment, instructional support, and evaluation, include the following:

1. demonstrate understanding of required academic standards on a nationally normed college entrance exam;
2. achievement and career and college readiness tests in mathematics, reading, and writing. The tests must have a continuum of empirically derived, clearly defined benchmarks focused on student; attainment of knowledge and skills so that students, their parent, and teachers know how well students must perform to have reasonable chance to succeed in a career or college without the need for postsecondary remediation. In addition, the tests must ensure that the foundational knowledge and skills for students' successful performance in postsecondary employment or education and articulated series of possible targeted interventions are clearly identified and satisfy Minnesota's postsecondary admission requirements. To the extent available, the tests should:
  - a. monitor students' continuous development of and growth in requisite knowledge and skills; analyze students' progress and performance levels, identifying students' academic strengths and diagnosing areas where students require curriculum or instructional adjustments, targeted interventions, or remediation; and
  - b. based on analysis of students' progress and performance data, determine students' learning and instructional needs and the instructional tools and best practices that support academic rigor for the student; and
3. consistent with this paragraph and Minn. Stat. § 120B.125 (*see Policy 604, Section II.H.*), age-appropriate exploration and planning activities and career assessments to encourage students to identify personally relevant career interests and aptitudes and help students and their families develop a regularly reexamined transition plan for postsecondary education or employment without need for postsecondary remediation.

4. Based on appropriate state guidelines, students with an IEP may satisfy state graduation requirements by achieving an individual score on the state-identified alternative assessments.
  5. Students meeting the state graduation requirements under this section must receive targeted, relevant, academically rigorous, and resourced instruction which may include a targeted instruction and intervention plan focused on improving the student's knowledge and skills in core subjects so that the student has a reasonable chance to succeed in a career or college without need for postsecondary remediation.
  6. Students meeting the state graduation requirements under this section and who are students in grade 11 or 12 and who are identified as academically ready for a career or college must be actively encouraged by the school district to participate in courses and programs awarding college credit to high school students. Students are not required to achieve a specified score or level of proficiency on an assessment under this subdivision to graduate from high school.
- D. Students enrolled in grade 8 through the 2011-2012 school year who have not yet demonstrated proficiency on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments, the GRAD, or the basic skills testing requirements prior to high school graduation may satisfy state high school graduation requirements for assessments in reading, mathematics, and writing by taking:
1. The Grade 11 ACT Plus Writing (college entrance exam) during statewide administration in reading, writing, and mathematics.
  2. If students are unable to participate in the Grade 11 ACT Plus Writing in 2014-2015, they can meet graduation assessment requirements through a combination of the following:
    - a. for reading and mathematics:
      - i. obtaining an achievement level equivalent to or greater than proficient as determined through a standard setting process on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments in grade 10 for reading and grade 11 for mathematics or achieving a passing score as determined through a standard setting process on the GRAD in grade 10 for reading and grade 11 for mathematics or subsequent retests;
      - ii. achieving a passing score as determined through a standard setting process on the state-identified language proficiency test in reading and the mathematics test for English language learners or the GRAD equivalent of those assessments for students designated as English language learners;
      - iii. achieving an individual passing score on the GRAD as

- determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an IEP or 504 plan;
    - iv. obtaining an achievement level equivalent to or greater than proficient as determined through a standard setting process on the state-identified alternate assessment or assessments in grade 10 for reading and grade 11 for mathematics for students with and IEP; or
    - v. achieving an individual passing score on the state-identified alternate assessment or assessments as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an IEP; and
  - b. for writing:
    - i. achieving a passing score on the GRAD;
    - ii. achieving a passing score as determined through a standard setting process on the state-identified language proficiency test in writing for students designated as English language learners;
    - iii. achieving an individual passing score on the GRAD as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with and IEP or 504 plan; or
    - iv. achieving an individual passing score on the state-identified alternate assessment or assessments as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an IEP.
- 3. the WorkKeys job skills assessment;
- 4. the Compass college placement test;
- 5. the armed services vocational aptitude test; or
- 6. the ACT assessment for college admission.

## **VI. GRADUATION CREDIT REQUIREMENTS**

- A. Students beginning 9<sup>th</sup> grade in the 2011-2012 school year and later must successfully complete, as determined by the school district, the following high school level credits for graduation:
  - 1. For credits of language arts;
  - 2. Three credits of mathematics, including an algebra II credit or its equivalent, sufficient to satisfy all of the academic standards in mathematics;

3. An algebra I credit by the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade sufficient to satisfy all of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade standards in mathematics;
4. Three credits of science, including at least: (a) one credit of biology; (b) one credit of chemistry or physics; and one elective credit of science. The combination of credits must be sufficient to satisfy (i) all of the academic standards in either chemistry or physics and (ii) all other academic standards in science;
5. Four credits of social studies, encompassing at least United States history, geography, government and citizenship, world history, and economics sufficient to satisfy all of the academic standards in social studies;
6. One credit in the arts sufficient to satisfy all of the state or local academic standards in the arts; and
7. A minimum of six and one half elective credits.
8. Credit equivalencies
  - a. A one-half credit of economics taught in a school's agriculture education or business department may fulfill a one-half credit in social studies under VI.A.5., above, if the credit is sufficient to satisfy all of the academic standards in economics.
  - b. An agriculture science or career and technical education credit may fulfill the credit in chemistry or physics or the elective science credit required under VI.A.4., above, if the credit meets the state chemistry or physics or district biology academic standards or a combination of these academic standards as approved by the district. A student must satisfy either all of the chemistry or physics academic standards prior to graduation. An agriculture science or career and technical education credit may not fulfill the required biology credit under VI.A.4., above.
  - c. A career and technical education credit may fulfill a mathematics or arts credit requirement under VI.A.2. or VI.A.6., above.

## **VII. GRADUATION STANDARDS REQUIREMENTS**

- A. All students must demonstrate their understanding of the following academic standards on a nationally normed college entrance exam:
  1. School District Standards, Health (K-12);
  2. School District Standards, Career and Technical Education (K-12); and
  3. School District Standards, World Languages (K-12).
- B. Academic standards in health, world languages, and vocational and technical



education will be reviewed on an annual basis.\*

\* Reviews are required to be conducted on a periodic basis. Therefore, this time period may be changed to accommodate individual school district needs.

- C. All students must satisfactorily complete the following required Graduation Standards in accordance with the standards developed by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE):
  - 1. Minnesota Academic Standards, Language Arts K-12;
  - 2. Minnesota Academic Standards, Mathematics K-12;
  - 3. Minnesota Academic Standards, Science K-12;
  - 4. Minnesota Academic Standards, Social Studies K-12; and
  - 5. Minnesota Academic Standards, Physical Education K-12.
- D. State standards in the Arts K-12 are available, or school districts may choose to develop their own standards.
- E. The academic standards for language arts, mathematics, and science apply to all students except the very few students with extreme cognitive or physical impairments for whom an IEP team has determined that the required academic standards are inappropriate. An IEP team that makes this determination must establish alternative standards.

## **VIII. EARLY GRADUATION**

Students may be considered for early graduation, as provided for within Minn. Stat. § 120B.07, upon meeting the following condition:

- A. All course or standards and credit requirements must be met;
- B. The principal or designee shall conduct an interview with the student and parent or guardian, familiarize the parties with opportunities available in post-secondary education, and arrive at a timely decision; and
- C. The principal's decision shall be in writing and may be subject to review by the superintendent and school board.

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. § 120B.02 (Educational Expectations for Minnesota's Students)  
Minn. Stat. § 120B.018 (Definitions)  
Minn. Stat. § 120B.021 (Required Academic Standards)  
Minn. Stat. § 120B.023 (Benchmarks)  
Minn. Stat. § 120B.024 (Graduation Requirements; Course Credits)

Minn. Stat. § 120B.07 (Early Graduation)  
Minn. Stat. § 120B.11 (School District Process)  
Minn. Stat. § 120B.125 (Planning for Students' Successful Transition to Postsecondary Education and Employment; Involuntary Career Tracking Prohibited)  
Minn. Stat. § 120B.128 (Educational Planning and Assessment System (EPAS) Program)  
Minn. Stat. § 120B.30 (Statewide Testing and Reporting Systems)  
Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0640-3501.0655 (Academic Standards for Language Arts)  
Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0700-3501.0745 (Academic Standards for Mathematics)  
Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0800-3501.0815 (Academic Standards for the Arts)  
Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0900-3501.0955 (Academic Standards in Science)  
Minn. Rules Parts 3501.1000-3501.1190 (Graduation-Required Assessment for Diploma) (repealed Minn. L. 2013, Ch. 116, Art. 2, § 22)  
Minn. Rules parts 3501.1300-3501.1345 (Academic Standards for Social Studies)  
20 U.S.C. § 6301, *et seq.* (No Child Left Behind Act)

***Cross References:*** MSBA/MASA Model Policy 104 (School District Mission Statement)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 601 (School District Curriculum and Instruction Goals)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 614 (School District Testing Plan and Procedure)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 615 (Testing Accommodations, Modifications, and Exemptions for IEPs, Section 504 Plans, and LEP Students)  
MSBA/MASA Model Policy 616 (School District System Accountability)