

BEMIDJI AREA SCHOOLS
BEMIDJI, MINNESOTA

DATE: MAY 18, 2015

TO: BOARD OF EDUCATION

FROM: KATHY PALM, DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM & ADMIN. SERVICES

SUBJECT: CREDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR BEMIDJI DISTRICT DIPLOMA &
APPROVAL OF FIRST READING OF REVISED SCHOOL BOARD POLICY
400-30-7

COMMENTS:

Bemidji High School students are required to complete 28 (out of 32 possible) credits to earn a high school diploma. Prior to the four-period day, Bemidji required 21 credits for graduation. At that time, students could earn a maximum of 24 credits, or six per year. When BHS changed their credit requirements, all Bemidji secondary programs changed their requirements to match the high school even though they were not on the four-period day schedule.

After much discussion, the district feels that we have placed an unfair burden on students who complete their education at the Alternative Education Center (AEC), Bemidji Youth Learning and Working (BYLaW), First City School (at NMJC), Lumberjack ALC, and Oshki Manidoo Center. Because we have set an unreasonable expectation for students who do not attend a four-period day schedule, we are concerned that this places a barrier to their receiving a high school diploma.

Following are the State of Minnesota's minimum requirements for a high school diploma:

Subject	# Credits	Required Classes
English/Language Arts	4.00	Including Literature and Composition
Mathematics	3.00	Including Algebra, Geometry, Statistics & Probability
Science	3.00	One credit Biology, one credit of either Chemistry or Physics, and one of student's choosing
Social Studies	3.50	Including US History, World History/Geography, Economics, & Government/Citizenship
Arts	1.00	Visual Arts, Music, Theater, Dance, or Media
Physical Education		Determined by local School Board
Health		Determined by local School Board
Electives	7.00	Determined by local School Board
Total Credits	21.50	Minnesota minimum high school diploma requirements

The District Curriculum Advisory Committee met March 17 and again May 12, 2015, to discuss this issue. The committee understands the concern for at-risk students' completing a high school diploma, but they do not want to sacrifice high standards for a Bemidji diploma. The secondary principals met April 24, 2015, and designed a recommendation to the District Curriculum Advisory Committee. Following are the Bemidji High School graduation requirements and the suggested requirements for a Bemidji District diploma:

Subject	Bemidji High School Diploma Requirements	Proposed Bemidji District Diploma Requirements
Language Arts	4.00	4.00
Mathematics	4.00	3.00
Science	4.00	3.00
Social Studies	4.00	3.50
Arts	1.00	1.00
Health	.50	
Physical Education	1.00	
Electives	9.50	9.50
Total Credit Requirements	28.00	24.00

The secondary principals further recommend that the Bemidji District diploma option is for students who participate in other course alternatives such as: Alternative Education Center (AEC), Bemidji Youth Learning and Working (BYLaW), First City School (at NMJC), Lumberjack ALC, and Oshki Manidoo Center. Principals and Counselors will review individual student situations to determine if they qualify for this alternative diploma option, possibly considering students completing Credit Recovery. This option is designed for students who are at risk of graduating, and not for students who want to accelerate their high school graduation.

RECOMMENDATION:

On May 12, 2015, the District Curriculum Advisory Committee passed the following recommendation:

We recommend that the Bemidji School Board **change the number of credits required for a Bemidji District diploma to reflect the Minnesota requirements and set that number at 24 credits.** This diploma is for students who attend alternative secondary programs and will be considered by principals and counselors on a per student basis. This is not a diploma option for students who want to graduate early.

ACTION:

The motion was offered by _____, seconded by _____, and carried () to approve the first reading of the revised School Board Policy 400-30-7.