



Board Policy Equity Lens Tool

Title of board policy being reviewed:

Graduation Requirements

Describe the purpose of this policy:

The purpose of this policy is to define the requirements and procedures for awarding diplomas and certificates to MESD students, ensuring all students—including those with disabilities or facing barriers—have access to appropriate and equitable graduation options that meet or exceed Oregon state standards.

What is your experience with this policy:

This policy is used to guide staff, students, and families through multiple graduation pathways, ensuring legal compliance and equitable access. In practice, it supports personalized planning for students with diverse needs but can be complex to implement consistently across all programs.

What is the plan to communicate this policy to staff, students, and/or families?
What is the plan to communicate this policy to linguistically diverse students and their families?
Is this policy:



Easy to locate for staff?

MESD informs students and families annually—beginning in grade 5 or upon a documented history—about diploma and certificate options. This includes credit requirements and implications of non-standard diplomas or certificates. Staff receive this information through professional development or administrative guidance.

This policy and a summary of this policy will be available on the MESD web page. The summary of this policy is also available on the MESD website in Chinese, Russian, Spanish, Somali, and Vietnamese. Upon request the summary and/or policy may be translated into other languages.

Accessible to students and families?

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Included in onboarding, intake, or other training?

Staff receive this information through professional development or administrative guidance.

Clear and easy to understand?

A two paragraph summary of this policy written at a 5th grade reading level is on the MESD webpage and is easily searchable. All policy summaries have a link to the full legal policy.



People

How are people affected positively or negatively by the policy? What potential barriers might people encounter? What barriers might be reduced by this policy?

Positive impacts:

- Provides multiple diploma options to meet diverse student needs.
- Supports students with disabilities, medical conditions, or life disruptions (e.g., foster care, homelessness).
- Allows early graduation and credit flexibility.

Negative impacts:

- Students receiving non-standard diplomas may face limited college, employment, or military opportunities.
- The complexity of the policy may confuse families or lead to inconsistent application.

Potential barriers:

- Stigma or misunderstanding about alternative diplomas.
- Limited awareness or access to information in students' home languages.
- Difficulty navigating consent and eligibility processes.

Barriers reduced:

- Credit transfer for mobile students.
- Annual communication requirements help improve family awareness and planning.



Can you identify the racial or ethnic groups affected by this policy, program, practice, or decision? Do you know the potential impacts to these populations? If you don't know, how will you find out?

Racial and ethnic groups more likely to be affected include Black, Latino, Indigenous, Pacific Islander, and migrant students, who are disproportionately represented in foster care, houselessness, juvenile justice, and special education systems.

Potential impacts:

These students may benefit from flexible graduation pathways, but may also be overrepresented in modified or extended diploma tracks, which can limit postsecondary options.

Were these populations involved in any way, at any point in the development, implementation, and evaluation of this policy? If so, when and how?

These graduation requirements are set by the State of Oregon and are required.

What priorities and commitments are communicated by this policy?

This policy communicates MESD's commitment to:

- Educational equity by offering multiple, accessible graduation pathways.
- Supporting students with disabilities and those facing systemic barriers.
- Complying with state requirements while allowing flexibility for students to succeed.
- Involving families in diploma decisions and ensuring informed consent.



Place

What kind of positive or negative environment are we creating?

What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes? (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic or managerial)

Environment Created:

The policy promotes a positive environment by valuing diverse student needs and offering multiple paths to graduation. It signals inclusion and support for students facing personal or academic challenges.

Barriers to More Equitable Outcomes:

- **Mandated:** State reporting and diploma definitions may limit how non-standard diplomas are valued.
- **Emotional:** Students may feel stigmatized for receiving modified or extended diplomas.
- **Programmatic:** Inconsistent access to appropriate supports or coursework across programs.
- **Managerial:** Staff may lack training to communicate options clearly or apply the policy equitably.

Power

How is the power of decision-making shared with those it affects?

How have you intentionally involved the communities affected by this policy, program, practice, or decision?

**Power Sharing:**

Decision-making is shared through IEP teams and school planning teams, which include students (when appropriate) and their parents or guardians. Students 18 or older can provide written consent for diploma decisions.

Community Involvement:

The policy mandates annual communication with families starting in grade 5 for students with qualifying histories. However, it does not clearly state how broader community engagement or culturally specific outreach is conducted—this is an area for improvement.

Process

Does the policy, program, or decision improve, worsen, or make no change to existing disparities?

Does it create other unintended consequences?

Impact on Disparities:

The policy is designed to reduce disparities by providing flexible graduation options for students facing systemic barriers. When implemented equitably, it can improve outcomes for marginalized groups.

Unintended Consequences:

- Students may be unintentionally tracked into lower-opportunity pathways.
- Non-standard diplomas may limit future access to college, employment, or the military.
- Stigma around modified or extended diplomas can affect student confidence and motivation.



Plan

How will you reduce the negative impacts and address the barriers?

To reduce negative impacts and address barriers:

- **Ensure informed decision-making** by providing translated, accessible information and guidance to students and families.
- **Monitor data** disaggregated by race, disability, and program placement to prevent inequitable tracking.
- **Provide staff training** on diploma options, implicit bias, and family engagement.
- **Promote inclusive practices** that value all diploma types while supporting pathways to postsecondary success.