

## Core Diploma Program

### **Background:**

A Core Diploma should not be available to all students. It is designed to meet the needs to students who have undergone extreme circumstances in their lives which may jeopardize their opportunity to graduate from a high school.

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.

### **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.

### **Recommended Action:**

I recommend the board move to approve and authorize the Core Diploma Program.

## 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 re-engagement 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.