

## **GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

MSAD 8 has implemented a proficiency-based system of learning. To be awarded a high school diploma from Vinalhaven School, students graduating in the Class of 2020 and beyond will demonstrate proficiency in the eight content areas identified in Maine’s system of Learning Results, meet the cross-content performance standards set forth in the Guiding Principles of the Learning Results, and fulfill all additional graduation requirements set by the School Board.

The Principal will inform students and parents as soon as practicable of any State-imposed proficiency standards/requirements that must be met before students may be awarded a high school diploma.

Students are required to demonstrate proficiency in the graduation standards and associated indicators as published in the school’s proficiency based curriculum documents. The calculation of proficiency is defined in Policy IKA-1 and detailed in the Student Handbook and will be determined by the appropriate high school subject/content teacher regardless of the approved pathway used to meet the graduation standard.

Vinalhaven School’s high school educational program is designed to enable students to satisfy graduation requirements in four years through a sequence of educational courses providing opportunities to gain and demonstrate proficiency in school graduation standards, content areas of the Learning Results, and in the cross-content Guiding Principles of the Learning Results.

Students following a traditional pathway will demonstrate graduation standard proficiency in:

- A. the content areas of English Language Arts and Science in each year of their high school program,  
(8 full year courses)
- B. at least 3 full year courses in the content areas of math and social studies during their high school program, one of which must include U.S. History as per state law.  
(6 full year courses)
- C. at least one full year course (or two semesters) in the content areas of visual and performing arts: any combination of band, music, art, or theater\  
(1 full year course equivalent.)
- D. at least 1 full year course in world languages during their high school program  
(1 full year course)
- E. at least **(one semester)** course of health, and 1 full year course (or two semesters) of physical education courses during their high school program,  
**full year course equivalent)**

- F. at least **(one semester)** computer science course during their high school program  
**(1 semester course)**
- G. 1 full credit of community engagement activity (KnowledgeQuest, Pecha Kucha, or other approved activity)  
  
(1 full year course equivalent/.25 per year but not part of the student's published schedule)
- H. at least **(4)** elective full year (or **(8)** semesters) courses (arts, world language, vocational, or other electives including Alternative Pathway Experiences)  
  
**(4)** full year course equivalents

Total Credits: **(Total number of required credits changed to 23. Each semester course is considered a ½ credit)**

Total Courses: **(Total number of required course credits is 22)**

Students following a traditional pathway must be enrolled in the equivalent of six full year courses alternative pathway experiences in each of their high school years.

**Alternative Pathway Experiences:** Students may also gain and demonstrate proficiency in the graduation standards and meet graduation requirements through:

- A. early college/dual enrollment courses (see policy IHCDA),
- B. career and technical education programming,
- C. online/virtual learning,
- D. apprenticeships, internships and/or field work,
- E. community service,
- F. exchange programs,
- G. independent study,
- H. alternative education/“At Risk” programming, and

I. adult education.

Any alternative pathway must be clearly mapped to content and graduation standards, commensurate with the student's grade, age, and skill level.

Each pathway must provide a quality learning experience comparable in rigor to the school unit's own educational experience (course) offerings and provide assessments which measure the student's progress toward meeting agreed school graduation standards.

In order to pursue one or more of the multiple/alternative pathways, a student must have a Personal Learning Plan detailing how the pathway will provide exposure to the content standards of the Learning Results and/or the Guiding Principles and how the student will demonstrate proficiency in meeting school graduation standards. The personal learning plan must be recommended by the Guidance Counselor, content area specialist, and approved by the Principal.

The Superintendent or his/her designee will develop and publish detailed guidelines and processes for the development, approval, and monitoring of alternative pathways.

### **STUDENTS RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES**

A student with a disability, as identified in 20-A MRSA §7001(1-B), who achieves proficiency as required in 20-A MRSA §4722-A(1), as specified by the goals and objectives of the student's individualized education plan (IEP) will be awarded a diploma.

### **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS APPLICABLE TO THE AWARDING OF A DIPLOMA FROM VINALHAVEN SCHOOL**

A. Transfer Students

For students who transfer to Vinalhaven School from another state or from an educational program that is not required to be aligned with the content standards of the system of Learning Results and Common Core, the Vinalhaven School Principal with advice from the content area specialist shall determine the value of the student's prior educational experience towards meeting graduation requirements. Students will take placement tests for core content areas to determine proper class assignments.

B. Home-schooled Students

For previously home-schooled students wishing to receive a diploma from Vinalhaven School, the Vinalhaven School Principal with advice from the content area specialist shall determine the value of the student's prior educational experience toward meeting graduation credit requirements. A home-schooled student must have attended Vinalhaven School for a minimum of 2 full semesters (175 student days) immediately prior to graduation in order to receive a Vinalhaven School diploma. Students will take placement tests for core content areas to determine proper class assignments.

C. Delayed Awarding of Diplomas

A student who leaves Vinalhaven School to attend an accredited, degree-granting institution of higher education may upon satisfactory completion of the freshman year be awarded a high school diploma, provided that the student has notified the principal at the time of the early admission.

#### D. Early Awarding of Diplomas

A student who has met the State's and the School Committee's diploma requirements in fewer than four years of high school may be awarded a diploma.

#### E. Extended Study

Students are eligible for extended years of study to complete the requirements of a diploma if they have not reached the age of 20 at the start of the school year. Students eligible for extended years of study may be referred to adult education or other resources suitable to young learners. Extended study for students with disabilities shall be specified in the student's Individualized Education Plan.

#### F. Certificate of Attendance

The School Committee may provide a certificate of attendance to a student who leaves school having completed four years attendance as a full-time high school student but has not met all graduation requirements set forth in this policy.

#### G. Participation in Graduation Ceremony

A student must complete all School Board requirements for a high school diploma or certificate of attendance prior to the graduation ceremony in order to participate in graduation exercises. In addition, the student must have returned all school property and paid all fees and debts in order to participate in the graduation ceremony.

#### H. Honors and Awards at Graduation

In order to be eligible for honors or awards based wholly or in part on academic achievement (e.g., valedictorian, salutatorian, class speaker, "Top 10"), a student must have been enrolled full time at Vinalhaven School during **the full year (175 student days) preceding graduation. Students who do not meet this** enrollment requirement will not be "ranked" for the purpose of determining eligibility for graduation honors, awards, or scholarships.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRSA § 4502(8), 4722, 6209  
Ch. 127 § 7 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rule)

Cross Reference: IHCDA – Post-Secondary Enrollment Options

## CREDIT and GPA calculation

Adopted: April 15, 2015

Revised: June, 2018 to be implemented in July 2018 for the classes of 2020 and beyond.

Revised May 2021 to be effective immediately.