

Greater Albany SD 8J Administrative Regulation

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Guidelines for the Implementation of Graduation Requirement Options

The Board seeks to serve the academic, social, emotional and aesthetic needs of all students. To serve these needs, the Board has established standards for graduation which include credit and attendance requirements. The district also recognizes certain options to the graduation requirements. Those options are explained in Board policy and administration regulations and include consideration of:

- Individual graduation plans;
- Diploma options for special education students;
- Diploma options for foreign exchange students;
- Alternatives for earning credit including independent study, off campus experiences and other planned learning experiences;
- Credit by assessment;
- Early and delayed graduation.

I. Individual Graduation Plans

The Board may approve individual graduation plans (IGP) tailored to the needs of individual students as they prepare for a vocation or post-secondary education. Students, together with their parents or guardians¹ and high school counselors, may design a four year graduation plan which varies from the regular requirements, but which still includes at least 24 credits, reflects the student's career and educational goals and is compatible with the educational goals and objectives of the district.

While details of the procedures, the forms and additional information regarding IGPs are available in each high school counseling center, the general process of developing and approving IGPs includes:

- A. A clear declaration by the student of his/her career or vocational goals;
- B. Research by the student to establish evidence of the content of the educational program appropriate to those career or vocational goals;
- C. Identification of necessary educational content that cannot be met under the traditional graduation plan;

¹As used in this document, the term parent includes legal guardian or person in a parental relationship. The status and duties of a legal guardian are defined in ORS 125.005 (4) and 125.300 - 125.325. The determination of whether an individual is acting in a parental relationship, for purposes of determining residency, depends on the evaluation of the factors listed in ORS 419B.373. The determination for other purposes depends on evaluation of those factors and a power of attorney executed pursuant to ORS 109.056. For special education students, parent also includes a surrogate parent, an adult student whom rights have transferred and foster parent as defined in OAR 581-015-0005(18).

- D. Cooperation of the student, the parent or guardian and the counselor in developing the IGP. That cooperation will include attendance at a minimum of three conferences dedicated to establishing the IGP;
- E. Acceptance and approval of the IGP by the student, the parent or guardian, the counselor, the principal, the assistant superintendent and the Board.

II. Diploma Options for Special Education Students

Prior to the entry of a special education student into high school, the transition team will discuss diploma options with the student and his/her parents or guardians. If, at any point during high school, one of the diploma options is considered more appropriate, the multidisciplinary team will again share its recommendation with the student and parents or guardians.

- A. Parents or guardians should be told about required areas of study which constitute the 24 unit graduation requirement.
- B. Parents should be told about the three diploma options available to special education students.
- C. Parent approval of the “Declaration of Intent” form must be obtained and documented.

The following should be reviewed by the transition team before a recommendation is made:

- A. The student’s current psychological data;
- B. The student’s ability;
- C. The student’s current level of performance;
- D. The student’s current credit status (when appropriate).

Options will be reviewed and updated at 9th, 10th and 11th grade annual reviews.

When a special education student transfers into the district, after completion of the eighth grade, the student must have a “Declaration of Intent” included with his/her original IEP preparation.

III. Diploma Options for Foreign Exchange Students

The option of earning an honorary diploma in place of a regular diploma is available only to students who:

- A. Are attending a district high school as a participant in a recognized and district-approved international student exchange program;
- B. Have senior status.

Students who do not meet these requirements will be expected to pursue regular diploma requirements.

It is important that eligible foreign exchange students work with their host families and school counselor to declare their intention to earn either a regular or honorary diploma. That declaration

needs to be made in writing by the end of the student’s second week of enrollment in the high school.

IV. Alternatives for Earning Credit Including Independent Study, Off-campus Experiences and Other Planned Learning Experiences

A. Independent Study

The course of study pursued by the student can be of two types. In either case, regulation of the program and monitoring by the building principal will guarantee the integrity of the credit earned in the program.

1. Existing Courses:

- a. Independent study cannot be used to make up credits for courses previously failed;
- b. Students who desire to pursue an existing course through independent study must establish the need for this approach and secure the recommendation of the counselor and the approval of the building principal;
- c. A cooperating teacher from the chosen subject area is located who will provide direction, supervision and evaluation in the approved course of study;
- d. The cooperating teacher and the student together accept the responsibility for:
 - (1) Establishing a written statement of expectations and objectives for the particular independent study program including a completion date;
 - (2) Describing learning activities to be completed in the program;
 - (3) Listing learning materials to be used in the program;
 - (4) Agreeing on a time and place for student study;
 - (5) Establishing a system for monitoring student involvement;
 - (6) Evaluating learning.
- e. The building principal’s approval of the entire program is required at this point.
- f. At the conclusion of the program or at the completion date, the cooperating teacher shall deliver to the principal a final grade and recommend credit to be awarded.

2. Courses **Not** in the Regular Curriculum

- a. With the variety of opportunities available under other graduation requirement options (such as “credit for off campus experience”) and the highly flexible nature of other school programs, it is expected that the necessity for offering courses not in the regular curriculum through independent study will be limited. As a consequence, stringent requirements will be enforced to guarantee the integrity and necessity of credits earned this way.
- b. The building principal will be responsible for approving any program initiated under this option.

- c. The student who desires to take a course not in the regular curriculum through independent study must have approval of parent or guardian and counselor. Also, the student must find a cooperating teacher with expertise in the general subject area of the proposed course.
- d. Student works with that cooperating teacher to complete a contract establishing objectives, general course of study, credit expectations and a timeline for involvement in the program.
- e. The completed contract is submitted to the building principal, who, in cooperation with the district's assistant superintendent, reviews and acts on the proposal.
- f. Upon approval of the contract the cooperating teacher and the student shall establish:
 - (1) A time and place for student study;
 - (2) A systematic monitoring and evaluation process for checking student involvement and progress in the program.
- g. Upon conclusion of the program or the completion date, the teacher shall deliver to the building principal a final report indicating recommendation for grade and grades to be awarded for including on the student's records.

B. Off-Campus Experiences

1. Simultaneous Enrollment in Another Educational Institution

Occasionally, students find it desirable to register in courses at other education institutions. This occurs in cases where a student is pursuing a planned program of educational development and finds that district curriculum and course schedules do not fit his/her needs. In those cases, effort should be made to satisfy the needs of the student while at the same time ensuring that the quality of education meets requirements suitable for the awarding of the high school credits and diploma. In particular:

- a. The district will assume no responsibility for any cost to the student arising from simultaneous enrollment;
- b. Credits from community colleges and state universities may be accepted as credit towards graduation if they meet the criteria established by the minimum state requirements for graduation as follows: 130 clock hours of instruction in a planned course shall be the minimum requirement for granting one unit of credit. For colleges courses, the clock hours are a combination of the hours spent in class and the hours of expected study outside the classroom. (Note: For high school continuation or equivalency courses, 1 college credit = .25 high school units, 3 college credits = .50 high school units. The units awarded are determined by the building principal and counselor.);
- c. High school credit may be granted for courses completed at other state accredited or licensed educational institutions. However, the burden of proof that these

institutions meet local and state requirements rests with that institution. Credits earned from such enrollment will follow the 130 clock hour rules stated in b. above;

- d. If an equivalent course or program is available in the student's school, the permission for enrollment at another institution will be withheld unless unreconcilable schedule conflicts exist;
- e. In order to maintain status as a student in district schools in pursuit of a diploma, the student will be expected to enroll in courses that will fulfill graduation requirements;
- f. Any student seeking permission for enrollment in courses for educational institutions must establish a planned education program and submit that program with signed parental/guardian approval to the building principal for review. The principal will act on the program based on (a) the quality of the proposed program, (b) the opportunities beyond what is otherwise available to the student in the district and (c) the appropriateness of the program to the student's needs and ability;
- g. A notation of the source of units and grades earned at other educational institutions will be recorded on the student's transcript. Official statements of student achievement must be received from the institutions, recorded on the transcript and placed in the student's permanent file. These units and grades will be included in calculation of student grade point averages.

2. Work Training Program

a. Directed Co-op Work Experience

Directed co-op work experience provides an opportunity for students to explore career interests. The work experience program should serve as a practical laboratory for reinforcing and supplementing in-school career training, particularly coursework in a designated career pathway. The student generally receives pay and school credit for successful participation.

(1) Responsibility of the student:

- (a) The student must have parental/guardian permission;
- (b) The student is responsible for transportation to and from work;
- (c) The student must have a work permit if required by law;
- (d) The job must contribute toward meeting the student's career goals and be related to the student's educational program. The student must be enrolled in a related upper level career pathway class;
- (e) The student must be making reasonable progress towards graduation;
- (f) Application must be made to the school's work experience coordinator. Both the student and the job must have the approval of that coordinator;

- (g) The student should work at least 25 hours per 6-week term and 75 hours per semester to earn .5 credits;
 - (h) Loss of job or significant change in working hours must be reported to the work experience coordinator immediately.
- (2) Responsibility of the school:
- (a) The school may assist the student in locating appropriate employment;
 - (b) If the job is associated with a particular career pathway area, a teacher from that area will cooperate with the work experience coordinator to relate the job experience with classroom activities and career-related standards;
 - (c) Release time from school is limited to two periods per day;
 - (d) A maximum of two units of credit will be granted;
 - (e) Student must make application with the work experience coordinator and receive the approval of the building principal and appropriate career pathway teacher(s);
 - (f) Grades will be pass/no pass.
- (3) Other criteria:
- (a) The district is not liable for the student while he/she is on the job;
 - (b) The district will not provide personal liability insurance;
 - (c) The employer must meet state and federal employment regulations.
- (4) General work experience:
- (a) Senior students may accept employment within an area of choice which will help develop desirable attitudes toward formal education and job success. A student may receive pay from the employer and a maximum of one period of release time from school per day for successful participation;
 - (b) The school will not give credit for this option;
 - (c) The student will be responsible for locating employment and providing evidence of continuous employment. The student must also have parent or guardian permission and continue to make reasonable progress towards graduation to remain in the program.
- (5) Internships:

A student may gain insights and skills relating to the world of work by participating in an internship experience at an off-campus work site. Internships differ from co-op work experience programs in that they do not

require enrollment in related courses on campus. They may or may not provide pay to the student. They do provide credit for the student involved.

Requirements for internship experiences include:

- (a) The student must have junior or senior status;
- (b) Arrangements for internships must be made in advance and have the approval of the building principal or designee prior to the student's participation;
- (c) A staff member will be designated as the school's liaison with the work site. The student will be required to make regular reports of activities and experiences;
- (d) The duration of the internship both in terms of the daily release time and the number of semesters of participation will depend on the relationship of the internship to the student's educational program;
- (e) The work site mentor or leader is not a district employee and may not have been subject to any certification or background screening. As a result, the district can assume no responsibility for the expertise or actions of that work site mentor or leader;
- (f) The student, parent or guardian and a work site representative must sign a statement recognizing and agreeing to the conditions of the internship experience as outlined in this administrative rule.

(6) Other planned learning experiences:

Students may be involved in meaningful learning experiences available within the community but not meet the requirements of the simultaneous enrollment or work training/internship programs. This typically involves students pursuing unique interests through organized or individualized opportunities within the community but outside of the regular school program or through extensive involvement in an organized extracurricular school activity. A student may earn credit in those cases where the experience satisfies the needs of the student while at the same time representing the quality of educational experience suitable for awarding of high school credits and diplomas.

In particular:

- (a) The student experience must compare with normal requirements of credit classes in terms of the time, effort and content to be considered for credit. Each potential experience will be evaluated by the high school administration and assigned appropriate credit ranging from 0.25 to 1.0 credits;

- (b) The student may be released from some attendance in the regular program to participate in an approved planned learning experience for credit;
- (c) Only elective credit may be earned through this option;
- (d) Grading of the planned experience will be on a pass/no pass basis. The student and parent or guardian will be informed of the potential impact of this grading scale on college entrance decisions;
- (e) The title of the experience and the grade will be displayed on the transcript of the student who successfully completes the experience;
- (f) The district will assume no responsibility for any costs either to the student or instructor/supervisor;
- (g) The individual, group or agency offering the learning opportunity must submit an application to be recognized as an approved learning experience.
 - (i) That application must be submitted six weeks prior to the semester for which release time or credit will be given.
 - (ii) That application must include:
 - a) A resume establishing the experience and expertise of the individual instructor or supervisor who will be working with the student;
 - b) A signed release enabling the district to complete a criminal records check with regards to that particular individual;
 - c) A statement of the goals, objectives and expected student outcomes for the experience;
 - d) A plan for the assessment of student progress;
 - e) A plan for reporting student progress to the school.
 - (iii) The high school principal or his/her designee will review the application and approve or disapprove the program.
 - (iv) The decisions of the principal or designee may be appealed to the assistant superintendent.
- (h) Students must apply to participate in approved learning experiences.
 - (i) The student application must be submitted prior to the beginning of the experience.
 - (ii) The application must include:
 - a) A statement of how the experience supports the student's individual goals and needs;

- b) A statement of the number of school periods/classes which will need to be waived in order for the student to participate;
- c) Signatures indicating the approval of the student’s parent or guardian and school counselor.
- (iii) The high school principal or his/her designee will review the student application and approve or disapprove the student’s participation and the potential credit to be earned. The principal will also designate the staff member who will provide liaison between the school and the particular learning experience.
- (iv) The decisions of the principal or designee may be appealed to the assistant superintendent for instruction.

V. Credits by Assessment

Some students who are capable of achieving the objectives of a particular course without actually participating in the class. As a consequence, students may apply to participate in an assessment activity to establish their competency in the subject matter of selected required courses and hence earn credit for the course.

- A. This will apply only for specific required courses selected by the high school administration in cooperation with the instructional department.
- B. A student wishing to challenge a course will be required to demonstrate competence in the class by completing a district-approved assessment with a pre-determined level of success.
- C. To be eligible to participate, students must have attained at least second semester eighth grade status but not beyond the second semester of their eleventh grade year. They must have the approval of their parent/guardian and/or counselor and complete an application form available in the high school counseling offices.
- D. The assessment activities will be scheduled by the high school administration and normally will be conducted during the last two weeks of each semester.
- E. A student who has received a failing grade in a course may not challenge that same course at a later time.
- F. A student may challenge any approved course only once.
- G. The district-approved assessment and grading criteria will be developed and approved by the district’s instructional department with input from teachers familiar with the course being challenged.
- H. Generally speaking, the grading scale will be pass/no pass. Where possible, the student will be given a choice between a pass/no pass or letter graded evaluation scale prior to the assessment. If the choice is the pass/no pass scale, the student and parent or guardian will be informed of its potential impact on college entrance decisions. The letter graded scale will provide for grades of A, B, C and no pass.
- I. The course title and the credit will be displayed on the transcript of successful students following the assessment process. The transcript entry will show the credit was earned through a challenge assessment.

- J. The building principal or designee will be responsible for monitoring this option, the proctoring of all assessments and the appropriate entries on student records.

VI. Early and Delayed Graduation

- A. Early graduation is the completion of credit requirements for graduation in less than 12 years. Early graduation should make it possible for students to take advantage of diverse learning opportunities outside of the school setting.

Students requesting early graduation must:

1. Meet credit requirements necessary to earn high school diploma;
2. Petition and receive approval for early graduation. The petition must be agreed upon by the principal, high school counselor and the student's parents or guardians. Petitioning students must be participants in these discussions.