

NEW MILFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION  
New Milford Public Schools  
50 East Street  
New Milford, Connecticut 06776

COMMITTEE ON LEARNING  
MEETING NOTICE

DATE: March 5, 2019  
TIME: 7:30 P.M.  
PLACE: Lillis Administration Building – Room 2

RECEIVED  
TOWN CLERK  
2019 MAR - 1 P 12: 07  
NEW MILFORD, CT

AGENDA

New Milford Public Schools Mission Statement

The mission of the New Milford Public Schools, a collaborative partnership of students, educators, family, and community is to prepare each and every student to compete and excel in an ever-changing world, embrace challenges with vigor, respect and appreciate the worth of every human being, and contribute to society by providing effective instruction and dynamic curriculum, offering a wide range of valuable experiences, and inspiring students to pursue their dreams and aspirations.

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Public Comment**

An individual may address the Board concerning any item on the agenda for the meeting subject to the following provisions:

- A. A three-minute time limit may be allocated to each speaker with a maximum of twenty minutes being set aside per meeting. The Board may, by a majority vote, cancel or adjust these time limits.
- B. If a member of the public comments about the performance of an employee or a Board member, whether positive, negative, or neutral, and whether named or not, the Board shall not respond to such comments unless the topic is an explicit item on the agenda and the employee or the Board member has been provided with the requisite notice and due process required by law. Similarly, in accordance with federal law pertaining to student confidentiality, the Board shall not respond to or otherwise discuss any comments that might be made pertaining to students.

3. **Discussion and Possible Action**
  - A. **Review and Approval of Curriculum**
    1. Advanced Creative Writing
    2. World Literature and Culture

4. **Item of Information**
  - A. Graduation Requirements

5. **Public Comment**

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shall not respond to or otherwise discuss any comments that might be made pertaining to students.

**6. Adjourn**

**Sub-Committee Members:** J.T. Schemm, Chairperson  
Angela C. Chastain  
Bill Dahl  
Tammy McInerney

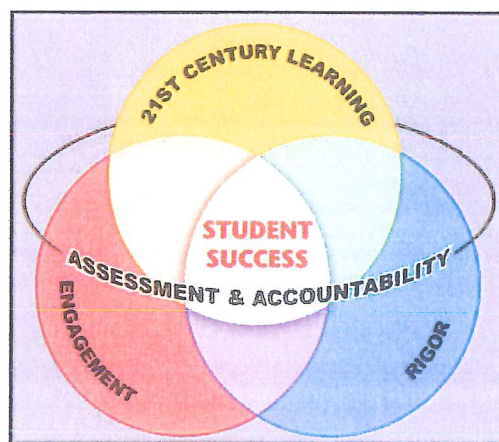
**Alternates:** Brian McCauley  
Wendy Faulenbach

# Graduation Requirement Proposal

Alisha DiCorpo, Assistant Superintendent  
Greg Shugrue, New Milford High School Principal

## Committee Members

Kevin Best - Math DC  
Bob Burkhart - PE Head Teacher  
Liz Curtis - AP  
Sara DelMastro - Science DC  
Kathy DelMonico - English DC  
Denise Duggan - Health DC  
Greg Holmes - Social Studies DC  
Danette Lambiase - Guidance Head Teacher  
Keith Lipinsky - AD  
Tracy Menzies - SPED Supervisor  
Linda Scoralick - AP  
Jessica Ward - World Language DC  
Eric Williams - AP



## The Road to 26 Credits

Prior Year 2015 Graduation Requirement was 22.5 Credits

In 2013 the following was proposed at COL

Year of Graduation 2015 (23.5 credits)

1. Increase PE Credit from 1 to 2

Year of Graduation 2016 (24.5 credits)

1. Capstone
2. 8.0 electives

Year of Graduation 2017 (26 Credits)

1. Increase math to 4 years
2. .5 Humanities Elective
3. Personal Finance Required as Course Elective
4. 8.0 electives

The following was ultimately adopted by the BOE (BOE #6146):

Year of Graduation 2015 (23.5 credits)

1. Increase PE Credit from 1 to 2

Year of Graduation 2016 (24.5 credits)

1. 8.0 electives

Year of Graduation 2017 (26 credits)

1. Increase math to 4 years
2. .5 Humanities Elective
3. Personal Finance Required as Course Elective
4. 8.5 Electives

## Impact of Legislation-Graduation Requirements

New Graduation Requirements: (c) "Commencing with classes graduating in 2023, and for each graduating class thereafter, no local or regional board of education shall permit any student to graduate from high school or grant a diploma to any student who has not satisfactorily completed a minimum of twenty-five credits, including not fewer than: (1) Nine credits in the humanities, including civics and the arts; (2) nine credits in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; (3) one credit in physical education and wellness; (4) one credit in health and safety education, as described in section 10-16b; (5) one credit in world languages, subject of the provisions of subsection (g) of this section; and (6) a one credit mastery-based diploma assessment."

—Public Act No.17-42; Sec. 1 (c)

## Paradigm Shift

Statute promotes pathways, individualism and choice

- Less about rigid restrictions in credit attainment (6 ways to distribute credits)
- Multiple methods to attain 1.0 credit beyond a Capstone to meet the Mastery Credit Requirement

With board approval allows for flexibility in credit attainment for courses taken at the middle school.

\*Maximum of 3 Credits at middle school to count as HS credit.\*

Pathways in HS are now aligned to that of a college and career experience grounded in student aspirations.

Student Choice, Voice, Opportunity

## Rationale for Change

- Flexible and Multiple Pathways to align to statute and provides more student choice
- Built on structures currently in place
- Greater alignment across disciplines
- Demonstration of mastery as prescribed in the law
- Change in world language and health requirements
- Help retain transfer students and students with credit recovery
- Reduction in credits to align with area districts (graduation rate/transient students)
  - Bethel 25 with capstone
  - Brookfield 25 No capstone
  - Danbury 25 proposed
  - Others currently under 25 (Masuk, Newtown, Pomperaug)

## Policies Reviewed

### 6146 (a-d) Proposed changes (HO#1)

- I. Academic Credit Distribution Requirements:(Pathways to Graduation Proposal): (HO#2)  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IsMrSVkkC1p-QqNc3O5B3Le1Z3F7LsE\\_6dtQQgKERs/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1IsMrSVkkC1p-QqNc3O5B3Le1Z3F7LsE_6dtQQgKERs/edit)
- (Mastery Based Credit Document): (HO#3)  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Kxls9oiY5F5F98EbbLre5J7oUXolOpO2U\\_Q-8lhC7Ls/edit?ts=5c79663f#heading=h.gjdgxs](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Kxls9oiY5F5F98EbbLre5J7oUXolOpO2U_Q-8lhC7Ls/edit?ts=5c79663f#heading=h.gjdgxs)
- Delete II-Performance Standards are in with Mastery Based Learning in New Proposal
- Delete III. Options if Graduation Requirements are Not Met are in with Mastery Based Learning in New Proposal
- IV.Exemptions, Modifications and Accommodations
  - C. should state as outlined in Public Act 17-42

## Policies Reviewed

### 6172.6 Virtual Learning Policy (HO#4)

- Can Transfer in 3 Credits with pre-approval (No Change Requested)

### 6141.4-Independent Study Policy-(Proposed Changes) (HO#5)

- Only available for BOE approved courses (Requesting to Change)#2 6141.1(a)
- We recommend connection to standards with pre-approval (Requesting Change) #2 6141.1(a)
- Currently for make up credits only-2 Maximum (Requesting to Leave)#7 6141.4(b)

## Discussion: Graduation Requirements

Pathways to Graduation Proposal Document: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lsMrSVkkC1p-QqNc3O5B3Le1Z3F7LsE\\_6dtQQgKERS/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1lsMrSVkkC1p-QqNc3O5B3Le1Z3F7LsE_6dtQQgKERS/edit)

Let's Discuss:

1. Pathways/Credit Number
2. Mastery Based Credit Requirement
3. Policy Changes Next Steps for Review
4. Next Steps for Committee work: COL and Internal committee

Questions?

# Instruction

## Graduation Requirements

To graduate from the New Milford Public Schools, a student must earn a minimum number of credits, fulfill credit distribution requirements and meet district performance standards.

### I. Academic credit distribution requirements

A. Students must complete the following credits:

Year of Graduation 2013, 2014	4.0 English 3.0 Mathematics 3.0 Social Studies (including 0.5 credit in civics and 1 credit for U.S. history) 3.0 Science 1.0 Physical Education 1.0 Arts (Fine or Practical) 0.5 Health 7.0 Electives <hr/> 22.5 TOTAL CREDITS
Year of Graduation 2015	4.0 English 3.0 Mathematics 3.0 Social Studies (including 0.5 credit in civics and 1 credit for U.S. history) 3.0 Science 2.0 Physical Education 1.0 Arts (Fine or Practical) 0.5 Health 7.0 Electives <hr/> 23.5 TOTAL CREDITS
Year of Graduation 2016	4.0 English 3.0 Mathematics 3.0 Social Studies (including 0.5 credit in civics and 1 credit for U.S. history) 3.0 Science 2.0 Physical Education 1.0 Arts (Fine or Practical) 0.5 Health 8.0 Electives (including 0.5 in humanities) <hr/> 24.5 TOTAL CREDITS



## Instruction

### Graduation Requirements

Year of Graduation 2017	4.0	English
	4.0	Mathematics
	3.0	Social Studies (including 0.5 credit in civics and 1 credit for U.S. history)
	3.0	Science
	2.0	Physical Education
	1.0	Arts (Fine or Practical)
	0.5	Health
	8.5	Electives (including 0.5 in humanities and 0.5 in Financial Literacy)
		26.0 TOTAL CREDITS

- B. A credit shall consist of not less than the equivalent of a forty-minute class period for each school day of a school year unless such credit is earned at an institution accredited by the Department of Higher Education or regionally accredited.

#### II. District's performance standards

These performance standards identify the basic skills that students are expected to achieve in order to graduate. A New Milford High School graduate must complete all academic requirements and demonstrate basic skills in Reading & Writing, Quantitative Thinking (Math & Science) and Information Literacy. The Superintendent of Schools or designee shall develop administrative regulations regarding performance standards for each basic skill, including the method(s) of assessing a student's level of competency in such skills. The assessment criteria must include, but not be based exclusively on, the results of the state or national high school state-wide mastery examination.

#### III. Options if graduation requirements are not met

The Board of Education is dedicated to providing students who may have difficulty fulfilling these requirements with different options and multiple opportunities to meet the academic and performance standards for graduation.

Those students who have not successfully completed the assessment criteria will be afforded alternative means of meeting this criteria. The following is not an inclusive list:

- Pass 0.5 credit of English 4
- Completion of a research project, approved in advance by the Science Department, that involves data collection, and is graded according to an established rubric
- Pass Departmental Exam covering the topics of arithmetic, algebra, geometry and statistics

## Instruction

### Graduation Requirements

#### III. Options if graduation requirements are not met (cont.)

- Pass 0.5 credit of Practical Math
- English Writing SAT I of 450 or better
- Math Reasoning SAT I of 450 or better
- Math SAT II Math Level 1C of 450 or better

Seniors who are not eligible for graduation with their class due to a failure to meet the district graduation requirements in one or more subjects may select one of the following options:

1. Successful completion of a summer course or summer courses comparable (as determined by the Principal) to the subject(s) in which the student was deficient
2. Enroll in an on-line course in accordance with Policy 6172.6 (Virtual/On-line Courses/College/University Courses)
3. Make arrangement for re-testing to meet performance standards
4. Return to school in September as a fifth year senior

#### IV. Exemptions, modifications, and accommodations

- A. If a physician or advanced practice registered nurse certifies in writing that the physical education requirement is medically contraindicated because of the physical condition of the student, this requirement may be fulfilled by an elective.
- B. Exemptions; modifications and accommodations of graduation requirements will be made for any student with a disability as determined by the planning and placement team or 504 team.
- C. Only credits for courses taken in grades nine through twelve shall satisfy graduation requirements except that the Superintendent of Schools or designee may grant credit for certain courses identified in subsection (e) of Section 10-221a of the Connecticut General Statutes.
- D. The Board may permit a student to graduate during a period of expulsion pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes 10-233d if the Board determines that the student has satisfactorily completed the necessary credits for graduation.
- E. In accordance with state law, the Board of Education may award a high school diploma to a veteran of World War II, the Korean hostilities, or the Vietnam Era who left high school to serve in the armed forces and did not receive a diploma as a consequence of such service as well as any person who withdrew from high school prior to graduation to work in a job that assisted the war effort during World War II, did not receive a diploma as a consequence of such work and has resided in the state for at least fifty consecutive years.

## Instruction

### Graduation Requirements

#### Early Graduation

Students may finish in seven semesters provided all graduation requirements have been satisfied. Any student interested in being considered for early graduation must notify his/her counselor of his/her intentions by May 1 of the junior year. Students applying for early graduation must obtain the Early Graduation Policy statement and related application form from the Guidance Office and take course no. 990.

Course No.	Course	Prerequisites
990	Early Graduation	By Special Arrangement Only

(cf. 5121 - Examination/Grading/Rating)  
 (cf. 5123 - Promotion/Acceleration/Retention)  
 (cf. 6111 - School Calendar)  
 (cf. 6145.6 - Travel and Exchange Programs)  
 (cf. 6142.2 - Statewide Proficiency/Mastery Examinations)

Legal reference:	Connecticut General Statutes
10-14n	State-wide mastery examination
10-161	Establishment of graduation date
10-18	Courses in United States history, government and duties and responsibilities of citizenship
10-19	Teaching about alcohol, nicotine or tobacco, drugs and acquired immune deficiency syndrome
10-221a	High school graduation requirements
10-223a	Promotion and graduation policies. Basic skills necessary for graduation, assessment process

Policy adopted: June 10, 2003  
 Policy revised: June 27, 2005  
 Policy revised: June 8, 2010  
 Policy revised: October 11, 2011  
 Policy revised: September 10, 2013  
 Policy revised: October 8, 2013

NEW MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
 New Milford, Connecticut

## Proposed Pathways to New Milford High School Graduation

PA 17-42 places significant emphasis on flexibility and multiple pathways for students. These pathways better prepare students to pursue their aspirations and dreams. Through more flexibility and student choice it is our goal that a graduate leaves New Milford High School prepared to successfully tackle the challenges laid before them.

### Pathways for the NMHS Graduate:

**Two Year College/Career Ready Pathway:** Minimum requirement is a high school diploma and attainment of the distribution of credits as prescribed. It is recommended that the student take the most personally challenging course load during their high school tenure and integrate work in the field whenever possible (internships, job shadowing, work, etc.)

**Four Year College Pathway:** Minimum requirement is a high school diploma and attainment of the distribution of credits as prescribed. Most four-year colleges require that the graduate take four credits in English and math, three credits in science and social studies, and at least two credits in a world language.

**Highly Competitive Colleges Pathway:** Minimum requirement is a high school diploma and attainment of the distribution of credits as prescribed. Most highly competitive colleges require that the graduate take four credits in English, math, science and social studies, and at least three credits in a world language. It is also highly encouraged that the level of these courses be at the Advanced Placement level and at the very least honors level when available.

### # of Credits Required

Graduation Requirements-Current	Graduation Requirements Proposed
4 English	<b>Humanities Cluster: 9 Credits</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No less than 3 credits in English and</li> <li>● No less than 3 credits in Social Studies. (Must include 1.0 credit in US History and .5 credit in Civics) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ English I, II, III/AP (3 Credits)</li> <li>○ US History (1 Credit)</li> <li>○ Civics/Modern America (.5 Credit)</li> <li>○ 1.5 credits in Social Studies (See Page 27)</li> <li>○ 3 credits of student choice (additional English, Social Studies, Level 4 or above in World Language, Art History, History of Jazz, History of American Musical Theater)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

3 Social Studies including .5 credit in Civics and 1 credit for US History	Included Above
4 Math	<p><b>STEM Cluster: 9 Credits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No less than 3 credits each in Science and Math <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Integrated Science, Biology, Chemistry (3 Credits)</li> <li>○ 3 Credits in Math</li> <li>○ 3 Credits of student choice (additional Science, Math, Tech. Ed., Intro to Business, Computer Literacy, Business Computer Applications, Website Design I&amp;II, Intro to Computer Programming, AP Computer Science A, AP Computer Science Principles)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Credit awarded for Math courses of Algebra 1 or higher taken at the middle school with a minimum grade of B- (80)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>*No more than 3 credits at the MS?*</p>
3 Science	Included Above
2 Physical Education	<p><b>Health &amp; Wellness: 2 Credits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Physical Education 1 Credit</li> <li>● Health &amp; Safety Education 1 Credit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All students take Health 1 .5 Credit</li> <li>○ Grade 10 – 12 Students .5 Credit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ *Health 2 (.5)</li> <li>▪ Allied Health (.5)</li> <li>▪ Medical Technology (.5)</li> <li>▪ Emergency Medical Technician (.5)</li> <li>▪ Sports Medicine (.5)</li> <li>▪ Early Childhood (.5)</li> <li>▪ Child Development (.5)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>
.5 Health	Included Above
1 Arts	

	<p><b>World Language Cluster: 1 Credit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Credit awarded for successful completion (B-/80) of Part A &amp; Part B of the same language course from grades 7 &amp; 8</li> <li>● Successful completion of any world language course listed on page 38 &amp;39 of the Program of Studies</li> </ul>
8.5 Electives Including .5 Humanities and .5 in Financial Literacy	<p><b>Electives Cluster: 3 Credits</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Personal Finance (.5) Required by state law)</li> <li>● 2.5 Credits of student choice</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Master Based: 1 Credit-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● .5 Credit in Assured Skills Experiences</li> <li>● .5 Credit in Assured Content Experiences</li> </ul>
26 Credits Total	25 Credits Total

## Mastery Base Credit Proposal

**Mastery Base credit (1.0 credit)** is demonstrated in two parts: Assured Skills Experiences (.5 credit) and Assured Content Experiences (.5 credit).

- Assured Skills Experiences are demonstrated in the embedded performance based assessments in each course developed by the NMHS faculty aligned with core standards and the NMBOE approved curriculum. Successful completion of the student's pathway will result in the awarded of .5 credit.
- Assured Content Experiences
  - **Complete one option in two of the three sections below:**

### Mathematics

Meet the State of Connecticut expectations for grade 11 proficiency on the math portion of the PSAT, SAT, or ACT.

Provide evidence of proficiency on a nationally recognized math assessment

Pass a competency-based assessment to demonstrate proficiency in math

Score a 3 or higher on Advanced Placement Calculus AB, Advanced Placement BC or Advanced Placement Statistics

Independent study based on mutually agreed goals and learning objectives that were not met through state assessments

Scheduled to Scientific Based Intervention (SRBI) for .5 credit

### Evidence Based Reading and Writing

Meet the State of Connecticut expectations for grade 11 proficiency on the Evidence Based Reading and Writing of the PSAT, SAT, or ACT.

Pass a competency-based assessment to demonstrate proficiency in reading

For English Language Learners who live in Connecticut for fewer than five years, a score of proficiency or above on the State English Mastery exam designed for this population.

Score a 3 or higher on Advanced Placement Language & Composition or Advanced Placement Literature & Composition

Independent study based on mutually agreed goals and learning objectives that were not met through state assessments

Scheduled to Scientific Based Intervention (SRBI) for .5 credit

### Content Mastery

Placement in state or national competitions in a content area, ie. DECA, FBLA

Proficiency scores on other content area assessments which are approved by curriculum departments

Proficiency scores in state assessments ie. NGSS, Seal of Biliteracy

Score a 3 or higher on content Advanced Placement exam (other than Math or English)

Complete a course internship in a field of study, employment opportunity, or volunteer role.

### Additional Considerations

#### Transfers

If a student transfers to New Milford High School after completing three (3) years of high school elsewhere, he/she is exempt from NMHS Assured Content Skills Experience requirement, but not exempt from the Assured Skills Experiences.

#### Notification: Teacher, Students, and Parents

By August before the start of the Senior Year, the guidance department will formally notify students, their teachers, and their parents or guardians, if the district's standard has not been met in the areas of Mastery-Based Content Experiences. A plan will be put in place to assist the student in successful completion of an alternate pathway.

#### Options

If a student does not meet the credits required for graduation, he or she may return to the high school for a fifth year, enroll in summer school, or enroll in other course options all to be pre-approved by the principal.



## Instruction

### Virtual/Online Courses/College/University Courses

The Board of Education believes that education through virtual/on-line courses or through university or college courses is an effective means of instruction for students. A virtual school is hereby defined as an educational organization that offers courses at various grade levels through Internet or Web-based methods. These schools can offer courses to enhance, supplement or enrich the existing curriculum and can also provide an alternative means of instruction. Interactive learning does not require the student to be physically present in the same location as the instructor or other students.

Virtual/on-line courses will be part of this District's educational program delivery system to increase accessibility and flexibility in the delivery of instruction. In addition to regular classroom-based instruction, students in the District may earn credit through programs provided by virtual/on-line courses.

All virtual/on-line educational programs and courses will be consistent with District instructional goals and aligned with Connecticut's academic standards, curriculum frameworks and assessments. The administration is directed to periodically review instructional materials of virtual on-line courses to ensure they meet program standards.

The Board of Education recognizes students may benefit from on-line courses or post-secondary courses to assist students in obtaining credits necessary to earn a New Milford High School diploma, to maintain academic standing, or to provide enrichment for those who might require special courses.

The District will not use on-line courses as the sole medium for instruction in any required subject area for students in grades K-8.

High school students may earn a maximum of three (3) units of academic credit to be applied toward graduation requirements by completing on-line or virtual courses or university/college courses through agencies approved by the Board unless the principal waives that provision in writing stating the reasons why, citing whatever circumstances that has caused this waiver.

Credits from an on-line or virtual course or a university/college course may be earned toward graduation only in the following circumstances:

1. The workload required by the on-line course is equivalent to that of a similar course taught in a traditional classroom setting.

## Instruction

### Virtual/Online Courses/College/University Courses (continued)

2. The content is rigorous and aligned with curriculum guidelines approved by the State Board of Education, where appropriate.
3. The course engages students and has interactive components, which may include, but are not limited to, required interactions between students and their teachers, participation in on-line demonstrations, discussion boards or virtual labs.
4. The program of instruction for such on-line coursework is planned, ongoing and systematic.
5. The courses are (a) taught by teachers who are certified in the state or another state and have received training on teaching in an on-line environment, or (b) offered by institutions of higher education that are accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or State Board of Education or regionally accredited;
6. The course is not offered at the District's high school.
7. The high school does offer the course, but the student is unable to take it due to an unavoidable schedule conflict.
8. The course will serve as an alternative or a supplement to extended homebound instruction.
9. The District has expelled the student from the regular school setting, and the student has been offered an alternative educational opportunity.
10. The Principal, with agreement from the student's teachers and parents/guardians, determines the student requires a differentiated or accelerated learning environment.
11. A student has failed a course and wishes to recover credits in that course area.
12. The student's PPT or Section 504 Team has determined it to be an appropriate means of instruction.

As determined by Board/school policy, students applying for permission to take a virtual course will do the following:

- Complete prerequisites and provide teacher/counselor recommendations to confirm the student possesses the maturity level needed to function effectively in an on-line/college learning environment.

## Instruction

### Virtual/Online Courses/College/University Courses (continued)

- Obtain the written approval of the Principal or his/her designee before a student enrolls in a virtual course or the university/college course.
- Adhere to the District code of conduct to include rules of behavior and consequences for violations.
- Adhere to attendance requirements of the District.
- Understand that any and all fees imposed on the learner are the sole responsibility of the learner and not the New Milford Board of Education or its designee.

The school must receive an official record of the final grade before awarding credit toward graduation. Only approved courses shall be posted on student transcripts.

Students will have access to sufficient library media resources such as a “virtual library” available through the World Wide Web, laboratory facilities, technical assistance, and hands-on training and information.

- Approval of any course shall be based upon its compliance with Connecticut’s academic standards and requirements.

On-line course delivery must be from institutions accredited by the new England Association of Schools and Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges or Western Association of Schools and Colleges or, if the institution is foreign, recognized by the Connecticut State Department of Education as having appropriate academic standards.

Legal Ref: Connecticut General Statutes Section  
10-221 (Board of Education to prescribe rules, policies and procedures)  
10-221a High school graduation requirements. Student support and remedial services.

Policy adopted: December 9, 2008  
Policy revised: March 12, 2013

NEW MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
New Milford, Connecticut

#5

6141.4(a)

## Instruction

### Independent Study

To meet the needs of extremely capable and highly motivated students, the Board of Education hereby establishes the following policy with respect to The Independent Study Programs at New Milford High School.

This policy is to provide equity as well as opportunities for all students who need to make up credits and is limited in scope to the following criteria and falls under the discretion of the High School Principal.

*to broaden opportunities for students to pursue study in courses not currently offered at NMHS.*

1. Independent Study proposals will be presented to the Principal or his/her designee prior to the school year or semester the independent study is to occur. Approval must be obtained from the Principal before the second week of the school year or semester. If a proposal is submitted subsequent to the second week of the semester, the Superintendent may approve the proposal, if the High School Principal can show cause as to why the time frame outlined above should be waived.

2. Independent Study ordinarily will be available only for approved Board of Education Courses. If a student submits a proposal which goes beyond the regular school curriculum, that student must have a record of outstanding responsibility and motivation in their academic pursuits.

*and for courses not listed in the program of studies with written prior approval from both the Dept Chair and*

3. The proposal must have a faculty sponsor certified in the area most closely associated with the Independent Study proposal. The staff member who guides and lends technical support does so voluntarily and not in lieu of any other assignment. *the admin.*

4. The Independent Study course is classified as an elective. It may not supplant any required high school class/course without first obtaining a waiver from the High School Principal.

5. Independent Study credits must be judged to require equivalent commitment of time and must be certified by the faculty sponsor.

6. An assessment component of the Independent Study proposal must be clearly delineated. A portfolio, performance or exam are acceptable assessment vehicles. The sponsoring staff member will conduct an assessment or review any outside assessment agreed upon as a prior part of the Independent Study proposal. The sponsor must approve the level of work in the project in order for any credit to be awarded.

## **Instruction**

### **Independent Study**

7. A maximum number of two (2) Independent Study credits may be earned by an individual unless, based upon the unique needs or circumstances of the student, the Superintendent of Schools has first granted approval to any plan that calls for an individual to be awarded more than two (2) independent credits in his/her high school career.

Policy adopted: June 10, 2003  
Policy revised: June 14, 2011

NEW MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
New Milford, Connecticut

# Connecticut High School Graduation Requirements Unpacked

## Brief 1: Introduction to the Series

In 2017 the Connecticut General Assembly took a bold step in its journey to create a graduation diploma system that prepares all students for the future of their choosing while allowing local districts, schools, and students the flexibility to create a wide variety of learning pathways. A summary of the major changes to the graduation requirements is captured in the table below. They include an increase in the number of required credits, significant emphasis on flexibility and multiple pathways, less restrictive course requirements, required students supports and remediation, and a new mastery-based diploma assessment requirement. This new law maintains the provision around mastery-based learning and graduation.

Over the course of the next several weeks, we will be publishing brief updates that dig into each of the individual areas below with resources, ideas, and considerations for implementation. These updates will help you think about these areas for opportunities in ways that build upon the work you're already engaged in and are simple, actionable, and have the potential to profoundly impact students.

### Updates and Clarifications from the Revision of the Statute

	2015 Graduation Requirements For the Classes Graduating from 2004-2022	<a href="#">2017 Graduation Requirements</a> For the Class of 2023
Total Number of Credits	Complete a minimum of 20 credits	Complete a minimum of 25 credits
Specific Credit Requirements	Including not fewer than: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 4 in English,</li><li>▪ 3 in social studies, including at least a 1/2 credit course on civics and American government,</li><li>▪ 3 in mathematics,</li><li>▪ not fewer than 2 in science,</li><li>▪ not fewer than 1 in physical education</li><li>▪ not fewer than 1 in the arts or vocational education</li></ul>	Including not fewer than: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(A) 9 credits in the humanities, including civics and the arts;</li><li>(B) 9 credits in science, technology, engineering and mathematics;</li><li>(C) 1 credit in physical education and wellness;</li><li>(D) one credit in health and safety education, as described in section 10-16b;</li></ul>

	2015 Graduation Requirements For the Classes Graduating from 2004-2022	<u>2017 Graduation Requirements</u> For the Class of 2023
		(E) 1 credit in world languages, subject to the provisions of subsection (g) of this section; and (F) a 1 credit mastery-based diploma assessment
Student Support + Remedial Services	Requires local and regional boards of education to “provide adequate student support and remedial services for students beginning in grade seven. Such supports and remedial services shall provide alternate means for a student to complete any of the high school graduation requirements <b>or end of the school year examinations</b> described in this section” for the class of 2021.	Requires local and regional boards of education to “provide adequate student support and remedial services for students beginning in grade seven. Such supports and remedial services shall provide alternate means for a student to complete any of the high school graduation requirements described in this section” for the class of 2023.
Mastery-Based Learning + Graduation	Allows districts to award credits based on a demonstration of mastery  Statutory language: “For purposes of this section, a credit shall consist of not less than the equivalent of a forty-minute class period for each school day of a school year except for a credit or part of a credit toward high school graduation earned (1) at an institution accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education or regionally accredited, (2) through on-line coursework that is in accordance with a policy adopted pursuant to subsection (g) of this section, or (3) through a demonstration of mastery based on competency and performance standards, in accordance with guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education.”	Statute maintains provisions that allows districts to award credits based on a demonstration of mastery  Statutory language: “For purposes of this section, a credit shall consist of not less than the equivalent of a forty-minute class period for each school day of a school year except for a credit or part of a credit toward high school graduation earned (1) at an institution accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education or regionally accredited, (2) through on-line coursework that is in accordance with a policy adopted pursuant to subsection (g) of this section, or (3) through a demonstration of mastery based on competency and performance standards, in accordance with guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education.”
Multiple Pathways	Previous statutory pathways language:  “(g) Only courses taken in grades nine to twelve, inclusive, shall satisfy the graduation requirements set forth in this section, except that a local or regional	Current version keeps the section in the left-hand column and expands multiple pathways opportunities by adding the following language:  “A local or regional board of education may grant a student credit (1) toward

2015 Graduation Requirements  
For the Classes Graduating  
from 2004-2022

2017 Graduation Requirements  
For the Class of 2023

board of education may grant a student credit (1) toward meeting a specified course requirement upon the successful completion in grade seven or eight of any course, the primary focus of which corresponds directly to the subject matter of a specified course requirement in grades nine to twelve, inclusive; (2) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of a world language course (A) in grade six, seven or eight, (B) through on-line coursework, or (C) offered privately through a nonprofit provider, provided such student achieves a passing grade on an examination prescribed, within available appropriations, by the Commissioner of Education and such credits do not exceed four; (3) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon achievement of a passing grade on a subject area proficiency examination identified and approved, within available appropriations, by the Commissioner of Education, regardless of the number of hours the student spent in a public school classroom learning such subject matter; (4) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of coursework during the school year or summer months at an institution accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education or regionally accredited. One three-credit semester course, or its equivalent, at such an institution shall equal one-half credit for purposes of this section; (5) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of on-line coursework, provided the local or regional board of education has adopted a policy in accordance with this subdivision for the granting of credit for on-line coursework.

meeting the high school graduation requirements upon the successful demonstration of mastery of the subject matter content described in this section achieved through educational experiences and opportunities that provide flexible and multiple pathways to learning, including cross-curricular graduation requirements, career and technical education, virtual learning, work-based learning, service learning, dual enrollment and early college, courses taken in middle school, internships and student-designed independent studies, provided such demonstration of mastery is in accordance with such state-wide subject matter content standards.”



2015 Graduation Requirements  
For the Classes Graduating  
from 2004-2022

2017 Graduation Requirements  
For the Class of 2023

Such a policy shall ensure, at a minimum, that (A) the workload required by the on-line course is equivalent to that of a similar course taught in a traditional classroom setting, (B) the content is rigorous and aligned with curriculum guidelines approved by the State Board of Education, where appropriate, (C) the course engages students and has interactive components, which may include, but are not limited to, required interactions between students and their teachers, participation in on-line demonstrations, discussion boards or virtual labs, (D) the program of instruction for such on-line coursework is planned, ongoing and systematic, and (E) the courses are (i) taught by teachers who are certified in the state or another state and have received training on teaching in an on-line environment, or (ii) offered by institutions of higher education that are accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education or regionally accredited; or (6) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of the academic advancement program, pursuant to section 10-5c."

**Student  
Success Plan**

"(i)(2)(i) For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, each local and regional board of education shall create a student success plan for each student enrolled in a public school, beginning in grade six. Such student success plan shall include a student's career and academic choices in grades six to twelve, inclusive."

This requirement remains unchanged.

## Outline of the Series

This brief is the first in a seven-part series. It provides an introduction to the resources that will be sent to you in the coming weeks as well as an explanation of the new changes to the graduation statute. Over the coming weeks, we will be sharing similar documents that address each of the topics in the order listed below. Each of the briefs will provide a high-level overview with links and references to additional materials.

Brief 1	Introduction to the Series
Brief 2	Elements of Effective Instruction
Brief 3	Flexible and Multiple Pathways
Brief 4	Mastery-Based Learning
Brief 5	Mastery-Based Diploma Assessment
Brief 6	Local Policy
Brief 7	Community Engagement + Communications

## For More Information

Please contact Terry Carroll, Professional Learning Facilitator at the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents [tcarroll@capss.org](mailto:tcarroll@capss.org) 860-236-8640, or

Sarah Linet, Policy Specialist at the Great Schools Partnership [slinet@greatschoolspartnership.org](mailto:slinet@greatschoolspartnership.org) 207-773-0505 with any questions, clarifications, or for additional support.

## Connecticut High School Graduation Requirements Unpacked

### Brief 3: Flexible and Multiple Pathways


**New Graduation Requirements:** “(c) Commencing with classes graduating in 2023, and for each graduating class thereafter, no local or regional board of education shall permit any student to graduate from high school or grant a diploma to any student who has not satisfactorily completed a minimum of twenty-five credits, including not fewer than: (1) Nine credits in the humanities, including civics and the arts; (2) nine credits in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics; (3) one credit in physical education and wellness; (4) one credit in health and safety education, as described in section 10-16b; (5) one credit in world languages, subject of the provisions of subsection (g) of this section; and (6) a one credit mastery-based diploma assessment.”

“(d) Commencing with classes graduating in 2023, and for each graduating class thereafter, local and regional boards of education shall provide adequate student support and remedial services for students beginning in grade seven.”

“(g) Only courses taken in grades nine to twelve, inclusive, and that are in accordance with the state-wide subject matter content standards, adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to section 10-4, as amended by this act, shall satisfy the graduation requirements set forth in this section, except that a local or regional board of education may grant a student credit (1) toward meeting the high school graduation requirements upon the successful demonstration of mastery of the subject matter content described in this section achieved through educational experiences and opportunities that provide flexible and multiple pathways to learning, including cross-curricular graduation requirements, career and technical education, virtual learning, work-based learning, service learning, dual enrollment and early college, courses taken in middle school, internships and student-designed independent studies, provided such demonstration of mastery is in accordance with such state-wide subject matter content standards”

“(i) For the school year commencing July 1, 2012, and each school year thereafter, each local and regional board of education shall create a student success plan for each student enrolled in a public school, beginning in grade six. Such student success plan shall include a student’s career and academic choices in grades six to twelve, inclusive.”

— Public Act No.17-42; Sec. 1(c)(d)(g)(i)



This brief explores how the statute's move away from specific course requirements and toward broader content area requirements can provide increased flexibility for students. This flexibility also enables schools and districts to think more expansively about the learning experiences available to students. As we have explored throughout this series, two of the major changes to this statute are around increasing flexibility for course requirements and strengthening the language about demonstrating mastery through multiple pathways. The statute intends to support the demonstration and achievement of learning standards through a variety of learning activities in a range of settings.

This flexibility provides an opportunity for increased student engagement and ownership, creating structures that enable students to pursue their passions in ways that have not always been possible given the specificity of previous graduation requirements. At the same time, the increased flexibility could enable, create, or enhance inequities. While the statute requires that all courses and learning experiences must be aligned to state standards, it does not detail a specific set of courses, learning expectations, or standards that all students must experience in order to graduate. It is the district's responsibility to set the expectations of the core skills and knowledge every student needs in order to graduate, regardless of the pathway they pursue.

While pathways may differ student to student, schools must use their local graduation requirements as the mechanism to ensure that all students graduate with the skills and knowledge they need to lead successful lives. Pathways allow for personalized experiences but districts must simultaneously ensure that all students are held to common graduation expectations. It is those common expectations for all students that enable all pathways to be equitable. Balancing the need for equity and the requirement for more flexibility requires districts and schools to be diligent and strategic about ensuring flexible and varied learning experiences while holding all students to common expectations.

The three samples below depict a wide range of learning experiences and opportunities. All of the courses and learning experiences highlighted below are aligned to state-wide subject matter content standards. The transcripts below show students who pursued learning experiences of interest while simultaneously gaining the foundational set of knowledge and skills in every content area that was required in their local district. These sample transcripts range from fairly traditional learning experiences and course-sequences to unique and student designed pathways, providing food for thought as you think about the opportunities within your own district.

# Transcript A

**Forest Lake High School**  
 Student Name: Lola Yvonne

9 <sup>th</sup> Grade		
English 9	A	1
Algebra I	B+	1
Earth Science	C-	1
Spanish I	D	1
Health	A	1
PE	A	1
World History	B-	1
Band	C	1

10 <sup>th</sup> Grade		
English 10	A	1
Geometry	B+	1
Biology	C	1
Spanish II	D	1
U.S. History I	C+	1
Band	B	1
Art I	B	1

Learning Experience

Final Grade

Credits

11 <sup>th</sup> Grade		
English 11	B+	1
Algebra II	B	1
Chemistry	B-	1
U.S. History II	C+	1
Spanish III	C-	1
Band	B+	1
Photography	A	1

12 <sup>th</sup> Grade		
Senior English	A-	1
AP Psychology	B-	1
Physics	C+	1
MBDA	B+	1
Trigonometry	B	1
Computer Science	C	1

Academic Summary		
Humanities	English 9, English 10, English 11, Senior English, World History, U.S. History I, U.S. History II, Psychology, Art I	9 credits
STEM	Algebra I, Earth Science, Geometry, Algebra II, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, Trigonometry, Computer Science	9 credits
World Languages	Spanish I, Spanish II	3 credits
MBDA	MBDA	1 credit
PE + Health	PE, Health	2 credit
Electives	Band	2 credits
		<b>26 credits</b>

**Transcript A** shows a student's path through high school meeting the updated graduation requirements through a fairly traditional course sequence. The statute dictates the broad content areas students must take for twenty-two credits, which requires that students (at a minimum) acquire an additional three credits through the content areas of their choosing. This student met the minimum number of twenty-five state-required credits through additional world language classes and band. Her course sequence throughout high school does not indicate any cross-content courses, work-based learning, service learning, or any of the other pathways specifically named in the statute.

# Transcript B

Forest Lake High School  
Student Name: Dexter Franklin

9 <sup>th</sup> Grade		
Humanities I	A	2
STEM I	B	2
Academic Support	B+	1
Arabic I	C	1
PE	A-	1
Health	B	1

10th Grade		
Health I (CTE)	B	1
Humanities II	B+	2
STEM II	B	2
Arabic II	C+	1
Art I	A-	1

Learning Experience

Final Grade

Credits

11 <sup>th</sup> Grade		
Health II	B+	1
Humanities III	A-	2
Student Designed Writing Course	A-	1
Biology II	B	1
Art II	B+	1

12 <sup>th</sup> Grade		
Health III-CNA	A	1
Apprenticeship at the hospital	B+	2
MBDA	B	1
AP Biology	B-	1

Academic Summary		
Humanities	Humanities I, Humanities II, Humanities III, Art I, Art II, Student Course	9 credits
STEM	Health I, Health II, Health III (CNA), Apprenticeship, STEM I, STEM II, Biology II, AP Biology	11 credits
World Languages	Arabic I, Arabic II	2 credits
MBDA	MBDA	1 credit
PE + Health	PE, Health	2 credit
Electives	Academic Support	1 credit
		<b>26 credits</b>

Transcript B shows a student who pursued additional credits in STEM, world languages, and an academic support elective. The academic support elective provides credits toward graduation and serves as a support and remedial service for Dexter. In this transcript, we see that the school offered (and the student pursued) cross-curricular courses in humanities and STEM. He acquired credit through a hospital-based apprenticeship and an academic support program. In addition to pursuing a STEM pathway, AP biology, and a hospital-apprenticeship, he also acquired additional credits in Arabic. This school has an academic support program that provides students with interventions, extensions, and credits for that time.

# Transcript C

**Forest Lake High School**  
 Student Name: William Washington

9 <sup>th</sup> Grade		
Humanities I	C	2
Algebra I	B-	1
Earth Science	A	1
Spanish I	A-	1
Art I	A	1

10 <sup>th</sup> Grade		
Humanities II	C-	2
STEM I	A-	2
STEM Support/Lab	A	1
PE	A	1
Health	A-	1
Spanish II	B+	1

Learning Experience

Final Grade

Credits

11 <sup>th</sup> Grade		
Humanities III	C	2
STEM II	B	2
Internship at hospital	B+	1
AP Biology	B+	1

12 <sup>th</sup> Grade		
MBDA	A	1
Student-Designed Exchange to Spain	B	5
College Spanish 101	B+	1
Online Cartography	B	1

Academic Summary		
Humanities	Humanities I, Humanities II, Humanities III, Art I, Spain,	9 credits
STEM	Algebra I, Earth Science, STEM II, STEM I Lab, STEM II, Internship, AP Biology,	9 credits
World Languages	Spanish I, Spanish II, Spain, College Spanish 101	6 credits
MBDA	MBDA	1 credit
PE + Health	PE, Health	2 credit
Electives	Online Cartography	1 credit
		<b>28 credits</b>

**Transcript C** shows the path through high school of a student who exceeded the state credit requirements. This student focused deeply on studying Spanish and designed a unique and self-directed course of study. William enrolled in cross-curricular humanities and STEM courses, designed an exchange to Spain, and enrolled in both college-level and online courses. He had both the flexibility and support to follow his passion, while the graduation requirements provided guardrails to ensure he acquired a foundational set of skills and knowledge in all content areas.

As you begin implementing the updated graduation requirements, you will want to focus on ways of increasing flexibility within the structures and programs that already exist within your schools. At the same time, you will want to examine course-taking patterns and pathways data, considering how you can remove barriers to access and create opportunities for all students to engage in rigorous deeper learning experiences driven by their own interests and aspirations. The current iteration of the statute retains the requirement that all students (beginning in grade six) maintain [student success plans](#), but allows students more flexibility to create new learning experiences and for schools to design integrated experiences that can guide student learning. Throughout the process of examining your pathway options and as you work collaboratively to expand learning opportunities for students, use the questions below to both prompt and push your thinking.

### Design Questions for Consideration

1. What are the opportunities within your schools and district for students to personalize their learning experiences?
2. How do the pathways in your high school(s) promote rigorous and complex learning that result in equitable outcomes?
3. How are you ensuring that all the pathways and learning experiences offered in your schools and district are aligned to state-wide subject matter content standards?
4. Are all available pathways open and accessible to all students?
5. Are all available pathways aligned to shared beliefs and practices in your schools and districts?
6. Are pathways integrated into your programs and culture?

### Additional Resources

1. [Student Success Plans](#)
2. [Assessment Pathways as a Means to Ensure Equity, Rigor, and Personalization for All Students](#)
3. [Assessment Pathways: Evidence of Learning](#)
4. [Designing Personalized Learning Pathways: Best Practices from Vermont](#)
5. [Video: Flexible Pathways to Graduation: Six Vermont High School Students](#)
6. [Scoring Criteria: Design Guide](#)

### For More Information

Please contact Terry Carroll, Professional Learning Facilitator at the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents [tcarroll@capss.org](mailto:tcarroll@capss.org) 860-236-8640, or

Sarah Linet, Policy Specialist at the Great Schools Partnership [slinet@greatschoolspartnership.org](mailto:slinet@greatschoolspartnership.org) 207-773-0505 with any questions, clarifications, or for additional support.



## Connecticut High School Graduation Requirements Unpacked

### Brief 5: Mastery-Based Diploma Assessment

**New Graduation Requirements:** “(c)Commencing with classes graduating in 2023, and for each graduating class thereafter, no local or regional board of education shall permit any student to graduate from high school or grant a diploma to any student who has not satisfactorily completed a minimum of twenty-five credits, including [...] (6) a one credit mastery-based diploma assessment.”

— Public Act No.17-42; Sec. 1(c)(6)

This week’s Connecticut High School Graduation Requirements Unpacked brief focuses on the mastery-based diploma assessment requirement. One option for how a school or district could design their mastery-based diploma assessment is to build these assessments around their Portrait of a Graduate competencies or the cross-curricular, 21st century skills that schools define for NEASC accreditation. These competencies are the cross-curricular skills and knowledge that every graduate needs to be successful. Frequently these competencies include standards like communication and problem solving. Schools, districts, and communities work together to collaboratively define the essential skills and knowledge all graduates need to live healthy and productive lives. This work is often incorporated into a portrait of a graduate document or aligned to a school or district’s mission and vision work.

Below is an example of a Portrait of a Graduate.



# Forest Lake High School

## Portrait of a Graduate



### Communication

Every Forest Lake graduate will be a clear communicator, able to effectively express themselves and listen to the ideas of others.



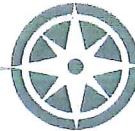
### Problem Solving

Every Forest Lake graduate will be a skilled problem-solver, prepared to creatively tackle the challenges of life, citizenship, and work.



### Informed Thinking

Every Forest Lake graduate will be an informed thinker, crafting arguments that build on reason and logic.



### Self Direction

Every Forest Lake graduate will be a self-directed person in their lives and in the way they engage with their community and the world.



### Collaboration

Every Forest Lake graduate will be a skilled collaborator understanding how to enhance their work in partnership with other people who bring different and needed perspectives.

Image 1: Portrait of a Graduate pg. 1



### COMMUNICATION

A Forest Lake Graduate will

- Demonstrate organized communication through varied modes (oral, written, visual and/or performance).
- Use evidence and logic purposefully in communication.
- Listen actively to others and analyze and respond to the information or viewpoints presented.
- Use tone, style, and conventions that are appropriate to the audience, context, and purpose.
- Use technology purposefully to enhance the communication of ideas and information.



### PROBLEM SOLVING

A Forest Lake Graduate will

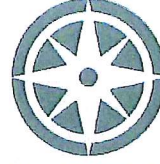
- Observe and evaluate situations in order to define problems.
- Frame questions, make predictions, and design data collection and analysis strategies.
- Identify and analyze patterns, trends and relationships in the data or information.
- Based on analysis of the data or information, generate options and use evidence to build a case for the best solution.
- Identify opportunities for innovation and collaboration.
- Evaluate the available tools, including technology, and select one to address the problem.
- Persist in solving challenging problems, adapting strategies and approaches as needed.



### INFORMED THINKING

A First Lake Graduate will

- Apply knowledge across disciplines and contexts and to real-life situations.
- Analyze, evaluate and synthesize information from multiple sources to frame questions and draw conclusions.
- Develop and use a model (2D or 3D visual representation) to represent or explain a system, process or complex concept.
- Apply systems thinking to analyze and explain the interaction and influence of related parts on each other, and on outcomes.



### SELF DIRECTION

A Forest Lake Graduate will

- Apply knowledge to set goals, make decisions and assess new opportunities. (NHPS)
- Demonstrates initiative, reliability and concern for quality.
- Demonstrate flexibility, including the ability to incorporate new ideas and revise.



### COLLABORATION

A Forest Lake Graduate will

- Participate in and contribute to the community.
- Demonstrate awareness and consideration for self and others.
- Demonstrate knowledge of and respect for diverse cultures, identities and perspectives.
- Practice responsible digital citizenship as a member of a community.
- Select and use communication strategies and interpersonal skills to collaborate with others.

Image 2: Portrait of a Graduate pg.2


The Forest Lake Portrait of a Graduate above identifies five competencies that are essential for all graduates to master. These competencies are: communication, problem solving, informed thinking, self-direction, and collaboration. Once schools and districts have defined their competencies, they need to describe the discrete skills and knowledge that make up each competency (also known as performance indicators), and then performance levels (or scoring criteria) for each of those indicators.

Forest Lake has also created some sample competencies, performance indicators, and scoring criteria for [communication](#), [problem solving](#), [informed thinking](#), [self-direction](#), and [collaboration](#) available here. Below is a sample of the communication scoring criteria. Notice how these indicators are aligned to the Portrait of a Graduate language and expectations. This scoring criteria also focuses on what moves we see students make as they are working toward proficiency in communication—as opposed to describing what students are not yet doing or demonstrating. When a student reads this scoring criteria, they know exactly what they need to do in order to demonstrate mastery of a specific competency.

All of the Forest Lake High School scoring criteria aligned to each of the defined Portrait of a Graduate competencies are available here for use and modification. [Here](#) are some additional resources and information about how to design and craft your own scoring criteria.

## Forest Lake High School

### Scoring Criteria



**COMMUNICATION**

Performance Indicator	1	2	3	4
<b>A. Demonstrate organized communication through varied modes (oral, written, visual and/or performance).</b>	I can <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• repeat information that has been presented to me when using any mode of communication (oral, written, visual, and/or performance).</li> </ul>	I can <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• organize information to communicate my ideas and responses when using any mode of communication (oral, written, visual, and/or performance).</li> </ul>	I can <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• present information and ideas coherently, with logical sequence when using any mode of communication (oral, written, visual, and/or performance).</li> </ul>	I can <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enhance my communication through the sequence and presentation of ideas when using any mode of communication (oral, written, visual, and/or performance).</li> </ul>
<b>B. Use evidence and logic purposefully in communication.</b>	I can <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• identify evidence that could relate to my purpose;</li> <li>• share ideas that relate to my purpose.</li> </ul>	I can <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• select evidence that connects to my purpose;</li> <li>• organize and present ideas based on my purpose.</li> </ul>	I can <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• incorporate evidence that enhances purposeful communication;</li> <li>• Use sound reasoning to explain my ideas and achieve my purpose.</li> </ul>	I can <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• incorporate the most relevant and effective evidence to justify my purpose;</li> <li>• Use sound reasoning to explain ideas and address counterarguments to achieve my purpose.</li> </ul>
<b>C. Listen actively to others and analyze and respond to the information or viewpoints presented.</b>	I can <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• participate as a listener in a variety of discussions, presentations, videos, etc.;</li> <li>• identify information gathered through active listening.</li> </ul>	I can <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gather information through active listening (including during discussions, presentations, videos, etc.) and determine main ideas and patterns;</li> <li>• connect information gathered through active listening to my ideas.</li> </ul>	I can <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyze information gathered through active listening (including during discussions, presentations, videos, etc.) and determine relevance;</li> <li>• Integrate relevant information gathered through active listening into my argument or response.</li> </ul>	I can <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• evaluate information gathered through active listening (including during discussions, presentations, videos, etc.) considering context and type of presentation, to determine reliability;</li> <li>• artfully integrate information gathered through active listening to draw conclusions and justify my response.</li> </ul>


DRAFT November 2016

*Image 3: Sample Scoring Criteria | Communication*

After a school or district has fully defined their competencies and performance levels, they can begin to craft task models for each competency. A task model is a set of characteristics or qualities that a task would need to have in order for a student to demonstrate a specific competency. Task models create the

conditions for students to follow their passion and have choice in their assessment. They allow students to create unique tasks to demonstrate their mastery of a given competency or set of competencies. As long as every task contains the elements captured in the task model, students have the freedom to design tasks or complete the task of their choosing. A Forest Lake task model that would elicit evidence of a student's communication mastery is below:

## Forest Lake High School Task Model



**Performance Indicators for Communication:**

- A. Demonstrate organized communication through varied modes (oral, written, visual and/or performance).
- B. Use evidence and logic purposefully in communication
- C. Listen actively to others and analyze and respond to the information or viewpoints presented.
- D. Use tone, style, and conventions that are appropriate to the audience, context, and purpose.
- E. Use technology purposefully to enhance the communication of ideas and information.

**Task Model**

Any Performance Assessment that is designed to elicit student work that will allow the student to demonstrate proficiency in **Communication** must include these elements:

- The student will engage with and synthesize various types of informational text or other informational sources such as graphs, charts, pictures, interviews, surveys, videos or other sources. (Performance Indicators B & C).
- The student will participate in collaborative discussion about their topic (Performance Indicator C).
- The student will create a text, presentation or other product that draws on information/ideas **from that discussion, as well as from other sources**, to communicate a claim and to support that claim with evidence. (Performance Indicators A, B, C, D & E).
- The student text or presentation must utilize technology in order to incorporate images, graphs, charts, audio, video or other effects into the support for the claim (Performance Indicator E).

*Image 4: Task Model for Communication*

Schools may also decide to design some specific tasks that align to their task models. Here are some tasks (and associated instructional materials) aligned to three of the Portrait of a Graduate competencies and their corresponding task models. All of these tasks could be used in their current form as a mastery-based diploma assessment or modified to fit local context.

### Communication

- [Sample Task \(Math\): Free Throw Adjustments](#)
- [Sample Task \(Health\): Health in Our Town](#)

- [Sample Task \(Biology\): Wildlife and Lyme Disease](#)

#### Problem-Solving

- [Sample Task \(English Language Arts, Art\): The Change We Can See](#)

#### Informed-Thinking

- [Sample Task \(Social Studies\): Laws That Work, Laws That Don't: The Consequences of Legislation](#)

For a mastery-based diploma assessment, we would recommend that students choose one competency aligned to your school/district's defined 21st Century Skills or Portrait of a Graduate competencies for their assessment. Once a student has chosen a specific competency (for example: communication), they would then complete a task of their own design or one designed by educators in your school/s that is aligned to the task model associated with that specific competency.

There are a variety of mechanisms for this to happen. A student could complete their mastery-based diploma assessment as part of one of their courses (for example, a student could complete the "Health in Our Town" assessment as part of their Health course). A student could present their teacher-designed or their student-designed mastery-based diploma assessment to a faculty advisor or a panel of experts. A mastery-based diploma assessment could be part of an independent study, advisory structure, or a capstone project.

Below are some design question for consideration as you are designing the mastery-based diploma assessment in your own school or district.

#### Design Questions for Consideration

1. Does your school or district have cross-curricular, 21st Century Skills, or Portrait of a Graduate Competencies that you can use as the basis of your mastery-based diploma assessment?
2. Does your school or district currently have scoring criteria for those skills or competencies?
3. Will your school or district create its own scoring criteria or build from previously created scoring criteria, incorporating pieces of your own vision?
4. What are the features of a task that would allow a student to demonstrate mastery of a specific competency?
5. Will you create the conditions for students to design their own tasks? Will you embed the mastery-based diploma assessment in a specific course or in an already established structure in your school?
6. How will the student demonstrate their mastery? Through a demonstration? Through the finished product of the task? Will there be a standard process or will students choose how they demonstrate mastery?
7. What resources will teachers have to inform and support their ongoing professional learning?



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## Additional Resources

1. [Sample Scoring Criteria: Communication](#)
2. [Sample Scoring Criteria: Problem Solving](#)
3. [Sample Scoring Criteria: Informed Thinking](#)
4. [Sample Scoring Criteria: Self-direction](#)
5. [Sample Scoring Criteria: Collaboration](#)
6. [Verifying Proficiency: Scoring Criteria](#)
7. [Sample Task Models](#)

## For More Information

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