GREAT SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

Proficieny-Based Education and Graduation

Adopting local policy...

• Helps to cement the commitment to school-wide, and oftentimes, district-wide expectations, practices, and resolve toward implementation of change;

• Provides a public forum for engagement and for building additional support as the Board holds work sessions and conducts its first and second readings(process varies by district) of the policy;

• Reinforces and secures a "steady ahead" implementation in the event of departures by key administrators and faculty, including a building principal or a superintendent;

• Ensures that you have the backing of the Superintendent -- a key gatekeeper and a necessary champion -- without policy, the Superintendent can waffle in support;

• Adoption into policy establishes a sense of importance and priority status for the Board and superintendent, as well as an important function for the respective principals;

• Policies on proficiency-based learning and graduation matters arguably fall into the highest priority -- top 3-5 policies among hundreds adopted by school districts nationally -- boards and superintendents understand the importance of the endgame, of graduation requirements as the pinnacle of a student's journey.

Key matters to attend to in proposing local policy:

• Examine exemplars of policies from school districts in your state, region, and around the nation, crafting your policy using the national template and components of what might

already be in policy and is keeping with the direction of proficiency-based learning (the Meddybemps example uses the national format, has a Maine flavor and legal references, but was shaped by looking at a host of others);

• Ensure that the level of specificity in the policy is clear enough to describe the intent and direction, but has some flexibility, knowing that details of implementation will occur through work plans and articulated action strategies;

• Garner sufficient support and a core of champions among the faculty with several ready to attend the Board meetings to lend support and their enthusiasm to the passage of the policy;

• Line up at least two, preferably three, school board members who are both supportive and able in making the case to adopt the local policy;

• Ensure that the Board chair understands the intent of the policy -- gaining support from this leader is important, but not absolutely essential if other members are on board;

• Help the Superintendent guide the background and learning of the Board regarding proficiency-based education and graduation, offering materials that are language-friendly to non-educators while always stressing the benefits to students;

• Cultivate the local and regional media in advance of the initial policy presentation;

• Promise to provide the Board with regular updates regarding the implementation progress of the adopted policy...

Implementing Proficiency-Based Learning and Graduation: A Roadmap for Policy Review (Draft – 10/18/2013)

Introduction

As school districts across Maine implement proficiency-based education and graduation, superintendents and school boards will engage in a process of local policy review, revision, and adoption.

To assist with this review process, districts can use the following checklist of policy topics to help guide the work. Be advised that this list is not intended to be all inclusive, but rather serve as a roadmap of policies that are likely affected by a district's movement to implement changes in practices, structures, and program design related to standards-based, proficiency-based education.

Maine statute requires that high school graduation -- commencing with the Class of 2018 -- be based on the demonstration of proficiency on skills and knowledge as described in the standards of Maine's Learning Results, including the Guiding Principles. To this end, the policy areas below should receive attention and review, recognizing that some policies, like ***Graduation Requirements***, due to their comprehensive nature, should be attended to sooner than later. Recommended timeframes for completion of the review and adoption process are included to assist superintendents and school boards. References to pertinent Maine statute and rules, as well as inclusion of samples to guide the development of local policies are also provided.

Policy Checklist

Graduation Requirements-Policy File: IKF

Overview:
This policy, arguably one of the most important local policies, describes for students and parents the requirements leading to the awarding of a high school diploma. Commencing with the Class of 2018, students will be required to demonstrate proficiency in the standards articulated in Maine's Learning Results. Consistent with Maine statute, most school districts will transition towards implementation by following a local graduation policy for the Classes of 2014-2017, then a proficiency-based diploma policy for the Class of 2018 and subsequent classes.

Key Legal References -Statutory Language and Rules/Regulations:
Maine Statute: The 125th Maine State Legislature enacted L.D. 1422 during its 2nd session in 2012. The statutory language -- Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, Chapter 207-A, Instruction, Subchapter 3, Secondary Schools, Section 4722A can be found at this link: http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec4722-A.html

Sample Local Policy:
Graduation Requirements, Passamaquoddy School District, File: IKF

DRAFT

[Click here to preview]

Recommended Timeline For Policy Review and Adoption: January 15, 2014

Multiple and Flexible Pathways for Learning- Policy File: IKFF

Overview:

Multiple pathways refers to the various courses, programs, and learning opportunities offered by schools, community organizations, or local businesses that allow students to earn academic credit and satisfy graduation requirements.

The "learning pathway" concept implies an expansion of educational options beyond the course sequences historically offered to students. These educational experiences, usually at the high-school level, occur in locales outside of traditional classroom settings or school buildings, such as internships, apprenticeships, career and technical programs, independent research projects, online classes, adult education, travel, community-service projects, or dual-enrollment experiences. While many schools are either creating and incorporating alternative learning options for students, academic courses remain the foundational learning experiences offered by most schools, and they are still considered one of the "learning pathways" available to students.

Key Legal References -Statutory Language and Rules/Regulations:
Maine statute states that elementary and secondary schools shall provide students with opportunities for learning in multiple pathways that may include career and technical education, alternative education programs, apprenticeships, career academies, advanced placements, online courses, adult education, dual enrollment, or gifted and talented programs.

Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, Chapter 207-A, Instruction, Subchapter 1, General Requirement, Section 4703 can be found at this link:
http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec4703.html

Sample Local Policy:
To be completed. [Click here for preview]

Recommended Timeline For Policy Review and Adoption: June 15, 2014

Early College and Dual Enrollment—Policy File: IHCDA

Overview:

Dual enrollment refers to students being enrolled—concurrently—in two distinct academic programs or educational institutions. The term is used in reference to high school students taking college courses while they are still enrolled in a secondary school (i.e., a *dual-enrollment student*), or to programs that allow high school students to take college-level courses (i.e., a *dual-enrollment program*). For this reason, the term *early college* is a common synonym for dual enrollment.

DRAFT

In some cases, high school students take dual-enrollment courses on a college campus, alongside regular college students, while in other cases students take the courses online or from instructors who offer college-level courses at a high school or community center. Dual-enrollment courses, programs, and experiences come in a wide variety of possible configurations.

Key Legal References - Statutory Language and Rules/Regulations:
Maine statute states that all high schools in Maine must allow students who are eligible to take college courses at any college in the University of Maine System, the Maine Community College System and the Maine Maritime Academy. Students must have at least a 3.0 GPA on a 4.0 scale, have a recommendation from their high school, and meet the post secondary institution's entrance requirements. The statute also states that if a student does not meet all approval criteria, the student may still participate in dual enrollment provided the student is at least in grade 11, has received a recommendation from the student's high school, and has received approval from a postsecondary institution. The Maine Department of Education pays 50% of the student's tuition for 3 credit hours taken each semester and 6 credits per academic year, within the limits of the annual state appropriation. The student only pays fees, not tuition.

Students are awarded credit at the college, but the local district chooses whether to award high school credit or not, an important policy decision, especially in light of the intent of recent statutory language guiding proficiency-based graduation and multiple pathways.

It is important to note that many provisions for Early College/Dual Enrollment learning opportunities are provided by school districts outside the provisions of the above state-funded program.

Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, Chapter 208-A, Postsecondary Enrollment, Subchapter 3, Elementary and Secondary Education, Sections 4771-4776 can be found at this link: http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/20-A/title20-Ach208-Asec0.html

Sample Local Policy:
To be completed. [Click here for preview].

Recommended Timeline For Policy Review and Adoption: June 15, 2014

Transfer Students-See Graduation Requirements, Policy File: IKF

Overview:
Today's students and their families are increasingly mobile, moving from district to district, as well as from state to state. Invariably, when a so-called transfer student enrolls in a new secondary school, the requirements for the awarding of a high school diploma or advancement through the grades may differ. Local policy needs to anticipate the process for assessing these incoming students and their proficiency against the standards and other graduation requirements.

DRAFT

Key Legal References - Statutory Language and Rules/Regulations:
Maine rules and regulations state that students who transfer into an elementary, middle, or secondary school from another state or an educational program that is not required to meet the standards of the system of Learning Results, the principal of the receiving school shall determine the value of the prior educational experience in order to make placement decisions.

Department of Education, Rules and Regulations, Agency 05, Sub-Agency 071, General, Chapter 127, Section 5, Subchapter 5.03, Part B; Agency 05, Sub-Agency 071, Chapter 127, Section 6, Subchapter 6.02, Part B; and Agency 05, Sub-Agency 071, Chapter 127, Section 7, Subchapter 7.02, Part A, subpart 2-5 can be found at this link:
http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/05/chaps05.htm

Sample Local Policy:
See Transfer Students section of Graduation Requirements, Passamaquoddy School District, File: IKF
[Click here to preview]

Recommended Timeline For Policy Review and Adoption: January 15, 2014

Latin Honors and Academic Recognition- Policy File: IKD

Overview:
Proficiency -based learning and graduation aligns well with the Latin honors system used by many colleges, universities, and an increasing number of secondary schools. Some educators would prefer to see class rank replaced with the "Latin honors" system of cum laude (*with honors*), magna cum laude (*with high honors*), and summa cum laude (*with highest honors*). The main argument for Latin honors (or any similarly designed system) is that it can recognize the achievements of more students, as well as a much broader spectrum of academic accomplishment, rather than only a handful of students whose performance may be based on relatively small or even numerically miniscule differences in grade point average. Local policy determines the parameters for the categories of academic distinction.

Key Legal References - Statutory Language and Rules/Regulations:

There are no Maine statutes that address Latin honors or class rank. This is up to the discretion of local school districts.

Sample Local Policy:
Latin Honors, Passamaquoddy School District, File: IKD
[Click here to preview]

Recommended Timeline For Policy Review and Adoption: August 15, 2014

DRAFT

PASSAMAQUODDY REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT NO. 9
Meddybemps High School

File: IKF

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Overview
The long-standing practice in American high schools has been the awarding of a high school diploma based on the accumulation of credits awarded for courses passed. This practice of awarding credits has not ensured competency based on demonstrated performance. Thus, many students have received a high school diploma, but are not prepared adequately to be successful in their postsecondary pursuits.

To address this problem, the Passamaquoddy School District has adopted a standards-based system of learning. Beginning with students who enter Meddybemps High School as members of the Class of 2018, every graduate, in order to be successful in the workplace and in postsecondary learning experiences – to be college and career ready -- will need to demonstrate what they *know*, what they *can do*, and how *well* they *can do it*. This Meddybemps High School standards and proficiency-based diploma provides evidence that our graduates have acquired the knowledge and skills – the competency -- to move on to postsecondary experiences.

Further, the proficiency-based diploma system guides the implementation of interventions, supports, and flexible learning pathways for students.

Communicating Graduation Requirements
Prior to entering high school, students and their parents need to know the standards for attaining a high school diploma in order to plan an appropriate, sequential, educational program to meet that goal.

The Superintendent, through the high school principal or other designee, shall be responsible for making accurate information concerning diploma requirements available to incoming students and their parents in the spring prior to the start of their ninth grade school year. An overview of graduation requirements will be disseminated to all incoming ninth grade students at the time of course selection. This policy will also be referenced in each edition of the high school student handbook and on the school district website.

The Board has approved the following schedule of minimum requirements for graduation, which includes minimum requirements specified by the State of Maine. The Board is aware that current law and regulations are subject to change.

The Board expects the Superintendent/designee to inform students and parents as soon as practical of any additional standards established by the State that must be met before students may be awarded a high school diploma.

Academic Requirements for Graduation from Meddybemps High School
For the Meddybemps High School Classes of 2013 – 2017 the following graduation requirements remain in effect.
(**NOTE**: list present requirements here as a transition to 2018 – to be phased out, beginning with present 7th graders, the Class of 2018)

A. Commencing with the Class of 2018, every Meddybemps High School student will demonstrate proficiency in meeting standards in the following content areas of the Maine Learning Results. Meeting the standards entails demonstrating proficiency on each standard prior to graduation.

English Language Arts
Mathematics
Science and Technology
Social Studies
Health Education and Physical Education
Visual and Performing Arts
World Languages
Career and Education Development (embedded in the other content areas)

To satisfy graduation requirements all students must be engaged in educational learning experiences in the content areas of English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Technology in each year of their secondary school program.

B. All graduating students must meet the cross content performance standards set forth by the Maine Learning Results' "Guiding Principles."

All students will graduate from Meddybemps High School as a:

Clear and effective communicator
Self-directed and life-long learner
Creative and practical problem solver
Responsible and involved citizen
Integrative and informed thinker.

C. Every student will complete a capstone research project, through which students will demonstrate their knowledge and skills in conducting in-depth research, as well as proficiency in the presentation of their research through the application of technology.

D. Every student will complete an application to a post-secondary educational institution, training program, or other experience to provide an opportunity for continued growth.

E. Most students will satisfy graduation requirements during a four-year experience; however, students may fulfill the requirements for a diploma in a time period that is accelerated or lengthened, based on their individual needs. These students are expected to develop a Personal Learning Plan with assistance from counselors, teachers and/or administrators.

Additional Considerations Applicable to the Awarding of a Diploma
In order to pursue a multiple pathway to graduation a student must have a Personal Learning Plan detailing how the student will demonstrate competency when a pathway is in lieu of core academic experiences. Each option must provide a quality learning experience that is rigorous. Multiple pathway experiences will be determined, assessed, and documented through the school. Pathway options include the following:

Early College / Dual Enrollment Courses
Career and Technical Education Programming
Online / Virtual Learning
Alternative / At-Risk Programming
Apprenticeships / Internships & Additional Field Work and/or Exchange Experiences
Adult Education

Transfer Students
For students who transfer to Meddybemps High School from another state, country, home schooling program, or from an educational program that is not required to be aligned with the content standards of the Maine Learning Results, the Principal shall determine the value of the student's prior educational experience towards meeting graduation requirements for a high school diploma. These students will need to satisfy all credit requirements, assessment requirements, and proficiency requirements in the appropriate content subject areas. The Superintendent will ultimately determine whether these students are certified to receive a diploma.

Home-schooled Students
For home-schooled students wishing to receive a diploma from Meddybemps High School, the Principal shall determine the value of the student's prior educational experience toward meeting graduation credit requirements. A home-schooled student must have attended Meddybemps High School for a minimum of two (2) semesters in order to receive a Meddybemps High School diploma.

Students Receiving Special Education Services
Students who successfully meet the graduation requirements, as specified in the goals and objectives of their Individualized Education Plans (IEP), will be awarded diplomas.

Delayed Awarding of Diplomas

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

Extended Study
Students are eligible for extended years of study to complete the requirements of a diploma if they have not reached the age of 20 at the start of the school year. Students eligible for extended years of study may be referred to adult education or other resources.

Participation in Graduation Ceremony
A student must complete all Board requirements for a high school diploma to participate in graduation exercises.

Legal Reference: 20-A M.R.S.A. § 4722-A (as revised) Proficiency-based Diploma Standards
Ch. 127 § 7 (Me. Dept. of Ed. Rule) (as revised)

Cross Reference: IHCDA – Post-Secondary Enrollment Options
IK – Assessment of Student Performances
IKFA – Early Graduation

PASSAMAQUODDY REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT NO. 99
Meddybemps High School

File: IKD

LATIN HONORS AND ACADEMIC RECOGNITION

At Meddybemps High School, consistent with students demonstrating proficiency against the standards of the Maine Learning Results and the desire to recognize high academic achievement, a system of Latin Honors is used to determine distinction. This system is based on the following criteria and grading system:

Summa Cum Laude (with highest honor): 3.9 or higher
Magna Cum Laude (with great honor): 3.8-3.89
Cum Laude (with honor): 3.65-3.79

Grading System:
1.0- Does not meet standards
2.0- Partially meets standards
3.0-Meets standards
3.25-3.50- Exceeds standards
3.75-4.0- Exceeds standards with honors

Legal Reference: None
Cross Reference: IKAB—Report Cards/Progress Reports