

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 199
Inver Grove Heights Community Schools
2990 80th Street East
Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota 55076

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set forth requirements for graduation from the school district.

II. General Statement of Policy

The policy of the school district is that all students must satisfactorily complete, as determined by the school district, all course credit requirements, all state academic standards, or local standards where state standards do not apply, and successfully pass graduation examinations, as required, in order to graduate.

III. Definitions

- A. “Academic standard” means: (1) a statewide adopted expectation for student learning in the content areas of language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, physical education, or the arts, or (2) a locally adopted expectation for student learning in health, the arts, career and technical education, or world languages.
- B. “Course credit” is equivalent to a student’s successful completion of an academic year of study or a student’s mastery of the applicable subject matter, as determined by the school district.
- C. “Section 504 Accommodation” means the defined appropriate accommodations or modifications that must be made in the school environment to the address the needs of an individual student with disabilities. “Individualized Education Program,” or “IEP,” means a written statement developed for a student eligible by law for special education and services.
- D. “English Learner” or “EL” student means an individual whose first language is not English and whose test performance may be negatively impacted by lack of English language proficiency.
- E. “Online Learning” is a form of digital learning delivered by an approved online learning provider.

IV. Assessment Coordinator

The Superintendent or designee shall be named the school district assessment coordinator. Said person shall be in charge of all assessment procedures and shall bring recommendations to the school board annually for approval.

V. Graduation Assessment Requirements

A. Students enrolled in grade 8 through the 2009-2010 school year are eligible to be assessed under:

1. the graduation-required assessment for diploma (GRAD) in reading, mathematics, or writing under Minn. Stat. § 120B.30, Subd. 1(c)(1) and (2) and Subd. 1(d) (2012) as follows:
 - a. for reading and mathematics:
 - i. obtaining an achievement level equivalent to or greater than proficient as determined through a standard setting process on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments in grade 10 for reading and grade 11 for mathematics or achieving a passing score as determined through a standard setting process on the GRAD in grade 10 for reading and grade 11 for mathematics or subsequent retests;
 - ii. achieving a passing score as determined through a standard setting process on the state-identified language proficiency test in reading and the mathematics test for English language learners or the GRAD equivalent of those assessments for students designated as English language learners;
 - iii. achieving an individual passing score on the GRAD as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 (504) plan;
 - iv. obtaining an achievement level equivalent to or greater than proficient as determined through a standard setting process on the state-identified alternate assessment or assessments in grade 10 for reading and grade 11 for mathematics for students with an IEP; or,

- v. achieving an individual passing score on the state-identified alternate assessment or assessments as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an IEP; and
 - b. for writing:
 - i. achieving a passing score on the GRAD;
 - ii. achieving a passing score as determined through a standard setting process on the state-identified language proficiency test in writing for students designated as English language learners;
 - iii. achieving an individual passing score on the GRAD as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an IEP or 504 plan; or,
 - iv. achieving an individual passing score on the state-identified alternate assessment or assessments as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an IEP.
 - c. Students enrolled in grade 8 in any school year from the 2005-2006 school year to the 2009-2010 school year who do not pass the mathematics GRAD under V.A.1., above, are eligible to receive a high school diploma if they:
 - i. complete with a passing score or grade all state and local coursework and credits required for graduation by the school board granting the students their diploma;
 - ii. participate in district-prescribed academic remediation in mathematics; and,
 - iii. fully participate in at least two retests of the mathematics GRAD test or until they pass the mathematics GRAD test, whichever comes first.
2. the WorkKeys job skills assessment;
 3. the Compass college placement test;
 4. the ACT assessment for college admission;
 5. the armed services vocational aptitude test; or,
 6. the school district may substitute a score from an alternative, equivalent assessment to satisfy the requirements of this paragraph.

B. Students enrolled in grade 8 in the 2010-2011 or 2011-2012 school year are eligible to be assessed under:

1. the GRAD in reading, mathematics, or writing under Minn. Stat. § 120B.30, Subd. 1(c)(1) and (2) (2012) as follows:

2.

a. for reading and mathematics:

- i. obtaining an achievement level equivalent to or greater than proficient as determined through a standard setting process on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments in grade 10 for reading and grade 11 for mathematics or achieving a passing score as determined through a standard setting process on the GRAD in grade 10 for reading and grade 11 for mathematics or subsequent retests;
- ii. achieving a passing score as determined through a standard setting process on the state-identified language proficiency test in reading and the mathematics test for English language learners or the GRAD equivalent of those assessments for students designated as English language learners;
- iii. achieving an individual passing score on the GRAD as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an IEP or 504 plan;
- iv. obtaining an achievement level equivalent to or greater than proficient as determined through a standard setting process on the state-identified alternate assessment or assessments in grade 10 for reading and grade 11 for mathematics for students with an IEP; or,
- v. achieving an individual passing score on the state-identified alternate assessment or assessments as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an IEP; and

b. for writing:

- i. achieving a passing score on the GRAD;
- ii. achieving a passing score as determined through a standard setting process on the state-identified language proficiency test in writing for students designated as English language learners;

- iii. achieving an individual passing score on the GRAD as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an IEP or 504 plan; or,
 - iv. achieving an individual passing score on the state-identified alternate assessment or assessments as determined by appropriate state guidelines for students with an IEP.
 - 2. the WorkKeys job skills assessment;
 - 3. the Compass college placement test;
 - 4. the ACT assessment for college admission;
 - 5. the armed services vocational aptitude test; or,
 - 6. the school district may substitute a score from an alternative, equivalent assessment to satisfy the requirements of this paragraph.
- C. For students enrolled in grade 8 in the 2012-2013 school year and later, students' state graduation requirements, based on a longitudinal, systematic approach to student education and career planning, assessment, instructional support, and evaluation, include the following:
 - 1. an opportunity to participate on a nationally normed college entrance exam in grade 11 or grade 12;
 - 2. achievement and career and college readiness tests in mathematics, reading, and writing. The tests must have a continuum of empirically derived, clearly defined benchmarks focused on students' attainment of knowledge and skills so that students, their parents, and teachers know how well students must perform to have a reasonable chance to succeed in a career or college without the need for postsecondary remediation. In addition, the tests must ensure that the foundational knowledge and skills for students' successful performance in postsecondary employment or education and articulated series of possible targeted interventions are clearly identified and satisfy Minnesota's postsecondary admission requirements. To the extent available, the tests should:
 - a. monitor students' continuous development of and growth in requisite knowledge and skills; analyze students' progress and performance levels, identifying students' academic strengths and diagnosing areas where students require curriculum or instructional adjustments, targeted interventions, or remediation; and,

- b. based on analysis of students' progress and performance data, determine students' learning and instructional needs and the instructional tools and best practices that support academic rigor for the student; and,
3. consistent with this paragraph and Minn. Stat. § 120B.125 (see Policy 604, Section II.H.), age-appropriate exploration and planning activities and career assessments to encourage students to identify personally relevant career interests and aptitudes and help students and their families develop a regularly reexamined transition plan for postsecondary education or employment without need for postsecondary remediation.
4. Based on appropriate state guidelines, students with IEP's may satisfy state graduation requirements by achieving an individual score on the state-identified alternative assessments.
5. Students meeting the state graduation requirements under this section must receive targeted, relevant, academically rigorous, and resourced instruction which may include a targeted instruction and intervention plan focused on improving the student's knowledge and skills in core subjects so that the student has a reasonable chance to succeed in a career or college without need for postsecondary remediation.
6. Students meeting the state graduation requirements under this section and who are students in grade 11 or 12 and who are identified as academically ready for a career or college must be actively encouraged by the school district to participate in courses and programs awarding college credit to high school students. Students are not required to achieve a specified score or level of proficiency on an assessment under this subdivision to graduate from high school.
7. A student's progress toward career and college readiness must be recorded on the student's high school transcript.

VI. High School Credit Requirements

- A. Students must satisfactorily complete 66 credits of course work at the high school level, grades 9-12 inclusively, to be eligible for high school graduation, as specified below.
 1. Language Arts – four years (12 credits);
 2. Social Studies (encompassing U.S. history, geography, world history, economics and government/citizenship) – four years (12 credits);
 3. Science (including one year of biology; one year of chemistry or physics,

and one year of a science elective) – three years (9 credits);

4. Mathematics (including an algebra II credit or its equivalent) – three years (9 credits), and an algebra I course by the end of 8th grade.
5. Other – 24 credits, including required courses in the arts, health, safety education and physical education. (No more than 12 credits of instrumental and/or vocal music may be applied toward fulfillment of the graduation requirements.)
 - a. Art – (3 credits);
 - b. Health – (2 credits);
 - c. Physical Education – (4 credits), and

B. Course Credit by Assessment – Students may receive credit for one or more required or elective courses through an assessment process.

1. A student may not attempt to receive credit by assessment for a course if:
 - a. The student has previously attempted to receive credit by assessment for that course;
 - b. The student has been previously enrolled in that course; or,
 - c. The student does not maintain his or her full-time status in the school.
2. A student who wants to receive credit by assessment for sequential courses must do so in sequence.
3. A student who wants to receive credit by assessment for a course which has a prerequisite must first satisfactorily complete or receive credit by assessment for the prerequisite course.
4. To receive credit by assessment for a course, a student must go through the following process:
 - a. Discuss the request with a counselor;
 - b. Complete the Application for Testing Out of a Course, and turn it in to the high school counseling office at least one full trimester (or quarter) before the beginning of the course; and,
 - c. Satisfactorily complete the required assessment for the course

within the specified time line.

5. When a student applies to receive credit by assessment for a particular course, the requirements for awarding the credit will be established. Once the credit requirements have been established for a particular course, those same requirements will be used if and when other students request credit by assessment for the same course.

VII. College and Career Readiness

- A. Students in grades 11 and 12 must be offered an opportunity to participate in a nationally recognized college entrance exam on a school day.
- B. Grade 11 special education students meeting certain criteria must be offered the opportunity to participate in the Minnesota Test of Academic Skills (MTAS).

VIII. Reporting and Notification to Parents, Guardians and Students

- A. Graduation Requirements – No later than 30 working days after the date a student enters grade 9 or transfers into the district during or after grade 9, the district will provide the student and his or her parents or guardians with written notice on the following:
 1. Graduation requirements;
 2. Exploration and planning activities for career interest or postsecondary education;
 3. Monitoring student's development of and growth in career and college readiness; and,
 4. The opportunity for students to participate in a nationally recognized college entrance exam on a school day.
- B. Assessment Results – No later than 90 days after a student takes a college entrance exam, the district will provide the student and his or her parent or guardian with written notice of the college entrance exam results.

IX. Recordkeeping

The district will keep a record on each student that includes the college entrance exam taken and the results. Individual student progress will be reported on the record as follows:

- A. For a student who takes a college entrance exam under standard conditions or with an accommodation, and,

- B. For a student who passes an MTAS with a modification established in an Individual Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 accommodation plan (504 Plan)

X. Students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and/or a Section 504 Accommodation Plan (504 Plan)

- A. The IEP team or Section 504 team will address the graduation requirements for students with an IEP and/or a Section 504 accommodation plan beginning in grade 9, in accordance with Minnesota Statute 120B.024, Graduation requirements; course credits.
- B. A student with an IEP or a Section 504 accommodation plan will be granted a high school diploma that is identical to the diploma granted other students once he or she satisfactorily completes the following items, as specified in his or her IEP or Section 504 accommodation plan developed by the IEP or Section 504 team:
 - 1. Those classes that regular education students need to attain a high school diploma that are appropriate and attainable by the student with an IEP or Section 504 accommodation plan; and,
 - 2. The individualized requirements for graduation outlined in the IEP or 504 plan.
- C. Students with an IEP will receive credit for special education instruction. Credit substitution will be specified in the IEP.

XI. English Learners (EL)

- A. Generally speaking, students enrolled in EL may receive a regular English credit for one EL course per term. Students earn elective credit for other EL courses taken during that term. This practice encourages more proficient English learners to earn at least part of their English requirement through non-EL English courses.
- B. Exceptions are made based on the English proficiency of the learner; for example, students arriving as non-English speakers in grade 8 or later, may earn more than one English credit per term, possibly meeting all of their English requirement through EL courses. Exceptions are made at the discretion of EL and counseling staff.

XII. Work Experience Students

- A. Students in grades 11 and 12 enrolled in work experience programs will receive

one credit per trimester or quarter for successful completion of the seminar. Students receive a maximum of two credits per trimester or quarter for work during school hours spent in an on-the-job training program.

- B. Students enrolled in work experience programs must meet all graduation requirements for their grade level. Students enrolled in a work experience program must take no less than three required subjects each trimester or quarter (exclusive of seminar). This does not include elective credits.

XIII. Summer School

A maximum of four credits per year earned in District 199 summer school may be used to meet the graduation requirements.

XIV. Rigorous Course of Study Waiver

1. Upon receiving a student's application signed by the student's parent or guardian, the school district must declare that a student meets or exceeds a specific academic standard required for graduation if the school board determines that the student:
 - a) is participating in a course of study, including an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course or program; a learning opportunity outside the curriculum of the school district; or an approved preparatory program for employment or postsecondary education that is equally or more rigorous than the corresponding state or local academic standard required by the school district;
 - b) would be precluded from participating in the rigorous course of study, learning opportunity, or preparatory employment or postsecondary education program if the student were required to achieve the academic standard to be waived; and,
 - c) satisfactorily completes the requirements for the rigorous course of study, learning opportunity, or preparatory employment or postsecondary education program.
2. The school board also may formally determine other circumstances in which to declare that a student meets or exceeds a specific academic standard that the site requires for graduation under this section.
3. A student who completes a postsecondary enrollment options course or program or an advanced placement or international baccalaureate course or program is not required to complete other requirements of the academic standards corresponding to that specific rigorous course of study.

XV. Transfer Students

A student who transfers into District 199 will be expected to meet graduation requirements beginning with the date of entrance.

- A. Course Credits – All passed course credits earned at previously attended public schools will be accepted by District 199 as part of the student’s requirement to successfully complete 66 credits, as described in section 1, above.
 - 1. District 199 will attempt to determine the content of courses, programs and other educational experiences to credit the student as fully as possible for previous learning. This determination may include asking the student or the sending institution to verify the content of completed courses and programs when it is not clear from the transcript or other documentation.
- B. Nonpublic and Home School Course Credits – When a nonpublic or home school student transfers to District 199, credits will be evaluated by the principal or designee.
 - 1. If the nonpublic and home schools are accredited by a Minnesota recognized accrediting agency, the district will:
 - i. Accept all credits certified on the transcript;
 - ii. Equate all transferred curriculum and/or course content with District 199 curriculum and/or course content;
 - iii. Accept all letter grades;
 - iv. Accept all standardized testing that fulfills the District 199 requirements for graduation;
 - v. Compute class rank and grade point average from the student’s transcript; and,
 - vi. Require the student to be enrolled in District 199 during the last two quarters/trimesters of his/her senior year in order to receive a District 199 diploma.
 - 2. If the nonpublic and home schools are not accredited by a Minnesota recognized accrediting agency, the district will:
 - i. Review the transcript and attempt to equate all transferred curriculum and/or course content with District 199 curriculum and/or course content;

- ii. Accept all standardized testing that fulfills the District 199 requirements for graduation;
- iii. Compute class rank and grade point average only if letter grades have been awarded; and,
- iv. Require the student to be enrolled in District 199 during his/her entire senior year in order to receive a District 199 diploma.
- v. Satisfactory documentation of curriculum and/or course content may be required before credit and letter grades will be awarded.

XVI. Other Credits

- A. Correspondence – Elective credits earned through accredited correspondence courses are acceptable when prior arrangements and approval have been granted by the high school principal. Make-up credit will be allowed for seniors who need credit for spring graduation.
- B. Credit from Online Learning Courses –
 - 1. Secondary Credits granted to a student through an online learning course or program that meets or exceeds a graduation standard or requirement shall be counted toward the graduation and credit requirements of a student completing the Minnesota Academic Standards.
 - 2. Course credit will be considered only upon official documentation from the online learning provider evidencing the course taken and the grade and credit awarded to the student.
 - 3. When a student provides documentation from an online learning provider, the course credit and course grade shall be recorded and counted toward graduation credit requirements for all courses or programs that meet or exceed the school district's graduation requirements in the same manner as credits are awarded for students transferring from another Minnesota public school as set forth in section IV.A. above.
- C. Study Abroad – Credits earned by students studying abroad (e.g., American Field Service [AFS] students) will be evaluated by the high school principal and may be approved and applied to meet graduation requirements.
- D. Post-Secondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) Program – Credits earned through PSEO are acceptable when prior arrangements have been made and approval has been granted by the high school principal.

- E. ABE (Adult Basic Education) Diploma Program – Credits may be earned from the District 199 ABE Diploma Program by adults aged 21 and over and by students aged 16 to 20 who are eligible under the Minnesota Education Options Program Law. Students receive a diploma from a District 199 high school.
1. When contacted by a candidate for the program, information about credit needs will be exchanged between the student's original high school and the ABE Diploma Program. ABE Diploma Program staff will send the appropriate high school principal a student information form, including a request for the following information:
 - i. Confirmation of support of the student's enrollment in the ABE Diploma Program;
 - ii. Description of credits and basic skills tests needed by the student to complete graduation requirements; and,
 - iii. The student's health record.
 2. For students aged 16 to 20, the counselor at the identified District 199 high school will assess the student's individual learning plan from the ABE Diploma Program after each seven credits earned by the student.
 3. With approval from the appropriate District 199 high school principal, students may earn credits from the ABE Diploma Program under dual attendance by continuing full-time attendance at their original high school and seeking additional credits in the ABE Diploma Program during flexible study times.
 4. ABE Diploma Program students must adhere to ABE policies regarding attendance, credit and graduation standards requirements, and District 199 policies on student behavior.

XVII. Grading System

The high school academic year is divided into three marking periods, or trimesters, which are approximately twelve weeks long. A final grade is given for each credit taken at the end of each trimester. The grade point average (GPA) will be calculated on a 4.0 system. Grades will be issued; and grade points will be based on the following components:

A = 4.0	C+ = 2.333	D- = 0.667
A- = 3.667	C = 2.0	E = 0.333
B+ = 3.333	C- = 1.667	F = 0.0
B = 3.0	D+ = 1.333	
B- = 2.667	D = 1.0	

P = Pass, not included in GPA
NC/NG = No credit/no grade, not included in GPA
S = Satisfactory, not included in GPA
U = Unsatisfactory, not included in GPA
I = Incomplete (course work not completed due to serious illness/extended absences)

XVI. Honors Class Rank

Honors class rank is an alternative ranking option that recognizes and ranks students who take a significant number of Advanced Placement (AP) or Honors courses. To qualify for inclusion in the Honors class rank at Simley High School, a student must meet the following criteria:

- A. Complete 22 trimesters or more of Honors or AP courses by the end of the second trimester of his/her senior year.
- B. Earn a grade of B- or higher in Honors or AP courses to be eligible for inclusion in the 22 trimester requirement.

Students who transfer to Simley High School may apply for inclusion in the Honors class rank.

Honors class rank is officially calculated at the end of each academic school year for grades 9-11. For seniors, final Honors class rank is determined at the end of the second trimester.

XVII. Regular Class Rank

Class rank is cumulative from the beginning of ninth grade and is based on the final grades in all trimester classes. Class rank is officially calculated at the end of each academic school year for grades 9-11. For seniors, final class rank is determined at the end of the second trimester. Honors and Advanced Placement courses are not weighted.

XVIII. Early Graduation

Students may be considered for early graduation, as provided for within Minn. Stat. § 120B.07, upon meeting the following conditions:

- A. All course or standards and credit requirements must be met;
- B. The principal or designee shall conduct an interview with the student and parent or guardian, familiarize the parties with opportunities available in post-secondary education, and arrive at a timely decision; and
- C. The principal's decision shall be in writing and may be subject to review by the

superintendent and school board

- Legal References:***
- Minn. Stat. § 120A.24, subd.2, Availability of documentation
 - Minn. Stat. § 120B.02 - Educational Expectations for Minnesota's Students
 - Minn. Stat. § 120B.021 – Required Academic Standards
 - Minn. Stat. § 120B.024 – Graduation Requirements; Course Credits
 - Minn. Stat. § 120B.07 - Early Graduation
 - Minn. Stat. § 120B.11 - School District Process
 - Minn. Stat. § 120B.125, Planning for students' successful transition to post-secondary education and employment
 - Minn. Stat. § 120B.30 – Statewide Testing and Reporting System
 - Minn. Stat. § 123B.445, Minnesota Nonpublic Education Council
 - Minn. Stat. § 124D.68, Graduation incentives program
 - Minn. Rules Parts 3500.3100, Issuance of General Education Development (GED) Diploma
 - Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0640-3501.0655 – Graduation Standards – Language Arts
 - Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0700-3501.0745 – Graduation Standards – Mathematics
 - Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0800-3501.0815 – Graduation Standards – Arts
 - Minn. Rules Parts 3501.0900-3501.0955 – Graduation Standards – Science
 - Minn. Rules Parts 3501.1200-3501.1210 – Graduation Standards – English Language Development
 - Minn. Rules Parts 3501.1300-3501.1345 – Graduation Standards – Social Studies
 - 20 U.S.C. § 6301, et seq. – Every Student Succeeds Act
- Cross References:***
- MSBA/MASA Policy 104 - School District Mission Statement
 - MSBA/MASA Policy 601 - School District Curriculum and Instruction Goals
 - MSBA/MASA Policy 614 - School District Testing Plan and Procedure
 - MSBA/MASA Policy 615 - Testing Accommodations, Modifications, and Exemptions for IEPs, Section 504 Plans, and LEP Students
 - MSBA/MASA Policy 616 - School District System Accountability