

Mt. Blue High School

Differentiated Diploma Pathway

Introduction

The Mt. Blue High School Differentiated Diploma Pathway is designed to be an alternative diploma option for students who have faced a life-altering hardship that has resulted in having a detrimental impact on their opportunity to graduate. This pathway is a highly structured program for a select group of students whose circumstances will prevent them from graduating from high school with their cohort graduation class.

Referral Criteria

To be eligible for referral, a student must be in their third year of high school. The student must indicate an interest in earning their high school diploma. Additionally, two or more of the following criteria statements must apply:

1. Was retained (held back) at some point during grades 1-8
2. Has previously dropped out of school or has a pattern of truancy
3. Has a significant number of course failures which will prevent the student from graduating with their cohort.
4. Has experienced a documented hardship which negatively affects his/her ability to graduate with their cohort such as:
 - a. McKinney Vento Status (homelessness, transience, runaway, unaccompanied youth)
 - b. Was/Is in treatment for a medical or mental health condition
 - c. Was/Is in Foster Care
 - d. Was/Is in treatment for substance abuse
 - e. Attended more than three high schools
 - f. Other extreme hardship.

Referral Process

Referrals may be made by a teacher, school counselor, or school administrator. The student must complete the Differentiated Diploma Application Form ([link.](#)) Prior to the referral being made, the student's administrator and counselor will meet with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the student's academic progress and future career plans. An individual graduation plan will be developed and included with the application.

All efforts should be made to refer a student prior to the first semester of the year when he/she may be eligible to graduate. This is to ensure that a proper course schedule is in place. Referrals will not be accepted during the last semester of the year in which the student is expected to graduate, except in very rare situations.

A panel will consist of at least a: school counselor, school administrator, teacher, and the Assistant Superintendent who will review applications and make a determination. The panel will meet at least twice per year, or as needed during the first and second quarter, but may meet more frequently if needed. The panel will make the decision for acceptance into the program after reviewing the referral materials

listed above. When a student is approved, the student will meet with their counselor monthly to monitor progress.

Minimum Differentiated Diploma Requirements

An individual graduation plan will be developed with the student and the school counselor. It should be included with the application and must be approved by both the panel and the school principal. The plan must include and the student must meet the following minimum graduation requirements:

- 4.0 Credits of English
- 2.0 Credits of Math
- 2.0 Credits of Social Studies including US History A/B and Government
- 2.0 Credits of Science
- 0.5 Credit of Health
- 0.5 Credit of PE
- 0.5 Credit of Economics
- 0.5 Credit of Visual/Performing Arts
- 6.0 Credits of Electives

18 Credits Total

Students will receive a regular Mt. Blue High School Diploma. A notation will be made on the transcript to indicate the differentiated credit requirements.

Candidate Expectations

The student must follow the graduation plan approved by the panel and the school principal. The student will also follow a support plan that is developed between the student and the mentor. The student's status will be reviewed each month by the student's counselor and administrator. If the student does not follow the support plan or successfully complete the courses outlined in the approved graduation plan, the student's ability to graduate may be delayed and the panel will meet to consider whether or not the student may continue in the program.

Relevant Statutes

State of Maine Graduation Requirements:

<https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0740&item=3&snum=129>

Compulsory Attendance:

<https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/20-A/title20-Asec5001-A.html>

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