



MEQUON-THIENSVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF EDUCATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

<u>Subject:</u> Initial Reading of the Modified High School Graduation Requirements Policy	<u>Category:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Action <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information
<u>Attachments:</u> Appendix A: HHS Credit Earned Analysis Policy #5460 Graduation Policy (Proposed Changes)	<u>Date for Consideration:</u> October 31, 2011

Background:

On July 18, 2011, the Board of Education for the Mequon-Thiensville School District voted to change the teaching and learning schedule used at Homestead High School effective with the 2012-2013 school year. As a result of the changed high school schedule, students will have increased opportunities to obtain and/or recover high school credits starting with the 2012-2013 school year. As identified in July, in an effort to retain rigor and consistency in the high school credit system at Homestead High School, the district and high school administrations are proposing a modification in high school graduation credit requirements.

Current Status & Proposal:

Currently, a student is required to obtain a total of twenty-two (22) credits to graduate from Homestead High School. Administration would recommend the following phase-in program:

Grade Level	Graduation Year	# of Credits Required for Graduation	# of Available Credits During Four Years at Homestead
Freshmen	2016	24.0	30.0
Sophomore	2015	23.0	29.5
Junior	2014	22.5	29.0
Senior	2013	22.0	28.5

Rationale for the Proposal:

Twenty-four (24) credits required for graduation would become permanent effective with the Class of 2016 and beyond. The rationale for the recommendation includes the following:

- There are more opportunities to obtain and/or recover credits in a trimester schedule, hence the need to increase credit requirements.
- Homestead's credit requirement increase is consistent with trimester implementation among the school districts studied by the study team.
- The average number of credits obtained by a graduating senior from Homestead in the past four years has been 25.16; this is 1.16 credits more than administration is recommending for an increase in graduation requirements.
- In the Class of 2011, 90% of students earned 23 or more credits for graduation. See Appendix A for more detail.
- The proposed change in graduation credits will not prohibit students from graduating early.

- The additional two (2) credits will not be associated with a certain discipline or academic department. The credits will be electives. See Policy 5460 attached for further details.

Considerations Associated with the Proposal:

- The phase-in approach is the most impartial implementation of the new requirements.
- This recommendation accommodates students who constructed their initial four-year high school course plan considering the previous seven-period semester schedule. The phase-in approach dictates that the first three graduating classes in the trimester always have a “differential” of 6.5 between the credits available and the credits required for graduation; currently, that differential is 6.0 (22 required and 28 available).
- Homestead is prepared to respond to the needs of the fewer than 10% of students who are currently earning the minimum number of credits in the current 22-credit system. Improved academic support systems and best practices in students’ retention of learning, along with changes to the current instructional practices, are already being implemented as part of the Homestead School Growth Plan. The nature of the trimester—having fewer courses on which students must focus at one time—was reported as an important opportunity for similar students in those school districts studied in the study team process.
- The trimester offers additional opportunities for credit remediation over the current system.
- The recommendation aligns with Wisconsin statutes regarding high school credits for graduation.
- There are no financial implications to requiring more credits because no staff is being added. In the trimester, students have 15 opportunities to take classes and earn credits per year; currently, students have 14 opportunities. Students’ enrollment in an additional class per year may result in slightly larger class sizes for some courses, the cost-neutral approach to addressing students in more classes.

Action Steps Timeline	Funding	Responsible Leadership	Timeline
Approval of Graduation Requirement Proposal	N/A	Administration	November
Changes to Course Selection/Registration Process	N/A	Counseling Office	November
Communication to Students and Parents	N/A	Administration	November

Submitted By: Eric Dimmitt	
Board of Education Action:	<input type="checkbox"/> Approve <input type="checkbox"/> Reject <input type="checkbox"/> Research/Report Back

Appendix A

Homestead High School Credit Earned Analysis

Class of 2011 Data		
<i>Credits Earned by Curricular Area (required classes only)*</i>		
Average Number of Credits Earned-TOTAL	25.22	
Average Number of Credits Earned- <i>English</i>	4.01	
Average Number of Credits Earned- <i>Math</i>	3.73	
Average Number of Credits Earned- <i>Science</i>	3.59	
Average Number of Credits Earned- <i>Social Studies</i>	3.00	
<i>*Additional electives may not be reflected in this average</i>		
Count of Graduates by Total Credit Level		
	Count	Percent
Students with 22 credits	26.00	7%
Students with 23 credits	16.00	4%
Students with 24 credits	70.00	19%
Students with 25 credits	51.00	14%
Students with 26 credits	63.00	17%
Students with 27 credits or above	146.00	39%
Previous Graduating Classes Data		
Average Number of Credits Earned Class of 2007-2010		
Average Number of Credits Earned - Class of 2007	25.05	
Average Number of Credits Earned - Class of 2008	25.27	
Average Number of Credits Earned - Class of 2009	25.23	
Average Number of Credits Earned - Class of 2010	25.11	
<i>Number of Seventh Semester Graduates</i>		
Class of 2007	10	
Class of 2008	11	
Class of 2009	8	
Class of 2010	11	
Class of 2011	5	
Miscellaneous		
	S1 Enrollment	S2 Enrollment
Number of Study Halls Taken by HHS Students		
Class of 2012 (number in class=344)	157	152
Class of 2013 (number in class=351)	144	120
Class of 2014 (number in class (316)	142	102
Class of 2015 (number in class=336)	172	120

Modified Language for the High School Graduation Discussion
(changes underlined and italicized)

5460 - GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

The District Administrator or his/her designee shall determine whether a student has satisfied the criteria in this policy and any other District policy applicable to high school graduation. The District Administrator or his/her designee shall also inform students and their parents/guardians of the requirements of this policy and of the high school student's progress toward meeting these requirements.

To qualify for a high school graduation diploma after September 1, 2012, a student enrolled in Homestead High School will be required to meet criteria 1 and 2.

Criterion 1: Board Approved Activities

Effective in the 2012-2013 school year, Homestead High School will be organized to have a five (5) period day for each of three terms or trimesters. In each trimester, all students must enroll in at least four (4) classes in addition to one (1) study hall and lunch. A student may enroll in five (5) classes with a lunch period and no study hall. Some students participate in Board-approved alternative programs such as cooperative vocational educational programs, work study programs, consortium programs, and college, university and/or vocational school courses. The school determines these options after discussion with the student and his/her parent.

Criterion 2: Academic Performance/Credit Requirements to Graduate *(Effective with the Class of 2016)*

Computer Science	0.50	Physical Education	1.50
English	4.00	Science	2.00
Fine Arts	1.00	Social Studies	3.00
Health	0.50		
Mathematics	2.00	<i><u>Electives</u></i>	<i><u>9.5</u></i>
		<i><u>TOTAL</u></i>	<i><u>24.00</u></i>

Specific information regarding the courses that are available for students to meet the requirements in each of these areas is published annually in the Homestead High School Course Guide and is available in the high school Counseling Office.

If a student does not meet the requirements for criterion 2, then s/he must retake and pass the failed course(s) either during the school year, during summer school, through approved correspondence course(s), or by enrolling in the school-sponsored Nova Net program. 115.28, 118.30, 118.33, Wis. Stats.