

# **POLICY**

## **Board of Education**

### **Bernards Township**

### **File Code: M 5460 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION**

The Bernards Township Board of Education will recognize the successful completion of the secondary school instructional program by the award of a State-endorsed diploma certifying that the pupil has met all State and local requirements for high school graduation. The Board will annually certify to the County Superintendent that each pupil who has been awarded a diploma has met the requirements for graduation.

### **CURRICULUM REQUIREMENTS**

A graduating pupil must have earned a minimum of 120 credits. Also, all graduates must have successfully completed the following courses:

1. Twenty credits in language arts literacy aligned to grade nine through twelve standards, effective with the 2009-2010 grade nine class;
2. Fifteen credits in mathematics, including Algebra I or the content equivalent ("content equivalent" is defined at N.J.A.C. 6A:8-1.3) effective with the 2008-2009 grade nine class, including geometry or the content equivalent effective with the 2010-2011 grade nine class, and including a third year of mathematics that builds on the concepts and skill of algebra and geometry and that prepares pupils for college and 21st century careers effective with the 2012-2013 grade nine class;
3. Fifteen credits in social studies, including satisfaction of N.J.S.A. 18A:35-1 and 18A:35-2; which requires five credits in world history, and the integration of civics, economics, geography, and global content in all course offerings;
4. Fifteen credits in science, including at least five credits in laboratory biology/life science effective with the 2008-2009 grade nine class, and two additional laboratory/inquiry-based science courses (ten credits) in chemistry and physics effective with the 2010-2011 grade nine class;
5. One credit year of physical education, health and/or safety for each year of enrollment; distributed as one hundred fifty minutes per week, as required by N.J.S.A. 18A:35-5, 7, and 8;
6. At least five credits in visual and performing arts;
7. At least five credits in world languages or pupil demonstration of proficiency as set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1 (a)2ii(2);
8. At least two and one-half credits in financial, economic, business, and entrepreneurial literacy, effective with the 2010-2011 grade nine class;
9. Technological literacy, consistent with the Core Curriculum Content Standards, integrated throughout the curriculum;

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10. At least five credits in 21st century life and careers, or career-technical education; and
11. Electives as determined by the high school program sufficient to total a minimum of one hundred twenty credits.

Credit will be assigned on the same basis to all high school courses offered by the Board.

Each course of study required for graduation shall include a statement of the required proficiencies approved by the Board. Credit for each required course will be awarded on the successful completion of the program assigned and demonstration of mastery of the approved proficiencies. Pupils shall be given every reasonable opportunity to remediate and satisfy failed proficiencies.

Successful completion of remedial courses will count toward the total number of credits required for graduation but will not satisfy the curricula requirements.

Curricula requirements may also be met by a pupil's participation, individually or as a member of a group, in a planned program of curricular activities, which may include independent study programs, field experiences, community service programs, and competency-based evaluation. Group curricular activities must be approved by the Board.

A pupil's participation in curricular activities must be approved in advance by the Principal. Credit will be awarded for program completion only when the Principal certifies that the pupil has met specific instructional objectives.

### **OPTION II**

The 120 credit requirement may be met in whole or in part through the use of Option II.

Option II establishes alternate pathways for pupils of the district to satisfy requirements for high school graduation and meet the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards in accord with New Jersey Administrative Code [N.J.A. C. 6A:8-S. 1 (a) ii].

The purpose of Option II is to provide educational experiences that are meaningful and relevant, and that provide pupils with opportunities to explore and achieve at high levels. In order to maximize pupil achievement and meet diverse pathways for learning, Option II permits pupils to employ alternative learning experiences that are stimulating and intellectually challenging, and that enable pupils to fulfill or exceed the expectations set forth in the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

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### 1. Applications for Policy

Employment of Option II may include, but is not limited to, one or more of the following alternatives: an online course, physical education exemption, pupil exchange programs, interdisciplinary or theme-based programs, independent study, internships, community service, accredited college coursework, concurrent enrollment at colleges and universities, meaningful research, and structured learning experiences.

### 2. Eligibility

Option II alternatives requested by eligible pupils must meet or exceed the proficiencies established by the New Jersey Core Curriculum Standards, receive prior approval by the Option II Review Committee, and demonstrate satisfactory performance as measured by district approved competency assessment instruments in order for credits to be awarded. It is understood that participation in Option II alternative experiences is voluntary. Pupils may fulfill the requirements for graduation by pursuing credits earned through the traditional classroom environment (N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5., through alternative learning experiences availed by Option II [N.J.A.C. 6A:8-S.1 (a)l ii], or through a combination of both programs. However, approved participation in Option II activities implies pupil and/or parent responsibility for attendance, transportation, personal safety and well being, specialized equipment, and any and all costs not otherwise provided by the school.

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

- a. The Principal shall have primary responsibility and authority for the implementation of the Option II program and will oversee all aspects of the program. All programs of study, individual or group, approved under Option II must meet or exceed the proficiencies and skills identified by the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. Skill proficiency will be measured or demonstrated through assessment instruments established by the Option II Review Committee.
- b. Pupils wishing to pursue programs of study under Option II guidelines must first present their proposal to the Option II Review Committee for approval. The Option II Review Committee shall consist of the Principal, Subject Area Supervisor, and the Director of Curriculum. Other district personnel may comprise the committee at the discretion of the Principal. The Option II Review Committee will consider a pupil's GPA when determining eligibility for Option II credit.
- c. All eligible pupils will be afforded equitable access to programs of study under the Option II program. Eligibility will be determined by the Option II Review Committee. In its deliberation, the Option II Review Committee will weigh the

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overall benefits, costs, advantages and disadvantages, both to the pupil and the district.

- d. All programs of study proposed through the Option II program shall have specific instructional objectives [N.J.A.C. 6A:5-1-(a) ii(c)] aligned with the Core Curriculum Content Standards and comply with all applicable laws and regulations including child labor laws and regulations governing occupational safety.
- e. Individual requests by pupils to employ Option II alternatives must be submitted to the Options II Review Committee prior to the semester in which they are proposed for implementation.
- f. Programs approved and credits awarded toward the attainment of a high school diploma shall be reviewed and determined by the Option II Review Committee.
- g. Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and/or pupils may appeal decisions rendered by the Option II Review Committee. Such appeals will be heard by the Superintendent of Schools.
- h. Pupils electing independent study, college coursework, internships, or other programs that are held off the high school campus and approved by the Option II Review Committee, will be responsible for providing their own transportation to and from the work or school site.
- i. Pupils approved for off-campus learning experiences shall be responsible for their personal safety and well-being. Internships or other worksite learning experiences at area businesses will require a signed Memorandum of Agreement among the school, the worksite, and the pupil. Such memoranda will specify the roles and responsibilities of each party.
- j. The district bears no responsibility for pupil transportation or personal safety and shall be held harmless for any liability arising from issues of transportation or personal safety for pupils participating in the Option II programs or activities.
- k. Pupils approved for Option II activities must have parental permission to participate in any alternative learning experiences. Such permission will be granted through a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and returned to the district before beginning the program.
- l. Pupils approved for college classes or concurrent enrollment at colleges or

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universities under Option II and through The Governor's Twelfth Grade Initiative [N.J.A.C. 6A:8-S.1(a)1 ii(3)] must first be approved by the district. Pupils must earn a "D" or better in each college course in order to receive concurrent credit.

- m. Outside coursework for Ridge High School credit will be recorded as pass/fail and will not count toward GPA, but will appear on the college transcript.

### **HIGH SCHOOL PROFICIENCY ASSESSMENT AND BIOLOGY COMPETENCY TEST**

In order to receive a diploma, a pupil must demonstrate proficiency at or above the State levels in reading, writing, and mathematics on the State mandated High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) and Biology Competency Test beginning with the class of 2014.

A twelfth grade pupil who has satisfied all other State and local graduation requirements but performs below the State minimum level of proficiency in one or more of the HSPA areas will be provided a special review assessment conducted in accordance with rules of the State Board of Education. The findings of the special review assessment will be recorded on a student profile form and will be independently evaluated by a review panel of at least three teaching staff members not currently instructing the pupil. A review panel's recommendation that the pupil's demonstrable skills meet State standards must be endorsed by the Principal, the Superintendent, and the County Superintendent before the Board may award the pupil a diploma. This review procedure is intended to protect pupils who do not test well and shall not be used to excuse unmotivated or careless pupils or to elevate the number of diplomas awarded by this Board.

A person eighteen years of age or older not enrolled in a school who has attended Ridge High School and has met all State and local graduation requirements, except the demonstration of basic skills, may take the HSPA at the time and place announced by the Board and on certification that he or she has passed the test, shall be awarded a State endorsed diploma by the Board.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Regular attendance is essential to the successful completion of a course of study, and pupils are expected to be present in every scheduled class except as their attendance is excused in accordance with Board Policy #5200.

### **REMEDATION SERVICES**

A pupil who fails to acquire the course proficiencies required by the Board will be given the opportunity in each academic year to demonstrate mastery of failed proficiencies and will be assessed at least once

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each year until all identified deficiencies have been remediated.

#### **PUPILS WITH EDUCATIONAL DISABILITIES**

In order to graduate, pupils with educational disabilities must meet all the graduation requirements established by State Board rules and this policy, including minimum proficiency levels on the HSPA, curriculum requirements, and attendance standards, unless the pupil's individualized education program (IEP) specifies alternate requirements for a state endorsed diploma. The pupil's IEP may include an Alternate Proficiency Assessment (APA).

A pupil with educational disabilities may be exempted from the HSPA and curricular proficiencies if the IEP sets goals and objectives that do not include the range of HSPA skills and curricular proficiencies. A pupil may be exempted from taking the HSPA if the IEP establishes that the pupil would be adversely affected by taking the HSPA. An IEP that does not include the proficiencies measured by the HSPA and the curriculum generally required for graduation must include a rationale for the exemptions and alternate proficiencies required for the pupil's graduation.

A pupil with educational disabilities who has not been exempted from the proficiencies and has performed below the State minimum levels of proficiencies in one or more areas on the HSPA shall participate in the special review assessment.

If a pupil attends a school other than that of the school district of residence which is empowered to grant a diploma, the pupil shall have the choice of receiving the diploma of the school attended or the diploma of the school district of residence.

Pupils with disabilities who meet the standards for graduation according to this section shall have the opportunity to participate in graduation exercises and related activities on a nondiscriminatory basis.

#### **PUPILS OF LIMITED ENGLISH-SPEAKING ABILITY**

Pupils of limited English-speaking ability must meet all credit, curriculum, and attendance requirements established by this policy and must take the HSPA until it is passed or, if unable to pass the HSPA, must demonstrate basic skills in a special review assessment conducted in English or the pupil's native language or both and must achieve a passing score on a test for fluency in English.

#### **NOTIFICATION**

A copy of all state and local high school graduation requirements shall be distributed to each pupil who enters or transfers into the high school and to the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s). A copy of the school district's requirements for a State endorsed diploma and those programs to assist pupils in attaining

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the State endorsed diploma shall be distributed to each pupil and to the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s).

Each pupil and his/her parent will be notified during the school year of the pupil's progress toward meeting graduation requirements. The parent of a pupil who demonstrates significant deficiencies in meeting course requirements will be so notified within ten (10) days of the marking period in which the deficiencies are discovered and will be offered an opportunity for immediate consultation with appropriate teaching staff members.

The Superintendent shall report annually, at a public meeting not later than September 30, the numbers of pupils graduated, denied graduation, graduated under an IEP, and graduated under the special review assessment procedures.

N.J.S.A. 18A:7C-1 et seq.; 18A:35-1, 35-7; 18A:36-17  
N.J.S.A. 6:8-7.1; 6:28-3.6; 6:39-1.3

**ADOPTED:** December 20, 2010