Local Graduation Competency Requirements: One District's Process

Plainville High School

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The Committee

Rose Marie Cipriano, Principal
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Greg Ziogas, Assistant Principal
Holly Bergen, Instructional Leader Social Studies
Jeff Blanchette, Instructional Leader Music
Joanne Curley, Instructional Leader World Languages
Jan McGann, Instructional Leader Science
Deborah Mosebach, Instructional Leader Library Information
Anne Pingpank, Instructional Leader Art
Chuck Radda, Instructional Leader
Steve Slomski, Instructional Leader Unified Arts
Jeff Sorel, Instructional Leader Physical Education
William Spring, Instructional Leader Guidance
Ernest Zike, Instructional Leader Mathematics
Kristin Giannini, PHS Teacher
Steve Sargalski, PHS Teacher and Administrative Intern
Two PHS Student Representatives
Mary Kilray, Middle School of Plainville Teacher
Linda Van Wagenen, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
Kathleen Binkowski, Superintendent

Tony Rigazzio-Digilio, Facilitator
Graduate Student Note-Taker

Process

Summer, 2001

Organizational Meetings – "High School of the Future"
Ben Tyson, Tony Rigazzio-Digilio (CCSU)
Kathleen Binkowski, Rose Marie Cipriano (Plainville)
Purpose: To develop a plan to approach the project

September, 2001

Introductory Meeting with Committee
Overview of the Challenge: Superintendent
Distribution of Materials
Discussion

October, 2001

The Business Community Expectations

Cara – From General Electric

- Leadership
- Well-rounded individuals
- Values and Integrity
- Competitive Spirit
- Strong work ethic

Attorney Jason Famiglietti

- Communication skills
- Maturity
- Initiative
- Computer skills

Sue Dean – Plainville Chamber of Commerce

- Job seeker
- Know where to look for jobs
- Resume skills
- Computer skills
- Ease in conversation
- Ability to respond to questions thoughtfully and carefully

Suzanne – Mott Manufacturing

- Computer skills
- Blueprint skills
- Mathematics skills
- Writing a business letter
- Communication with colleagues
- Team work
- Understanding how to approach short term goals
- Understanding how to approach long term goals

Other Points made during discussion:

- E-mail etiquette
- Database
- Microsoft Access
- Publisher software
- Proofreading skills (in addition to "spell check")
- E-Commerce

Process

November, 2001

Post-Secondary Educational Institution Expectations

Zaira Santiago – UCONN

- 4 years of English
- 2 years of laboratory science
- 2 years of world language
- 2 years of social studies (one must be US History)
- 3 years of math (preferably pre-calculus)
- Strong writing skills – see this as a weakness
- Strong mathematics skills – again, a weakness

Dr. Rick Roth – Academic Dean CCSU

- 4 years English with emphasis on writing, literature and reading comprehension
- 2 years of science – 1 must be laboratory science
- 3 years of mathematics (Alg. I, Alg. II, Geometry)
- 2 years of world language
- 2 years of social studies
- Students take the "Accuplacer" for placement in math and English
- Weak areas for many students: writing, math

Kelly Pittman – Tunxis Community College

- Open Admissions – HS diploma or GED
- 50% of students need a developmental writing course

Other Points made during discussion:

- Students need a stronger math background
- Students need strong reading and writing skills
- Do not reduce the number of "credits" in English
- Recommend that students take math in senior year; prefer advanced math (pre-calculus or higher)
- The CAPT is not a predictor of how a freshman in college will do
- Students should keep portfolios – especially those interested in the arts
- Presentation skills are important
- Oral communication skills are important
- Important to get kids thinking about college and their future before they get to high school
- Encourage kids to try new areas of study

January, 2002 Work Session – Brainstorming Ideas

February, 2002 Work Session – Wrap Up Plan

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SERIES 2001-2002
CIRCULAR LETTER: C-3

TO: Superintendents of Schools

FROM: Theodore S. Sergi
Commissioner of Education

DATE: August 17, 2001

SUBJECT: Local Graduation Competency Requirements, New Legislation

An Act concerning the Connecticut Academic Performance Test was amended in this years' legislative session. Section 10-223a was repealed and the following was substituted in lieu thereof:

> **Sec. 10-223a. Promotion and graduation policies.** On or before July 1, 2000, each local and regional board of education shall review and revise its policies for promotion from grade to grade and for graduation in order to ensure that such policies foster student achievement, reduce the incidence of social promotion and meet the requirements of this section. On and after said date, such policies shall: (1) Include objective criteria for the promotion and graduation of students, (2) provide for the measuring of the progress of students against such criteria and the reporting of such information to parents and students, (3) include alternatives to promotion such as transition programs, and (4) provide for supplemental services, and such policies may require students who have substantial academic deficiencies that jeopardize their eligibility for promotion or graduation to attend after school programs, summer school or other programs offered by the school district that are designed to assist students in remedying such deficiencies.
>
> **(b) On or before September 1, 2002, each local and regional board of education shall specify the basic skills necessary for graduation for classes graduating in 2006, and for each graduating class thereafter, and include a process to assess a student's level of competency in such skills. The assessment criteria shall include, but shall not exclusively be based on, the results of the tenth grade mastery examination pursuant to section 10-14n. Each local and regional board of education shall identify a course of study for those students who have not successfully completed the assessment criteria to assist such students to reach a satisfactory level of competency prior to graduation.**

As stated above, on or before September 1, 2002, each local and regional boards of education must first identify the basic skills necessary for graduation which will apply to the graduating class of 2006 and thereafter.

For each basic skill area (as decided by the local board of education) districts must specify a "competency" and then identify how they will assess students' competencies and also determine the level or standard required to be met (assessment criteria) for graduation. For those students who do not successfully complete the assessment criteria, the district must provide specific courses geared to help students gain the competencies required for graduation.

The results of the 10th grade CAPT cannot be used as the sole basis for the graduation criteria but must be included as one alternative. For example, to meet a district's mathematics competency, the district might decide that a student meet a district determined score on the mathematics portion of CAPT, or satisfactorily complete a district performance task in mathematics, or achieve a minimum grade in a specific course, or achieve a specified score on a national or other standardized exam or a local exam in mathematics.

While not explicit in the statute, the record of this statute's development supports students being provided sufficient and different options to meet the competency and be given multiple opportunities to do so. Attached is a copy of Milford's graduation requirements as one example.

Since this is a complex and challenging task, which must be completed by September 1, 2002, districts are urged to begin this process now. As you identify the basic skills for which you will assess the students' level of competency, start with the fundamental core of basic skills graduates from your district's system should be able to demonstrate. Examples of districts' unique graduation requirements (Lebanon, Milford, Putnam and Wallingford) are posted on the state web page, www.state.ct.us/sde under Promising Practices.

If you have questions about the use of CAPT or other assessments, please contact Dr. Abigail L. Hughes via email at abigail.hughes@po.state.ct.us. If you have questions or need assistance with identifying graduation competencies, please contact Dr. Betty Sternberg via email at betty.sternberg@po.state.ct.us.

TSS/ahe

Attachment

Graduation Requirements

I. Introduction

To graduate from the Milford Public Schools a student must have earned a minimum of 22.3 credits and must have met the credit distribution requirement. Students must also meet three performance standards: Technology, writing and mathematics. The district's performance standard in writing shall take effect for the class of 2002. The class of 2003 must also meet the district's performance standard in mathematics. Beginning with the class of 2004, each student must earn 0.5 credit in Civics as part of the 3.0 credits in Social Studies.

II. Credit Distribution Requirement

The following courses must be passed:

A. English – 4 credits
B. Mathematics – 3 credits
C. Social Studies – 3 credits including 1.0 in United States History and .5 in Global Studies
D. Science – 3 credits
E. Physical Education – 1.0 credit
F. Health - 0.5 - credit
G. Business, Technology Education, Family and Consumer Science, Art or Music – 1.5 Credits
H. Technology Graduation Requirement – 0.1 credit
I. Writing Performance Standard – 0.1 credit
J. Math Performance Standard – 0.1 credit

III. District's Performance Standards

A. Writing and Mathematics Performance Standards
   1. Definition

      a. Writing: Students shall, prior to the completion of their senior year, produce an essay that is focused, organized, elaborated, and edited for standard English conventions.

      b. Math: Within the content of the course in which the student is enrolled, he/she will satisfactorily complete multistep mathematical problems which require demonstration of basic math operations including fractions or decimals. The student will be provided with any required formulas and may use a calculator in completing the task. The student shall also explain in writing either how he/she arrived at each answer or justify each answer in writing.

   2. Exemptions

      a. Students will be exempt from the district performance standard if they have:
         1) Achieved a score of 8 on a related section of the Connecticut Academic Performance Test – Response to Literature or Interdisciplinary Subjects
         2) Achieved a score equivalent to the national average on the SAT II in mathematics and/or writing
         3) Achieved an annually designated score on the mathematics section of the SAT

Graduation Requirements (continued)

b. Transfers: If a student transfers into the Milford Public Schools after completing at least three years in a high school in another district, he/she may be exempted from Milford's performance standards requirement for graduation.

c. Special Needs: Students with special needs may be exempt from district performance standards for graduation as described in this policy if so indicated in their Individual Education Plan

3. Implementation

a. Students will have at least five opportunities over the course of their junior and senior year to complete the performance standard

b. Students who have not satisfactorily demonstrated the district's performance standard in writing, or who do not qualify for an exemption, will be required to take a writing course in their senior year.

c. Students who have not satisfactorily demonstrated the district's performance standard in mathematics, or who do not qualify for an exemption, will be required to take a mathematics course, other than a computer mathematics course in the senior year.

4. Notification

a. Of teachers: At the beginning of the school year, the Guidance Department will provide to teachers (in subject areas with required performance tasks) a list of all seniors who have not met a standardized test goal in their areas. Teachers will be notified of the junior CAPT scores upon their receipt at the school.

b. Of students: The Guidance Department will write to juniors who do not meet the CAPT goal and the parents of said juniors to remind them of the performance standard requirements for graduation. At the beginning of the school year, each senior shall be notified by his/her guidance counselor of his/her status relative to meeting the performance standards for graduation.

c. Of parents: The Guidance Department will also notify in writing the parents of seniors who have not met the performance standard goal in any area and thus must pass one or more of the district performance tasks.

B. Technology Requirement

The goal of this requirement is to have a student independently design a solution to an authentic, complex problems. The student must select the appropriate technology (such as computers, advanced calculators, or computer-assisted machinery) and use the technology independently to solve the problems. Some examples of appropriate projects are the task of manufacturing a part, a small business simulation, a design problem in drafting or art, a communication/information task, etc. Guidelines for the technology requirement will be available in the Guidance Department. (0.1 credit)

Graduation Requirements (continued)

C. A student may count the credits for the passing the Math performance standard, the writing performance standard or the technology graduation requirement to a maximum of 0.3 credits of the 22.3 needed for graduation.

II. Options If Requirements are Not Met

Seniors who are not eligible for graduation with their class due to a failure to meet the district graduation requirement, as per policy, in one or more subjects as described above, may select one of the following options:

A. Return in September as a fifth year student (*See Policy 6146.3)*
B. Enroll in summer school and pass the requirement
C. Enroll in courses to be designated through the Milford Adult Education Program and pass the assessment
D. Make arrangements for re-testing to meet the performance standard

Legal References: Connecticut General Statutes

10-18 Courses in United States history, government and duties and responsibilities of citizenship
10-19 Teaching about alcohol, nicotine or tobacco, drugs and acquired immune deficiency syndrome
10-220 Duties of boards of education
10-220a High school graduation requirements

(cf. 5123 – Promotion and Retention)

Policy Proposed:	April 14, 1998	MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Revision Proposed:	June 9, 1998	Milford, Connecticut
Policy Approved:	July 7, 1998	
2nd Revision Proposed:	October 12, 1999	
2nd Revision Approved:	October 12, 1999	
3rd Revision Proposed:	March 13, 2001	
3rd Revision Approved:	April 10, 2001	

Graduation Requirement Regulations

I. Performance Objectives

A. The performance objectives in writing are:

1. The students will read an article or story and respond critically in writing to a question called a prompt.

2. Students will edit their writing to show their ability to use standard English conventions.

B. The performance objective in mathematics is:

1. The student will satisfactorily complete multi-step mathematical problems, which require demonstration of basic math operations including fractions or decimals. The student will be provided with any required formulas and may use a calculator in completing the task. The student shall also either explain in writing how he/she arrived at each answer or justify each answer in writing.

II. Administration of Assessment

A. Writing

1. English and Social studies teachers will administer the assessment at least five times over the course of a student's junior or senior years during regular class periods. It will be used as a classroom assignment for all students and will be graded by the teacher and counted as part of the student's work for the marking period.

2. Only the papers of students who scored below 8 out of 12 on the 10th grade CAPT writing assessments, i.e. Response to Literature and Interdisciplinary, will be scored by a committee, and that score will determine whether or not the student has met the writing graduation requirement. A score of 8 out of 12 is required to pass.

3. Papers will be scored without student names on the paper. Each paper will be scored by at least two (2) scorers from a team of three teachers using a rubric with a six-point scale. The team will be appointed by the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, or his/her designee, in consultation with the high school principals. The team will not score paper from within the school in which they teach. Each teacher who scores papers will pass a score reliability test. The rubric is a list of criteria needed for each score, which the students know in advance of the test. In the event of a discrepancy (two scores more than one number apart) the paper will be read by a third scorer who will resolve the discrepancy.

III. Notification of and Reporting of Parents – Writing and Mathematics

A. Preliminary notification

1. Students in grades 8 and 9 will be given a practice assessment and parents will be notified of their child's scores by the school.
2. Continuing current practice, parents of 10th graders are notified of their child's CAPT results in the fall of their junior year.

3. Parents of 11th and 12th graders will be notified of their child's score after each assessment that a student takes.

4. Each high school will notify parents by certified mail that their child has not passed one or more assessments by the end of the junior year.

5. All notifications will include a description of opportunities for additional help.

B. Notification of Successful Completion

1. When a student meets the graduation requirement it will be indicated on his/her transcript at the end of the next marking period.

IV. Appeals

A. Writing

1. Students whose score on the assessment is 6 or 7 points out of 12 will be allowed to appeal their score. Students must submit their request for an appeal to the principal within 20 school days of receiving their score. A student must submit a statement, using the scoring rubric, demonstrating why their score is incorrect. If an appeal is made, the paper will be submitted anonymously to a teacher trained in writing assessment scoring from outside the school.

B. Mathematics

1. Students whose score on the assessment is within 10% of the standard may appeal their score. Students must submit their request for an appeal to the principal within 20 school days of receiving their score. A student must submit a statement, using the criteria of the assessment, demonstrating why their score is incorrect. If an appeal is made, the paper will be submitted anonymously to a teacher trained in mathematics assessment scoring from outside the school.

C. The independent assessor will be selected by the Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction or his/her designee.

D. The outcome of the independent review will be sent to the principal. The principal will communicate the result of the independent review to the student and parent(s)/guardian(s).

E. Any student may appeal the scoring of their paper in writing within 20 days of receiving score to the Superintendent if they believe the process described in these regulations was not followed. The Superintendent will review the case to assure that all regulations were followed. If the Superintendent finds the regulations were not followed, the Superintendent will order a special assessment.

Regulation Proposed: October 12, 1999
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MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Milford, Connecticut