

Proficiency-Based Graduation Requirements (PBGRs)

Awarding a high school diploma based on the accumulation of credits earned for passing courses has been a longstanding practice in American high schools, but this system has not ensured that students meet high academic standards and demonstrate proficiency. Consequently, many graduates leave high school unprepared to succeed in postsecondary education and modern careers.

To help schools establish a philosophical and pedagogical foundation for this work, the Great Schools Partnership created the following “Ten Principles of Proficiency-Based Learning,” which describe the common features found in the most effective proficiency-based systems:

1. All learning expectations are clearly and consistently communicated to students and families, including long-term expectations (such as graduation requirements and graduation standards), short-term expectations (such as the specific learning objectives for a course or other learning experience), and general expectations (such as the performance levels used in the school’s grading and reporting system).
2. Student achievement is evaluated against common learning standards and performance expectations that are consistently applied to all students regardless of whether they are enrolled in traditional courses or pursuing alternative learning pathways.
3. All forms of assessment are standards-based and criterion-referenced, and success is defined by the achievement of expected standards, not relative measures of performance or student-to-student comparisons.
4. Formative assessments measure learning progress during the instructional process, and formative-assessment results are used to inform instructional adjustments, teaching practices, and academic support.
5. Summative assessments evaluate learning achievement, and summative-assessment results record a student’s level of proficiency at a specific point in time.
6. Academic progress and achievement are monitored and reported separately from work habits, character traits, and behaviors such as attendance and class participation, which are also monitored and reported.
7. Academic grades communicate learning progress and achievement to students and families, and grades are used to facilitate and improve the learning process.
8. Students are given multiple opportunities to improve their work when they fail to meet expected standards.
9. Students can demonstrate learning progress and achievement in multiple ways through differentiated assessments, personalized-learning options, or alternative learning pathways.
10. Students are given opportunities to make important decisions about their learning, which includes contributing to the design of learning experiences and learning pathways.

¹ See [https://www.greatschools.org/greatschools/ten-principles-of-proficiency-based-learning/](#)

To ensure that all students graduate from our schools with the knowledge, skills, and work habits they will need in adult life, Lamoille Union High School District #18 has adopted a proficiency-based system of teaching, learning, promotion, and graduation. Beginning with Lamoille Union High School Class of 2020, all students will need to demonstrate achievement of all cross-curricular and content-area graduation standards before receiving a high school diploma. These new graduation requirements will ensure that each student provides evidence that they have achieved expected learning standards, and acquired the knowledge, skills, and work habits that will prepare them for postsecondary education and modern careers.

The district's proficiency-based diploma system also requires our schools and educators to provide the interventions, support systems, and personalized-learning pathways that each student needs to meet the expected standards and graduate college and be career ready.

A. Communicating Graduation Requirements

To ensure that every student and family has the information and resources they need to appropriately plan and sequence the student's educational decisions, our schools, educators, and staff will clearly and consistently communicate – prior to entering high school and throughout the student's educational career – the graduation standards and diploma requirements that must be met to earn a high school diploma.

The Superintendent, through the high school principal or other designee, shall be responsible for ensuring that accurate, up-to-date information concerning all graduation standards and diploma requirements are (1) readily available to all incoming students and their families in the spring preceding the start of each school year, and (2) published on the district and high school websites. A detailed guide to graduation standards, academic expectations, and diploma requirements will be disseminated to all incoming ninth-grade students starting during the 2016-2017 school year. This policy will also be referenced in each edition of the high school student handbook and on the district and high school websites.

As soon as it is practical and feasible, the Board expects the Superintendent or designee to inform all students and their families of any modifications made to the district's graduation requirements, which extends to all applicable changes in relevant state law, rules, or regulations.

B. Academic Requirements for Graduation

For the Lamoille Union High School classes until 2019, the following graduation requirements remain in effect:

- English 4
- Social Studies (U.S. History required) 3
- Mathematics 3
- Science 3
- Fine Arts/Visual or Performing Arts 1
- Physical Education 1 ½
- Health ½
- Electives 8
- Total Credits Required: 24

Commencing with the class of 2020, all students attending Lamoille Union High School must meet the following graduation requirements:

B1. All students will demonstrate proficiency in the following content-area graduation standards of the Educational Quality Standards multiple times over the course of high school. Meeting the standard entails demonstrating proficiency in each of the following content areas identified in Vermont Agency of Education “Sample Graduation Proficiencies” prior to graduation:

1. Literacy
2. Mathematical Content and Practices
3. Scientific Inquiry and Content Knowledge
4. Global Citizenship
5. Physical Education
6. Health Education
7. Artistic Expression
8. Transferable Skills

The Lamoille Union High School will develop and apply performance indicators that align with the content-area standards of the Educational Quality Standards.

To satisfy graduation requirements, all students must be engaged in proficiency-based educational experiences in the identified content areas.

B2. All students will demonstrate that they have achieved proficiency in Transferable Skills aligned with the Educational Quality Standards.

The Lamoille Union High School administration, faculty, and staff will develop and apply a set of performance indicators. Transferable Skills may be embedded and addressed in other content-area learning experiences.

B3. All students will complete a capstone project, through which students will demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and work habits by conducting in-depth research, using technological applications, producing a high-quality exhibition of learning, and presenting their research and findings to a review panel.

B4. All students will complete and submit at least one application to a postsecondary educational institution, training program, or other certified learning experience, such as the military, that will provide them with continued opportunities for academic, career, and personal growth.

B5. While most students will satisfy graduation requirements over the course of a four-year academic program, students may also satisfy Lamoille Union High School’s graduation requirements during a period of time that is either accelerated or lengthened, based on their distinct learning needs. All students are expected to develop a Personal Learning Plan with assistance from counselors, teachers, and/or administrators that allows them to meet expected standards at the pace and with the support they need.

C. Grading and Reporting System

The purpose of the grading policy is to establish a set of guiding principles that all district educators will use to establish a system of grading that fairly, clearly, accurately, and consistently communicates student learning progress and achievement.

C1. Academic Grading All grading and reporting practices at Lamoille Union High School will reflect the following design characteristics:

1. The primary purpose of the grading system shall be to fairly, clearly, accurately, and consistently communicate learning progress and achievement to students, families, postsecondary institutions, potential employers, and other relevant stakeholders and audiences.
2. The grading system shall be designed to ensure that students, families, teachers, counselors, advisors, and support specialists have the detailed information they need to make important decisions about a student's education.
3. The grading system will measure, report, and document student proficiency against a set of clearly defined cross-curricular and content-area graduation standards developed by the administration, faculty, and staff of Lamoille Union High School.
4. The grading system will measure, report, and document academic progress and achievement separately from habits of work, character traits, and behaviors.
5. The grading system will ensure consistency and fairness in the assessment of learning, and in the assignment of scores and proficiency levels, across students, teachers, assessments, learning experiences, content areas, and time.

C2. Transferable Skills All grading and reporting practices for Transferable Skills will reflect the following design characteristics:

1. The Lamoille Union High School administration, faculty, and staff will develop and apply a common set of Transferable Skills standards, and related scoring criteria, that teachers will use to grade students on work habits, character traits, and/or behaviors.
2. The Transferable Skills grading system will measure, report, and document habits of work, character traits, and behaviors separately from academic progress and achievement. A student achieving a high level of academic proficiency may demonstrate a low level on Transferable Skills proficiency, and vice versa.
3. Transferable Skills will be monitored over the duration of a learning experience and scores, as measured and determined using common assessment methods and scoring criteria, will be reported for each student at the end of a term or grading period.
4. The Transferable Skills grading system will ensure consistency and fairness in the assessment of work habits, and in the assignment of scores and proficiency levels, across students, teachers, assessments, course, learning experiences, content areas, and time.
5. Transferable Skills grades shall be communicated using the same performance levels used for academic reporting.

C3. Reporting Lamoille Union High School will employ a consistent system of grading that reports student learning progress and achievement across a 4-point scale that describes proficiency levels.

C4. Grading Courses and Learning Experiences Aggregate proficiency scores on graduation standards shall be derived through a common and consistently applied process that is collaboratively developed by the administration, faculty, and staff at the school and approved by the Principal.

C5. Changes to the Grading System The school administration, faculty, and staff, under the leadership of the Principal, may modify the reporting system based on the evolving needs of students, teachers, families, and other stakeholders, but the Proficiency Levels shall remain fixed, and will continue to measure, report, and document student proficiency against a set of clearly defined and consistently applied cross-curricular and content-area standards.

D. Multiple Pathways

Lamoille Union High School offers all students multiple learning options that allow students to demonstrate proficiency with their graduation requirements. Lamoille Union High School also encourages its students to explore a broad range of learning experiences, including outside-of-school options.

To pursue outside-of-school learning options, students must describe their learning experiences in a Personal Learning Plan, including how the experience satisfies both graduation requirements and expected cross-curricular and content-area standards.

Learning options may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Academic courses offered by the school
2. Dual enrollment or early college courses
3. Career and technical education programming
4. Online or blended learning options
5. Alternative or at-risk programming
6. Apprenticeships, internships, field work, or exchange experiences
7. Independent studies or long-term projects
8. Adult education

E. Transfer Students

For students who transfer to Lamoille Union High School from another state, country, school, program, or home-schooling situation, including educational programs that are not aligned with Lamoille Union High School's cross-curricular and content-area graduation standards, the Principal shall evaluate the value of the student's prior educational experiences and determine to what degree the student has met the school's graduation requirements. After enrolling in Lamoille Union High School, these students will need to satisfy proficiency graduation requirements in the appropriate subject areas, as determined by the Principal. The Superintendent will ultimately determine whether these students are eligible to receive a diploma.

F. Home-Schooled Students

For home-schooled students wishing to receive a diploma from Lamoille Union High School, the Principal shall evaluate the value of the student's prior educational experiences and determine to what degree the student has met the school's graduation requirements. After enrolling in Lamoille Union High School, these students will need to satisfy all assessment, proficiency, and graduation requirements in the appropriate subject areas, as determined by the Principal.

G. Students Receiving Special-Education Services

Students who successfully meet Lamoille Union High School's cross-curricular and content-area graduation standards, as specified in the goals and objectives of their Individualized Education Plans (IEP), will be awarded diplomas.

H. Delayed Awarding of Diplomas

If a student leaves high school to attend an accredited, degree-granting institution of higher education, the student may upon satisfactory completion of the freshman year, be awarded a high school diploma, provided that the student has notified the Principal at the time of the early admission.

I. Extended Study

Students are eligible for extended years of study to complete the school's graduation requirements if they have not reached the age of 20. Students eligible for extended years of study may be referred to adult education or other programs and resources.

J. Participation in Graduation Ceremony

A student must complete all requirements or otherwise be eligible per Vermont statute to participate in graduation exercises.

K. Academic Recognition: Latin Honors and Grade Point Averages

To recognize high academic achievement as determined by students demonstrating proficiency in the school's cross-curricular and content-area graduation standards Lamoille Union High School uses a system of Latin honors and proficiency-based Grade Point Averages to award academic recognition and distinction. Using a system familiar to prospective colleges and universities, Lamoille Union High School does not rank order students based on relative performance, but awards Latin honors based on individual achievement as measured against consistently applied learning standards.

K1. Latin Honors: The categories of academic distinction are as follows:

Summa Cum Laude (with highest honors)

Magna Cum Laude (with great honors)

Cum Laude (with honors)

K2. Grade Point Averages: Lamoille Union High School will employ a consistent system of grading, scoring, and aggregating proficiency that will produce a rolling and cumulative Grade Point Average for each student. The Grade Point Average will be reported on the official Lamoille Union High School transcript and will be used to determine Latin honors in accordance with the following categories:

Summa Cum Laude: a minimum GPA of 3.9

Magna Cum Laude: a minimum GPA of 3.7

Cum Laude: a minimum GPA of 3.5

L. Transcripts

An official transcript is created and maintained for all students who attend Lamoille Union High School. To ensure that the transcript conveys a full and accurate picture of a student's academic record and accomplishments, and that it can be accurately interpreted and understood by diverse external audiences, the following guidelines apply to all official transcripts issued by Lamoille Union High School:

6. The names of courses, content areas, and other relevant information will be presented in full, not abbreviated.

7. All learning experiences—whether they are classroom-based courses or approved learning pathway options, such as internships, dual-enrollment courses, or independent studies—will be clearly recorded by title and category type (e.g., course, internship, dual-enrollment, independent study, etc.).

8. The student's grade level when the course or learning experience was completed, and its duration (e.g., semester, year, or summer session), will be recorded.

9. Summary grades and/or proficiency levels for specific courses and learning experiences will be recorded.

10. The student's cumulative proficiency-based Grade Point Average will be recorded alongside any Latin honors attained.
11. Additional academic and co-curricular accomplishments may be recorded, as appropriate, including test scores, significant awards and honors, or the title of the student's capstone project.
12. The transcript will include a summary of proficiency levels achieved on Lamoille Union High School's cross-curricular and content-area graduation standards.
13. The transcript will include a summary explanation of the school's grading system and graduation requirements.
14. Selected student information will be presented, including the student's full name, date of enrollment, date of graduation, and other relevant, non-private information.
15. Contact information for the school, principal, guidance counselor, and/or student advisor will be presented.

Date Written: 7/13/17

Date Adopted: 7/24/17

Legal Reference(s):