Competency Determination P6128

To graduate from Westford Public Schools, students must meet all locally established graduation requirements (see P6110 Graduation Requirements) and demonstrate competency in the subject areas identified by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In alignment with state regulations, students are required to show mastery of the common core of skills, competencies, and knowledge previously assessed through the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). These standards reflect the state's 2023 high school MCAS assessment blueprints and priority standards, which DESE has designated as the benchmark for CD certification.

Westford Public Schools shall determine whether each student has achieved this mastery through satisfactory completion of coursework certified by the district as aligned to the State academic standards and curriculum frameworks. For purposes of Competency Determination, "coursework" may include district-approved coursework completed at Westford Academy or through approved postsecondary partnerships, including early college and dual enrollment, and certified by the district as demonstrating mastery of the required standards. Such coursework must document that the student has met the skills, competencies, and knowledge necessary for the State's Competency Determination (CD).

Upon approval by the Westford School Committee, this CD policy will be publicly posted on the district website, accompanied by translated versions to ensure meaningful access for all parents and families.

To receive a Westford Academy diploma, a student must earn 117.5 total credits by meeting the minimum graduation requirements of Westford Public Schools.

A determination of competency shall include:

- ➢ Demonstrating a mastery of skills in English language arts, mathematics, and science; and
- ➢ The satisfactory completion of relevant coursework aligned to the standards measured by the high school English language arts, mathematics, and science MCAS assessments administered in 2023.

Starting with the graduating class of 2027, an additional requirement for mastery in US History will apply.

A student enrolled in Westford Public Schools will demonstrate mastery, satisfactorily complete coursework, and receive full credit by earning a final grade of 65 or higher and meeting the attendance criteria for that course. The final grade may be represented on the transcript as a "P" or a letter grade of D or higher

<u>ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS</u>

For English Language Arts, a student must satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of two (2) years of high school English language arts courses. In most cases, this may include English 9 and English 10, equivalent courses, or advanced coursework.

Students must earn 20 credits in high school English Language Arts courses to meet graduation requirements. Courses are identified in the course listings document.

A student enrolled in Westford Public Schools will demonstrate mastery, satisfactorily complete coursework, and receive full credit by earning a final grade of 65 or higher and meeting the attendance criteria for that course. The final grade may be represented on the transcript as a "P" or a letter grade of D or higher. Students who do

not show mastery on their first attempt will be given additional opportunities in the same or future courses, so they have as many opportunities as possible to demonstrate mastery before their time of graduation.

MATHEMATICS

For Mathematics, a student must satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of one (1) year of both Algebra I and Geometry; or satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of one year of both Integrated Math I and Integrated Math II as follows:

Students must earn 20 credits in high school mathematics courses to meet graduation requirements. Courses are identified in the course listings document.

A student enrolled in Westford Public Schools will demonstrate mastery, satisfactorily complete coursework, and receive full credit by earning a final grade of 65 or higher and meeting the attendance criteria for that course. The final grade may be represented on the transcript as a "P" or a letter grade of D or higher. Students who do not show mastery on their first attempt will be given additional opportunities in the same or future courses, so they have as many opportunities as possible to demonstrate mastery before their time of graduation.

SCIENCE

For Science, a student must (1) satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of:

- ➢ One (1) year of Biology; or
- ➢ One (1) year of Physics; or
- ➢ One (1) year of Chemistry; or
- ➢ One (1) year of a Technology/Engineering course.

Students must earn 15 credits in one of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, or Technology/Engineering to meet graduation requirements. Courses are identified in the course listings document.

A student enrolled in Westford Public Schools will demonstrate mastery, satisfactorily complete coursework, and receive full credit by earning a final grade of 65 or higher and meeting the attendance criteria for that course. The final grade may be represented on the transcript as a "P" or a letter grade of D or higher. Students who do not show mastery on their first attempt will be given additional opportunities in the same or future courses, so they have as many opportunities as possible to demonstrate mastery before their time of graduation.

U. S. HISTORY

For U.S. History, beginning with the graduating class of 2027, the student must satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of a one (1) year U.S. History course.

Students must earn 15 credits in high school courses that contribute to the Westford US History Graduation Requirement. Courses are identified in the course listings document.

A student enrolled in Westford Public Schools will demonstrate mastery, satisfactorily complete coursework, and receive full credit by earning a final grade of 65 or higher and meeting the attendance criteria for that course. The final grade may be represented on the transcript as a "P" or a letter grade of D or higher. Students who do not show mastery on their first attempt will be given additional opportunities in the same or future courses, so they have as many opportunities as possible to demonstrate mastery before their time of graduation.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Westford Public Schools provides a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to students with disabilities and also determines when students have met the Competency Determination (CD) and local graduation requirements prior to graduation.

The IEP Team will include discussion of the CD requirement as part of its transition-planning process to ensure that each student's path to graduation is clearly defined and tailored to their strengths and needs.

All content area courses, including those specifically designed for students with disabilities, are aligned to the curriculum frameworks and the priority standards for those content areas.

In some cases, a department may develop an alternative method for demonstrating mastery for an individual student based on the student's disability and accommodations. This alternative method will be in alignment with other measures of mastery and must also assess at least half of the priority standards for the particular subject area at the level defined above in each subject area.

For students placed in approved out-of-district schools, Westford Public Schools collaborates with the out-of-district placements to confirm that the program meets the district's CD policy requirements, ensuring that all students—regardless of placement—have access to coursework, assessments, and accommodations needed to demonstrate the required competencies.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Westford Public Schools will provide the appropriate support so that ELL students can access the courses necessary to achieve the Competency Determination in each subject. The route to the CD will be included in the ELL Success Plan for each student. Westford Public Schools shall, on a case-by-case basis, determine the appropriate course necessary for English Language Learners to both achieve language proficiency and meet the competency determination requirements.

English Language Learners are enrolled in general education math and science courses with appropriate ELL support for learning within the inclusive setting. Language support that does not change the content being learned or assessed may be provided when appropriate.

LATE ENROLLING STUDENTS

Students who enroll in a Massachusetts public high school after their ninth-grade year may be granted a determination of competency by Westford Academy in one or more of the following ways:

As part of the registration process for students entering Westford Academy after grade 9, records, including transcripts and/or report cards, will be reviewed to complete a "Progress Toward Graduation" assessment of their transfer credits. This process will include reviewing prior courses for alignment with CD related coursework. Students will be awarded components of the CD requirements in a particular subject area based on their transcript and/or report card.

In the limited circumstance in which a student enters Westford Academy after grade 9 and is unable to provide documentation of their prior coursework, the student may earn the CD by attaining a qualifying score of at least "Meeting Expectations" or "Exceeding Expectations" achievement levels on the relevant high school MCAS assessment; or by meeting the standard for a substituted equivalent that the relevant department certifies satisfies the same academic standards.

APPEALS PROCESS

Competency Determinations are awarded by the Principal in accordance with Westford Public School policy.

A student or parent/caregiver may reach out to the Principal to appeal the determination if the student has not met the requirements of a specific CD. The student and/or family would submit relevant transcripts, report cards, measures of mastery, and/or additional documentation.
The Principal will review all relevant documentation and may approve the appeal themselves (awarding the CD) or may present the case to the Westford Public Schools' CD Committee for the specific subject area. The committee may include the relevant representatives from Westford Academy, such as the School Counseling Coordinator, Curriculum Coordinator, Assistant Superintendent, and relevant administrators from the Special Education and/or the ELL Departments.

DIPLOMA REQUEST PROCESS

Students who were members of the class of 2003 through the class of 2024, who exited Westford Academy without a diploma as a result of the MCAS-based Competency Determination Requirement, may now apply for a diploma via a Local Competency Determination Review by the following process:

- The student and/or family should submit relevant transcripts, report cards, measures of mastery, and/or additional documentation.
- The Principal will review all relevant documentation and may approve the diploma themselves (awarding the CD) or may present the case to the Westford Public Schools' CD Committee. The committee may include the relevant representatives from Westford Academy, such as the School Counseling Coordinator, Curriculum Coordinator, Assistant Superintendent, and relevant administrators from the Special Education and/or the ELL Department.

REFERENCES

Massachusetts General Law References:

DESE Graduation Requirements and Related Guidance

DESE Graduation and Transition Planning for Students with IEPs

DESE Competency Determination Guidance and Policy Submission Process

603 CMR Standards 30.00 - for Competency Determination and Local Graduation Requirements

M.G.L. c. 69, § 1D - Statewide educational goals; academic standards

Westford Public Schools Policy References:

P6110 - Graduation Requirements

Massachusetts Association of School Committee Policy References:

IKFE – Competency Determination

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