



Board Meeting Date: 8/20/24

Title: Graduation Requirements

Type: Discussion

Presenter (s): Jody De St. Hubert, Director of Teaching and Learning; Paul Paetzel, Edina High School Principal; and Jenny Johnson, Edina High School Assistant Principal

Description: Over the last two years a change in and an addition to legislation for students who begin grade 9 in the 2024-2025 school year have impacted course offerings and graduation requirements in the state of Minnesota. The change is in the area of Social Studies and the addition is in Personal Finance. The combination of the change and the addition, impacts what is required for graduation credits under Minnesota Statutes 2022, section 120B.024. This prompted the need for a review and possible change to the current Edina Graduation Requirements and Policy 613.

In the Spring of 2024, Policy 613 was updated to reflect the changes in the area of Social Studies that were approved by the school board on January 8, 2024. Legislative law now requires EPS to update Policy 613 to ensure the requirement for Personal Finance is included.

Recommendation: Building Administration and Teaching and Learning in collaboration with the Edina High School Area Lead Team recommends that when the 1 semester credit for Personal Finance is added to policy that the total number of semester credits for graduation is increased from 43 to 44.

Desired Outcomes from the Board: Review the information in detail and come prepared with questions and comments. The questions and comments will inform updates to Policy 613 that will be brought to the Policy Committee this fall for review to ensure alignment with state legislation, and the full school board for final review, feedback and action.

Attachments:

[Policy 613](#)

[Edina High School Course Registration: Graduation Requirements](#)

[2028 Graduation Course Requirements](#)

[Portrait of a Well-Rounded Edina Graduate](#)

Additional Background Information

Legislation Impact:

The requirement to take a course for credit in citizenship and government in 11th or 12th grade impacted the Edina Social Studies course sequence and thus the number of credits required for graduation in Social Studies. In the fall of 2023 the teaching and learning department and social studies team presented a plan to the school board outlining the need to increase the Social Studies graduation semester credit requirements from 7.5 to 8. The addition will add a 1 semester credit required for the graduating class of 2028 and beyond. The school board approved this recommendation on January 8, 2024.

The requirement to complete a course for credit in personal finance in either grade 10, 11, and 12 is new to all Minnesota school districts. Although Personal Finance has been a long standing elective at Edina High School, it has not been required. Approximately 200 students in the graduating class of 2023 and 2024 took the current Edina Personal Finance class in grade 9,10, 11 or 12. The table below highlights the details of this data:

Graduation Year	Grade	Number of Students
2023	9	3
2023	10	13
2023	11	72
2023	12	127
2023	TOTAL Grades 9-12	215
2024	9	9
2024	10	30
2024	11	37
2024	12	11
2024	TOTAL Grades 9-12	193

This new legislative addition will require 1 semester credit for graduation.

Spring 2024 Updates:

In the spring of 2024, Policy 613 was updated to add the semester Social Studies credit. In order to maintain 43 as the total number of semester credits required for graduation, the total number of electives required was reduced from 11 to 10. During this process, MDE had not released the direction needed on the personal finance expectations in order to make the changes needed to add the 1 semester Personal Finance credit requirement to policy 613.

The additional one Social Studies semester credit required for graduation was updated in Policy 613, Appendix I, section II: Edina Public Schools Graduation Requirements to state:

4. Seven (7) semester credits of social studies, encompassing at least United States history, government and citizenship, world history, geography, and economics; however, starting with the class of 2028, eight (8) semester credits of social studies, encompassing at least United States history, government and citizenship, world history, geography, and economics;

It was also updated in Edina High School Course Registration materials to reflect Policy 613 changes in visual format:

Required Subjects	Semester Credits	Minimal Required Courses
Mathematics	6	Intermediate Algebra, Geometry, Algebra 2
Science	6	Physical Earth Science, Chemistry, and Biology
Language Arts/English	8	Refer to the English Section in the Course Catalog
Wellness (PE)	2	Personal Wellness, and one additional semester credit in grades 9-12
Social Studies	8	Geography, World History, US History, Government and Economics
Arts	2	Coursework in visual arts, music, theater, dance, or media
Health	1	Health
Required Credits	23	
Elective Credits	10	
Total Credits Needed for Diploma	43	

Next Steps:

Personal Finance course requirement alignment with MN State Legislation:

The next step on the topic of Graduation Requirements to ensure that Edina Public Schools is in alignment with state legislation is to add one Personal Finance semester credit.

In collaboration with Edina High School Administration, Leadership Team, and Counselors the options to add this semester credit while ensuring each and every student is able to discover their possibilities and thrive were discussed using the IROD decision making process.

Team Members

Jody De St. Hubert, Director of Teaching and Learning

Paul Paetzel, Edina High School Principal

Jenny Johnson, Edina High School Assistant Principal

Troy Stein, Edina High School Assistant Principal

Jenn Carter, Edina High School Assistant Principal

Mike Pretasky, Edina High School Assistant Principal

Erik Anderson, Edina High School Social Studies Teacher

Gavin Mclean, Edina High School Science Teacher

Nate Murphy, Edina High School Math Teacher

Kim Caster, Edina High School World Language Teacher

Jodi Ramirez, Edina High School Computer Science Teacher

Geneva Fitzsimonds, Edina High School Arts Teacher

Sandy Schmidt, Edina High School Counselor

Mellanie Pussieri, Edina High School Physical Education/Health Teacher

Sarah Swenson, Edina High School Media Specialist

Tess Bademan, Edina High School English Language Arts Teacher

Reactions to Background Information:

- The schedule is a critical driving factor in decision making. The current Edina schedule is a 7 period hybrid schedule. Students can take up to 7 credits per semester. This totals 14 semester credits per year and allows for a maximum number of 56 semester credits over a student's four year career. All students take 6 or more credits per semester. This totals 12 semester credits per year and allows for a maximum number of 48 semester credits over a student's 4 year career. The current Edina total of semester credits required for graduation is 43 matching the state requirement. This means if a student takes the minimum of 6 credits per semester (12 per year) there is still room for 5 semester credits beyond the total 43 required.
- The seven period day offers a lot more opportunity to add classes. This needs to be explored recognizing there are many variables that would impact long term decision making (space and staffing being two specific examples).
- Over half of our students are currently graduating with 50 semester credits. This equates to 2 semesters of taking 7 classes a day.

- Edina requires 1 semester credit more than the state in Social Studies. This change was passed by the school board in 2024 and was proposed to ensure alignment with legislative changes.
- Edina requires more semester credits than the Minnesota Department of Education in Physical Education/Wellness. The Minnesota Department of Education articulates that the Physical Education credit should be determined at the local level. The credit must be sufficient to satisfy the state standards in physical education. Many surrounding districts require 1 credit of Physical Education.
- There are increasing opportunities to take PE in a more flexible and less traditional format. And the majority of our Edina students are still taking PE in person indicating it is a class students are finding value in for a variety of reasons:

How PE Credit Was Earned				
Credit Earned InPerson			Credit Earned Online	
Grad Year	Number of Students	Percent of Students	Number of Students	Percent of Students
2021	608	99.84%	1	0.16%
2022	604	98.21%	11	1.79%
2023	607	92.39%	50	7.61%
2024	492	77.85%	140	22.15%
Grand Total	2311	91.96%	202	8.04%

How Health Credit Was Earned				
Credit Earned InPerson			Credit Earned Online	
Grad Year	Number of Students	Percent of Students	Number of Students	Percent of Students
2021	578	94.91%	31	5.09%
2022	580	94.31%	35	5.69%
2023	600	91.32%	57	8.68%
2024	515	81.49%	117	18.51%
Grand Total	2273	90.45%	240	9.55%

- MDE requirement for Health Education, credit is determined at the local level. Must meet locally developed standard requirements.
- Research continues to show a critical need to support the whole student, emphasizing a need for Physical Education/Wellness and Health. This need directly aligns with our Portrait of a Well-Rounded Edina Graduate, as well as Strategy C of our 2020-2030 Edina Strategic Plan.
- The Portrait of a Well-Rounded Edina Graduate also aligns directly with ensuring students have the choice to explore new content areas as “motivated life long learners who understand their personal interests and passions.” It is important that students have room in their secondary experience to do this. Edina Middle Schools build a strong foundation of enrichment. This exploration should continue into Edina High School with developmentally appropriate shifts in the goals and objectives.
- Every education system is continually striving to improve student engagement while there are continually evolving variables that impact engagement such as COVID, technology, social factors, and more. Over the last 4 years there has been a shift in attention and focus in High School students with it being more difficult to sustain attention for longer periods of time independently with little structure. Thus the purpose of student prep for many students has shifted and is not being used for the intended purpose when the 7 class schedule was implemented.

- The 2020-2030 Edina Strategic Plan Strategy A.1 outlines the action step to explore and create additional PreK-12 programming (e.g., STEAM, STEM, Immersion, Biomedical) that promotes authentic and engaging learning experiences to meet the needs of future-ready learners and provide attractive educational options for families. The specific action step that all Edina graduates will have had internship or apprenticeship experience by graduation could impact Edina graduation requirements and a student's individual high school schedule.
- For those students who are at risk of graduation (approximately 2% of our population) we need to look more deeply at root causes and ensure proactive measures are put in place if graduation requirements increase (and even if they do not). This can be done and many systems are currently being improved upon. Staff is committed to continuing this conversation.
- We have several core subject areas where many students are currently taking more than is required. For example, in Math and Science, many students take 4 years and a full 8 credits.
- The MDE change in Science requirements means we have students not graduating with Physics. This may need to be explored further when we see the impact of the shift in our Science programming in a couple of years.
- A large majority of Edina students take music and world language in 9-12 grade. These classes fulfill both arts and elective credits.
 - % of Edina students take World Language and Band/Orchestra/Music for 4 years of high school.
 - % of Edina students take World Language for 4 years of high school.
 - % of Edina students take Band for 4 years of high school.

Percent of Students		Music / World Language Status		
School Year	World Language Only	Music Only	Both World Language and Music	Neither World Language or Music
2019	39.75%	5.92%	35.90%	18.43%
2020	36.62%	7.81%	34.04%	21.52%
2021	34.16%	8.37%	33.41%	24.06%
2022	36.28%	8.58%	28.43%	26.72%
2023	35.30%	7.49%	30.97%	26.25%
2024	36.41%	7.22%	32.14%	24.23%
Total	36.42%	7.56%	32.49%	23.53%

Number of Students		Music / World Language Status		
School Year	World Language Only	Music Only	Both World Language and Music	Neither World Language or Music
2019	1074	160	970	498
2020	980	209	911	576
2021	906	222	886	638
2022	956	226	749	704
2023	971	206	852	722
2024	999	198	882	665
Total	5886	1221	5250	3803

- We are in close alignment with our surrounding districts with current credit requirements.

Subject	MDE	Edina	Mntk	Wayzata	E.P.	Orono	Mounds View	Mahtomedi
ELA	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Math	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3
Science	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3
SS	3.5	4	3.5	4	4	3.5	3.5	3.5
Arts	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
PE	Satisfy standards	1	1	1	1	.5	.5	.5
Health	Satisfy standards	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5	.5

**Direct comparisons of districts is challenging due to schedule differences.*

Options:

Option	Pros	Cons
<p>Further reduce the number of electives to 9 semester credits: stay at 43 total credits for graduation. All other requirements stay the same with a total of 43 semester credits required for graduation</p>	<p>Would maintain a high graduation rate.</p> <p>Allows a student room for credit recovery within a school year.</p> <p>Have to sign up for 48 credits and you need 43 to graduate. Still allows 5 opportunities within a 6 period day and 13 within a 7 period day.</p>	<p>Limits flexibility to take additional math, science, or electives.</p> <p>The limiting of electives narrows the opportunity to explore passions.</p> <p>May not align with MDE once they add the personal finance semester credit. This additional semester credit is currently not included in the MDE total credits required.</p> <p>If we reduce anything we are adding to student prep which for many is an opportunity to be less engaged in school.</p>

		<p>Students are not maximizing student prep currently in alignment for its intended purpose.</p>
<p>Continue with 43 semester credits required for graduation and align local requirements for PE with the state reducing PE requirements to 1 semester credit and add 1 semester credit of personal finance (1 semester credit of personal finance would take the place of the current additional PE credit)</p>	<p>Would maintain a high graduation rate.</p> <p>Remains consistent for the total number of semester credits required for graduation.</p> <p>Allows a student to credit recovery within a school year.</p> <p>Have to sign up for 48 credits and you need 43 to graduate. Still allows 5 opportunities within a 6 period day and 13 within a 7 period day.</p>	<p>There is a negative Impact on student mental health and wellness when decreasing opportunities for PE.</p> <p>Decrease in PE is not in alignment with Edina commitments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mission “whole student” ● Strategy C: “... whole student support.” (curriculum was shifted to align with this). ● Portrait of a Well-Rounded Edina Graduate ● Core Belief: “Healthy Learning Environment.” <p>Wellness is a place that you learn to get along with all people (Core Belief: Equity and Inclusion). A decrease in PE requirements would directly impact Unified programming.</p> <p>Critical to support physical and mental health in our changing world.</p> <p>There are many popular creative classes that students are actively and highly engaged in.</p> <p>With as many spaces in the schedule that we have open, we have room in the day for most students.</p> <p>Research shows activity</p>

		<p>during the day improves learning.</p> <p>Staffing would be directly impacted.</p> <p>There are so many unique and flexible ways to take PE (when schedules are tight there are flexible options such as online, NSO, summer) Our community supported and invested in the addition and improvement of many gym and field spaces.</p> <p>PE and Wellness classes are where some kids find their sense of belonging (Strategy B: Ensure Equitable and Inclusive School Culture)</p>
<p>Raise requirements to 44 semester credits required for graduation. Add the 1 semester addition of Personal Finance to the current total of 43 semester credits required for graduation.</p>	<p>Maintains positive support for student mental health and wellness.</p> <p>Adds more instructional hours to a student day which supports current student developmental and social needs for structure.</p> <p>This will correlate to increased engagement and rigor.</p>	<p>Limits flexibility to take additional math, science, or electives in a 6 period day. Noting that even minimally utilizing the 7 period day allows for more flexibility and opportunity for all electives.</p> <p>The limiting of electives may narrow the opportunity to explore passions.</p> <p>There could be an impact on graduation rates. (our system can adjust to this)</p>

Recommendation:

Building Administration and Teaching and Learning in collaboration with the Edina High School Area Lead Team recommends that when the 1 semester credit for Personal Finance is added to policy, the total number of semester credits for graduation is increased from 43 to 44. The overall consensus is that there is room in the current schedule for most Edina students to make this increase while continuing to positively support future success in alignment with individual strengths and passions. The entire team is committed to maintaining well established mental and physical health supports, as well as providing slight additions to the structure of a student's

day to ensure alignment with the Edina Excellence outlined in our Strategic Plan. The entire team is also collectively committed to ensuring that all students are supported on their path to graduation. Recognizing that the increase in credit requirements for graduation will impact some students, the team noted current changes that are being implemented (attendance policies and 9th and 10th grade ELA changes) and possible changes to explore in the future (adjusting credit recovery options, audit classes to determine patterns, and increase alignment with middle schools) that keep us all laser focused on ensuring that our graduation rates continue to increase and we meet the needs of each and every Edina student.