

Early Graduation

Code #345.61

The Tri-County Area School District acknowledges that there are exceptional circumstances under which a student may opt to graduate early from high school. Early graduation will occur only in exceptional circumstances and when all requirements are successfully met. The School Board will ultimately determine whether or not a student's request for early graduation is granted. All requests will be considered on an individual basis. A student interested in graduating early should review the Eligibility and Rules for Early Graduation, and must follow the procedures outlined below.

Eligibility and Rules for Early Graduation:

1. A student must earn the minimum number of credits required for graduation for his/her class. If a student is unable to create a plan to schedule and complete all required courses prior to graduating early, the request cannot be granted. Credit requirements can be found on the District website, under School Board Code #345.06AR, or by consulting with the 7-12 Counseling Office.
2. A student must complete a minimum of six (6) semesters of high school.
3. A student must submit all necessary paperwork by:
 - A. October 1st of his/her Junior year, if graduating at the end of the Second Semester of his/her Junior year; or
 - B. May 1st of his/her Junior year, if graduating at the end of the First Semester of his/her Senior year.

The application date may be modified under special circumstances.

4. A student must take the Career Exploration course prior to graduating early.
5. All reasons for early graduation will be reviewed. However, prior to early graduation being considered, all other interventions, plans or "options" shall be exhausted. Potential reasons for early graduation and possible interventions/plans/"options" include:

A. Pursuing Post-Secondary Education:

- (1) A student enrolls in available AP courses at Tri-County and/or utilizes the programs (e.g., Early College Credit Program/ECCP) for earning college credit in a post-secondary program.

B. Pursuing a Career Through Special Training or Obtaining a Full-Time or Part-Time Job:

- (1) A student enrolls in a School-To-Work program and Career Exploration course.

C. Individual and/or Family Health Concerns:

- (1) A student organizes a specialized class schedule that accommodates his/her individual/family needs through either partial days, on-line education (GradPoint) or a hybrid of in-class and on-line coursework.

D. A Student is Expecting a Child:

- (1) A student organizes a specialized class schedule, possibly including partial days, on-line (GradPoint) or a hybrid of in-class and on-line coursework.

E. A Student is Older in Age for His/Her Class:

- (1) A student continues to participate in Tri-County courses and activities that enhance the student's academic, social/emotional and career development.

- (2) A student participates in a School-To-Work program.

- (3) A student enrolls in programs (e.g., ECCP) for earning college credit in a post-secondary program.

6. A Student's attendance record, behavior, history of referrals and overall maturity will be considered as factors for granting a request for early graduation.

7. If an early graduation request has been granted, the student must turn in all school property prior to the student's last day of school.

8. A student who is graduating at the end of his/her Second Semester of his/her Junior year, and will not be a member of his/her Senior class and will relinquish the right to the Wisconsin Higher Education Aids Scholarship Award and all locally generated scholarships available to students in their Senior year. A student who is graduating at the end of his/her First Semester of his/her Senior Year is still eligible for the Wisconsin Higher Education Aids Scholarship Award and all locally generated scholarships available to students in his/her Senior class.
9. A student must pay all school-related fines or fees prior to the end of his/her final semester or he/she will not receive his/her official high school diploma or participate in the commencement ceremony.
10. If a student has paid any/all school fees and fines and has met all requirements for graduating early, he/she will participate in the commencement ceremony in May of his/her Senior year. The official diploma and high school transcript shall not indicate an early graduation date.
11. A student whose request for early graduation is granted is able and expected to attend the commencement ceremony, however it is understood that some student's circumstances may make their physical presence difficult or impossible.
12. When a student has officially graduated, he/she will not be permitted to take part in any organized school activity, except for those open to the general public. While visiting Tri-County schools, the student will be expected to follow all procedures required of other citizens in the community.

Procedures for Early Graduation:

1. The student must meet with the school counselor and/or administrators to discuss his/her intent for early graduation, which will help determine eligibility and any further course of action.
2. The student must complete and submit the necessary paperwork for the Early Graduation Request by October 1st of his/her Junior year, if graduating at the end of the Second Semester of his/her Junior year, or by May 1st of his/her Junior year, if graduating at the end of the First Semester of his/her Senior year. The Early Graduation Request paperwork includes:

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- A. A written statement by the student explaining (1) the rationale of why he/she wants to graduate early; (2) what greater benefit is derived from graduating early; (3) plans following graduation; and (4) how the Tri-County Area School District served the student.
 - B. A written letter from the parent(s)/guardian(s) stating approval for the student's early graduation as well as an understanding of the Early Graduation Policies and Procedures.
 - C. Proof of extenuating circumstances (including, but not limited to):
 - (1) If pursuing a post-secondary education, the student must provide proof of enrollment and registration for classes.
 - (2) If pursuing a career through special training or obtaining a full-time or part-time job, the student must provide a written letter from the supervisor.
 - (3) If health related, the student must provide a "release of information" and documentation from an appropriate professional(s) that indicates it is in the student's best interest to graduate early.
 - (4) Having exhausted all other options, the student must provide proof that those options have not been successful.
 - D. A written verification from the school counselor that all requirements for graduation and the School Board's minimum required certifiable credits for graduation can be fulfilled before the graduation date.
 - E. The "Application for Early Graduation from High School" - School Board Code # 345.61, Exhibit, complete with signatures.
3. After receiving the Early Graduation Request, a meeting with the (A) Administrator(s); (B) School Counselor; (C) Teacher(s); (D) Student; and (E) Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be scheduled to review the request and provide the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) with information regarding the impact of the request and further steps that will need to occur (if any) prior to the request being granted.
4. The Early Graduation Request and all necessary paperwork shall be submitted to the School Board for approval.

5. The student and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of the School Board meeting date and are welcome to attend the meeting at which the student's early graduation request is discussed. The decision may or may not be disclosed publicly to the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) at the meeting, but the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified of the decision in writing.

Legal Reference: Section 118.33, Wisconsin Statutes
PI 18, Wisconsin Administrative Code

Cross Reference: 345.61 Exhibit, Application for Early Graduation from High School
470.01 Rule, Wisconsin Higher Education Aids Board Scholarship
Criteria

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