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To: Superintendent McGee
From: Principal Mead and Dr. Marandos, Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
RE: Proposal regarding a New Hampshire State Core Diploma
Date: January 8, 2021

Following up to the Pelham School Board discussion on January 6, 2021, the Pelham High School leadership team requests that the Pelham School Board add a twenty credit New Hampshire State Core Diploma in our 2021-2022 Program of Studies. This diploma would include the NH State Core requirements plus Pelham's Personal Finance Plan and Community Service requirement.

This diploma option will allow a group of Pelham students who in the past have had to choose between leaving for a Salem Adult Education Program diploma or staying for additional time to complete the Pelham High School Diploma to graduate with a Pelham High School Diploma and walk with their classmates at graduation. Many local districts have already adopted and implemented a twenty credit state core diploma. This includes Bedford, Bow, Exeter, Goffstown, Hollis-Brookline, Hudson, Londonderry, Manchester, Nashua, Salem, Sanborn, and Windham.

The request is also a result of the pandemic, which has exacerbated the challenges some students face in earning the credits required for a Pelham High School Diploma. We have current juniors and sophomores who have struggled with remote learning. Students with extenuating circumstances have found their academic progress and success further complicated by the global pandemic. In the school year 2019-2020, PHS students were enrolled in 8 courses (A/B schedule) and many were not successful in earning credits with the pivot to remote learning. This includes current juniors and sophomores. Due to the pandemic, the adult education programs that are traditionally accessed by Pelham High School students have limited their enrollment. In the past, students have enrolled in and paid for these courses to earn credit to graduate with a Pelham High School diploma or a Salem Adult Education

Diploma. The adult education diploma is equivalent to a New Hampshire State Core Standards Diploma (20 credits). These programs have only offered remote classes with a limited course offering since the spring of 2020.

The New Hampshire State Core Diploma:

[NH Education regulation ED 306.27 High School Curriculum, Credits, Graduation Requirements and Co-curricular Program](#) states, in part, that “The local school board of each high school shall award a regular high school diploma to those students who earn at least 20 credits for courses selected from the school’s program of studies, provided that the student meets the requirements for high school graduation.”

The table below compares the current requirements for a Pelham Diploma and the proposed requirements for the New Hampshire State Core Diploma with the changes suggested by the Pelham School Board at the 1/6/21 meeting. We recognize the importance of the Personal Financial Planning/Managing Your Money courses. They provide students with real life skills that benefit all students. This course would be a required elective for the Pelham NH State Standard Diploma. It is a .5 credit course. The course is a requirement for all diplomas. All Pelham High School students would be required to fulfill the 40 hours of community service as part of their graduation requirements. This would be consistent for all Pelham High School Diplomas. The changes to the Pelham NH State Standard Diploma requirements are highlighted in yellow.

Diploma Requirements

Pelham Diploma (26 Credits)			Pelham NH State Standard Diploma (20 Credits)	
Subject	Credits	Required Courses	Credits	Required Courses
English	4	<i>An English course must be taken each year of high school</i> Intro to Writing (.5) Freshman English (1) Sophomore English (1) Junior English Elective (1) Senior English Elective (1)	4	<i>An English course must be taken each year of high school</i> Freshman English (1) Sophomore English (1) Junior English (1) Additional English (1)
Social Studies	3	World Geography (.5) Civics (.5) Economics (.5) Western Civilizations (.5) U. S. History (1)	3	World Geography (.5) Civics (.5) Economics (.5) Elective (.5) US History (1)

Math	3.5	<i>A math or math intensive course must be taken each year of high school. All students must complete 3 math credits including Algebra I.</i>	3.5	<i>A math or math intensive course must be taken each year of high school. All students must complete 3 math credits including Algebra I.</i>
Science	3	Physical Science Biology Chemistry	2	Physical Science Biology
Fine Arts	.5		.5	
Health	.5		.5	
Physical Education	1		1	
Computer Applications	.5	Students must pass Computer Applications I or pass a computer technology test with a B- , which would allow them to enroll in an advanced computer course.	.5	
Personal Financial Plan/ Managing your Money	.5		.5	
Personal Choice Electives	9.5		4.5	
Community Service Learning		40 hours total or 10 hours per year of enrollment.		40 hours total or 10 hours per year of enrollment.
Total	26		20	

Process

If approved, Pelham High School will implement an application process. Students will submit an application to their school counselor. The application process is open to first semester juniors and beyond who cannot meet the Pelham High School graduation requirements by June of their senior year. Applications will need to be submitted for approval no later than January 31st of the student's senior year. Exceptions regarding the timeline can be made by the school principal in extenuating circumstances. The application will include a written description of reasons for request. Students and counselors will create a Plan of Action including how remaining credits will be earned. The application will include an up to date transcript and documentation (if for medical reasons, etc). An application review team made up of the

following will meet: student, parent/guardian, counselor and/or case manager (if applicable), and administration. When the paperwork is complete the student and parent will meet with the principal for approval.

We think this proposal will embrace the 'culture of grace' that we have adopted. We recognize that some students struggle with the transition to high school and the rigorous coursework. We want our students to be able to stay 'home' and graduate with their classmates. This diploma will provide students that have struggled with earning 26 credits another option/ opportunity to graduate with their class.