

Plans taking shape for ACT benchmarks

Written by MARK JAEGER
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The Northern Ozaukee School Board is crafting a policy that will incorporate the standardized ACT testing into its graduation requirement.

According to the policy, which underwent an initial review Monday, the ACT requirement would be in place for the graduating class of 2016.

That class will also see a slight bump in the number of credits needed to graduate — from 27 to 28. The additional credit will come from elective subjects.

Starting next school year, juniors will be required to take the ACT tests. The battery of tests will be paid for by the school district.

Minimum proficiency levels on those tests will be in place for the class of 2016. They include scores of 14 in English, 18 in math, 18 in reading and 20 in science.

Supt. Blake Peuse said the proposed timetable would give students and staff three years to prepare for the new graduation requirement.

School Board member Tom Hoffmann said the ACT requirement would also make the district eligible to host the testing, saving local students the imposition of having to travel to other sites around the state.

“The way I see it, it is pluses all around,” Hoffmann said.

The board is expected to take final action on the grading system policy at its June meeting.

In another policy matter, the board tweaked its employee handbook and contract template to make it more costly to leave a district teaching position.

The current policy sets liquidated damages — the penalty charge assessed for backing out of an employment contract — at \$300 if the agreement is broken before June 30 and \$500 if broken thereafter.

The revised contracts will establish a \$1,000 charge if letters of resignation are received after July 31.

The rationale for the higher fee is that it is often more difficult to find a replacement that close to the start of a new school year.

“We felt \$500 was not enough. It made sense to make people think harder about whether they want to leave,” Peuse said.

He said a number of districts have an even higher fee for liquidated damages for teachers that leave their district.

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Peuse said special circumstances will be considered if an unexpected resignation request is made.