

Question from Ms. Anne Keith if the date should be extended further.

Chair Quinlan noted that public comment at this time should be taken before discussing this any further.

Dr. Rob Watson, SAM, gave public comment regarding extending the effective date to July 1, 2027 and stated his reasons for the request. Most notably, the Montana School Board Association's model policy is that any changes to graduation requirements are always effective for the incoming freshman class. Dr. Watson thanked the Board for holding a special meeting to discuss the issue.

Deputy Superintendent Sharyl Allen spoke regarding competency transcripts.

Dr. Tharp asked OPI if a Social Studies Broadfield or History teacher could teach economics. Deputy Allen responded that would be allowed.

Dr. Tharp asked if any schools in the state are not offering civics courses. Deputy Allen and Dr. Julie Murgel, OPI, both responded that five schools reported in their accreditation report that they do not have a course code that aligned with government or civics. Dr. Murgel also responded to Dr. Tharp's question regarding who could teach economics or financial literacy.

Chair Quinlan asked for clarification from Dr. Murgel regarding which graduating class would be affected by the rule change.

Chair Quinlan clarified that depending on the date set at this meeting students who graduate before the effective date set would not have to meet the minimum graduation requirement. Dr. Murgel answered that is correct. Only students graduating after the effective date would have to meet the new requirements.

Chair Quinlan noted that if a Board member wants to offer a different effective date a substitute motion would need to be made.

Ms. Keith stated her preference would be to align with the Montana School Boards Association model policy to make it effective for the incoming freshman class.

Dr. Tharp noted he needs more information to be talked into delaying implementation further.

Ms. Susie Hedalen stated that she does not see an issue moving forward with the proposed date.

Mr. Ron Slinger asked for clarification if there are other alternatives for students to meet the requirement.

Dr. Murgel answered and shared that there are options that school districts have to meet the requirements including: independent study or economics via social studies coursework.

Ms. Keith asked Ms. Hedalen and Dr. Tharp if the proposed timeline gives districts enough time to meet the requirements. Both Ms. Hedalen and Dr. Tharp said the proposed time frame is sufficient. Dr. Tharp noted that schools always have the option of applying for a Variance to Standards if they are experiencing issues meeting the accreditation standards. Dr. Tharp asked Dr. Watson if his members

have expressed any concern that this is going to be problematic, and Dr. Watson answered that he has not.

No further discussion. Motion passed unanimously.

Ms. McCall Flynn discussed the next steps, which is to submit the notice to the Secretary of State's office for publication in the Montana Administrative Register.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comment was made.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 1:37 PM.

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