

# State Board increases graduation requirements

The State Board of Education last week increased the minimum number of school credit hours a student must take before graduating from high school.

Before the board action, students had to take a minimum 19 hours for graduation but after the action, students must have at least 21 credit hours and the types of classes are spelled out.

Students now must have at least four hours in language arts, three in social studies, two in mathematics, two in science and one in health or physical education. The previous minimum credit hours in social studies, mathematics, science, language and health was one hour per classification.

According to a spokesman for the Department of Education, the increase in minimums will effect about 12 of Alaska's 53 school districts.

He said that currently nine school districts require students to take 20 credit hours. They are the Aleut Regional School District, and the Chugach, Haines, Hydaburg, Juneau-Douglas, Kenai, Matanuska-Susitna and Tanana School districts. The Pribilof Island district doesn't meet the requirements but doesn't really need to because the district doesn't graduate students.

Other districts must increase the distribution of credit hours taken. Districts that must increase the amount of credit hours taken in language arts include the Bristol Bay, Cordova, Dillingham City, Haines, Hydaburg, Iditarod, Klawock, Kodiak, Lake Peninsula, Matanuska-Susitna, Nome, Northwest Arctic and Railbelt School Districts.

Increased minimums for the social studies classes need to be implemented for Bering Straits,

Chugach, Dillingham City, Hydaburg, Juneau-Douglas, King Cove, Matanuska-Susitna, Pelican, Tanana and Yukon Flats districts.

Mathematics minimums must be increased for the Copper River, Dillingham City, and Northwest Arctic Districts. In the Mathematics classification, Mat-Su and Haines now have a one credit minimum for mathematics and also require one science credit and then another credit in either mathematics or sciences. Kodiak requires one credit taken beyond the general math credit.

DoE spokesman Harry Gambell said the new regulations take effect this fall. He said the DoE doesn't "anticipate that there will be any added state dollars to impliment the

regulation. Some districts may need to redistribute their class loads but we don't think there will be a need to be adding staff."

The toughening of school minimum requirements is the latest step on the Board's drive to upgrade the state's education system. The board

several months ago stiffened rules on allowing students to participate in athletic events if their grades were not above average.