

# **North Central Local Schools Credit Flexibility Procedures and Guidelines**

## **Section 1: Credit Flexibility Rational**

Pursuant to SB 311, all school districts in the state of Ohio have been charged with fully implementing a plan that would enable “students to earn units of high school credit based on a demonstration of subject area competency, instead of or in combination with completing hours of classroom instruction.” This plan will be fully implemented and initiated on the first official day of school for the 2010-2011 school year.

The rational for the use of credit flexibility is two-fold:

- Students will be able to show what they know and move on to higher-order content they are ready to learn and have not yet mastered; and
- Students will be able to learn subject matter and earn course credit in ways not limited solely to seat time or the walls of the school building.

## **Section 2: Options For Earning High School Credit**

Students may earn initial credit through any of the following or a combination thereof:

- The completion of traditional courses approved for high school credit offered within the North Central Local Schools;
- The completion of college-level coursework through either post-secondary enrollment or established dual credit courses for student who qualify;
- Testing out or otherwise demonstrating mastery of the course content through a grade equivalent score of a “C” or better on a standardized end-of-course exam approved by North Central Local Schools;
- Pursuant of one or more educational options including, but not limited to distance learning, learning portfolio, on-line education, educational travel, independent study, intern/mentorships, music/arts programming, after school programs, community service, etc.

## **Section 3: Eligibility**

To be eligible to submit and participate in the credit flexibility option, students must meet the following qualifications:

- Must be enrolled as a full-time student (enrolled for 5 credits) within North Central Local Schools;
- Must have been enrolled as a full-time student within North Central Local Schools or another Ohio public state-accredited institution for at least one full academic year (180 days);
- Must attend with their parent/guardian an individual counseling session with the school counselor to discuss their plans, outcomes and impacts of participation in the credit flexibility option;
- Must obtain pre-approval from the district Credit Flexibility Committee by the designated deadlines set forth in the district calendar and guidance handbook.

## **Section 4: Credit Flexibility Approval**

To earn credit through credit flexibility option, students must submit the following documentation to the Credit Flexibility Committee by February 1<sup>st</sup> of the previous school year.

- Credit Flexibility Approval Agreement;
- Any supporting documentation related to the method of earning credit;
- 1-page written statement from student indicating their desire to participate in the credit flexibility option and likelihood of success.

The Credit Flexibility Committee will consist of:

- Building administrator(s);
- School counselor(s);
- Teacher representative(s) from the department(s) with which credit is being requested.

The following information will be determined during the approval process:

- Method of earning credit;
- Amount of credit sought (may request for only a full or half credit towards a course);
- Academic or elective discipline of study (may request to earn credit in multiple subjects for the same credit flexibility option);
- Outside parties/resources that will be involved in the completion of credit;
- Timeline for completion (must be completed by May 1<sup>st</sup> of year credit will be awarded);
- Teacher of record who will monitor progress and attainment of knowledge and award grades;
- Learning outcomes, standards and demonstration of knowledge as laid out in the Credit Flexibility Approval Agreement.
- Special accommodations to be provided for students with a disability in compliance with their Individualized Education Plan or 504 Plan.

## **Section 5: Awarding Of Credit**

Students approved to take an end-course exam for the following school year must have their approved end-of-course examination completed and scores submitted prior to May 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year. This is to ensure that guidance staff will be able to appropriately schedule students into the necessary courses for the following year.

Students approved to participate in other educational options must have their work completed and submitted to their teacher of record by May 1<sup>st</sup> of the year the credit will be awarded.

Credit and grades will be awarded based upon the completion of the credit flexibility option approved by the committee:

- Testing out or otherwise demonstrating mastery of the course content
  - Credit and grade will be awarded to students upon completion of a standardized test approved by the district. A pre-established grade-equivalent scale will be used in determining letter grades awarded based on the test. Credits and grades earned through credit flexibility option will be reported on student transcripts and factored into a student's grade point average (GPA) and class ranking. All credit and grades earned are final.
- Pursuant of one or more educational options as described above in Section 2
  - Credit and grade will be awarded to students who successfully complete all requirements laid out in the Credit Flexibility Approval Agreement. Student grade will be determined by the teacher of record and based on the student's attainment of knowledge as related to the Ohio Content Standards and course objectives. Credits and grades earned through credit flexibility option will be reported on student transcripts and factored into a student's grade point average (GPA) and class ranking. All credit and grades earned are final.

The district reserves the right to reassign a student participating in credit flexibility option to a traditional course if the student fails to meet the standards for ongoing participation and satisfactory progress described in his or her Credit Flexibility Approval Agreement.

Should a student not complete their requested credit flexibility option by the designated deadline or completely fail to meet the requirements for adequate completion and/or knowledge attainment of the course no credit will be awarded and a grade of "F" will be recorded on student's transcript and factored into their GPA. The student must then take the course at the school through traditional seat time to earn their credit. They may not submit to earn that same credit through credit flexibility option.

In the event that a student does not complete or fails their credit flexibility option, the student and parent/guardian will be held financially liable to reimburse the school for any and all financial costs invested into the credit flexibility option.

The district shall accept all credit earned under credit flexibility options by students transferring to the district from another Ohio public state-accredited institution. Students who transfer into the district while in the process of completing a credit flexibility option approved by another district must have their current option re-reviewed by the Credit Flexibility Committee for approval. The committee reserves the right to deny or modify the current option if it does not meet the district standards for credit flexibility.

## **Section 6: Responsibility of Student and Parent/Guardian**

### **A. School Attendance**

Students participating in the credit flexibility option will be required to attend school for the remainder of their course load. The school will assist in creating the most conducive schedule for students, but cannot guarantee one that will fully accommodate the wishes of the student. Students may be placed on an adjusted schedule when appropriate.

### **B. Athletic Eligibility**

Students wishing to participate in credit flexibility option and athletics must ensure that they continue to meet eligibility requirements as directed by OHSAA bylaws (441 & 448) and North Central Local School Board of Education policy (2431 - INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS). Approval of credit flexibility option for 1 credit will be equivalent to taking a full year course.

### **C. Fees**

The district will require parents/guardians of students participating in a credit flexibility option not initiated by the district to be responsible for paying all fees associated with participation in that option, including any charges for: tuition and registration fees, books, assessments, travel costs, materials, etc. not typically provided free of charge to students in traditional courses. The district shall make every reasonable effort to assist in the participation of free or low cost credit flexibility options to economically disadvantaged students requesting the opportunity to earn flex credit.

### **D. Academic Integrity**

Credit flexibility options are the sole responsibility of the student. The student must complete all work and final products on their own. Students may accept support, feedback and/or knowledge from outside sources to assist in the completion of their credit flexibility option, but credit must be given to outside sources for their contribution to the work.

Students and/or parent/guardians deemed to be in violation of academic integrity guidelines will be notified of the complaint and informed of the student's revocation of their credit flexibility option. Any student found to be in violation of the academic integrity guidelines will receive no credit and a failing grade for the course that will be reported on their transcript and factored into their GPA and will be denied participation in any future requests to participate in the credit flexibility option.

## **Section 7: Appeals Process**

Should a student and or parent/guardian have a disagreement with a decision or action of the Credit Flexibility Committee, teacher of record or school system regarding any aspect of the credit flexibility procedures and guidelines, they may request for an appeal and have the right to a hearing.

Appeals must be formally written and submitted to the Credit Flexibility Committee. The appeal will be reviewed by the Credit Flexibility Committee comprised of the building administrator(s), school counselor(s) and a teacher representative from the department in the relevant subject area not involved in the original approval and assessment of the student.

The student filing the appeal and his or her parent/guardians(s) shall be given an opportunity to present concerns and recommendations to the committee. The committee will review appeals within 10 days from the date the appeal was submitted in writing. The decision of the committee shall be final unless overturned by the Superintendent and Board of Education or a directive resulting from an appeal filed with the Ohio Department of Education.

## **Section 8: Communication Plan**

Opportunities and requirements related to credit flexibility shall be publicized annually using multiple forms of media which may include any combination of the following: publication on the district's website, publication in the high school guidance handbook, dissemination of information at parent/guardian meetings, and the district newsletter. Copies of a publication describing opportunities and requirements related to credit flexibility will be made available to students, staff, and parent/guardians upon requests to the high school counselors or administrators.

The Superintendent or his or her designee shall review the content of these publications annually to ensure their completeness and accuracy.

The superintendent or his or her designee(s) shall maintain a cumulative database of approved educational options and standards for awarding grades and credits based on demonstrations of mastery to assist students, parents, and teachers with understanding available options and to help ensure equity and consistent standards of rigor.

## **Section 9: Reporting to State**

Students and parents/guardians are informed that data regarding participation in credit flexibility option will be shared on a yearly basis as required by the Ohio Department of Education.