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Credit Recovery: An Overview

DCPS launched a redesigned credit recovery program in School Year 2018-2019 to ensure that all students have the opportunity to succeed and are held to rigorous standards of excellence. Through the new credit recovery program, students have access to individualized, competency-based courses that are aligned to DCPS curriculum standards. These courses enable students to progress at their own pace through content that they did not master in their original course to earn course credit on their path to graduation.

Why did DCPS change its credit recovery model?

Students, families, and staff expressed concerns that the credit recovery guidance was unclear and that the structure of the courses made it difficult for students to succeed (such as rigid attendance policies and time-bound courses). Evidence revealed that many of our credit recovery course offerings did not meet DCPS' standards for rigor and were not setting our students up for success in high school and beyond.

How did DCPS gather feedback from stakeholders?

In October 2018, DCPS released a draft credit recovery policy and solicited extensive stakeholder feedback through:

- Online public comments (63);
- Webinars and public forums;
- Meetings with school-based credit recovery specialists and pathways coordinators;
- Chancellor's Principal Cabinet and Student Cabinet discussions; and
- Letters from the State Board of Education and Senior High Alliance of Parents, Principals, and Educators.

What does the new Credit Recovery model look like?

The model was modified based on stakeholder feedback and then finalized and released in November 2018 (see the table on page 2 for specific policy changes). The primary focus of credit recovery is to help students stay engaged, master course content, and graduate ready for college and career. Students in credit recovery programming participate in rigorous, individualized, competency-based courses that are aligned to DCPS curriculum standards. These courses enable students to reengage with content that they didn't master in their original class.

The following improvements were introduced this year:

- The courses are fully aligned to the DCPS curriculum and include clear expectations and resources to support student success.
- Targeted individualized instruction helps students learn concepts and content that they did not originally master.
- Self-pacing allows students to speed through areas where they are already proficient and take more time where they need it.
- Teachers are empowered to re-teach students until they gain proficiency. Students can complete multiple revisions with meaningful feedback.
- Students pass courses when they have demonstrated proficiency in all units as demonstrated by the passage of specific assessments.

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How will DCPS continue to improve Credit Recovery for students?

Policy Alignment: DCPS is committed to supporting schools to implement credit recovery programming in alignment with the new policy. We will ensure this commitment through training, monitoring, observation, and technical support.

Rigorous and Engaging Courses: In order to ensure students are receiving high-quality, rigorous course experiences, DCPS has developed 15 credit recovery courses that are aligned with the DCPS curriculum and contain clear standards for completion. For School Year 2019-2020, DCPS is creating more robust courses with embedded diagnostics, intervention strategies, and resources to address the specific academic needs and gaps of all students.

Wrap Around Support: Collaborating with teachers and coordinators has yielded a deeper understanding of the challenges the students in the credit recovery program face. DCPS is working on including more robust wrap-around support to address the non-academic challenges many students in credit recovery face such as child and sibling care, hunger, and safety.

Professional Development: Credit recovery teachers receive ongoing professional development specific to implementing a competency-based approach in their subject area. Credit recovery coordinators participate in monthly meetings and additional training as necessary to develop their capacity to oversee credit recovery programing. Specific topics include:

- Ensuring pathways coordinators and counselors work with students to help them understand the impact of course completion rate on promotion and graduation.
- Educating coordinators and teachers on the benefits of competency-based learning.
- Supporting the success of all students by providing differentiation for those who are below grade level.

Category	School Year 2017-2018	School Year 2018-2019
Eligibility	Only students who took the full course and failed were eligible for credit recovery. Seniors were able to take one credit recovery course as original credit.	All students who fail a course are eligible for credit recovery. No students may take credit recovery as original credit.
Attendance	Students were required to attend credit recovery courses daily and were withdrawn after four unexcused absences.	Teachers work with students to determine an attendance plan comprised of between 3 and 5 days of in-class attendance, supplemental instructional time, and online work as relevant. Students are withdrawn after 18 days of unexcused absences.
Schedule	Courses were scheduled for a set period of time (e.g. a term or semester).	Students can enter courses throughout the year and complete courses when they have demonstrated mastery, rather than on a time-bound schedule.
Grading and Completion	There was no standardized definition of course completion and the grading policy was unclear.	Credit recovery courses are competency-based. Students' grades are based on 50 percent practice and application and 50 percent standardized assessment. Students must pass all prescribed assessments to pass the course.