



This DCPS Credit Recovery Policy rescinds and supersedes all previous policy, memoranda, and/or guidance promulgated by DCPS on this subject matter.

Chancellor Approval:

Effective: November 5, 2018

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DCPS Credit Recovery Policy

I. Purpose

The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) is committed to ensuring every student feels loved, challenged, and prepared to positively influence society and thrive in life by providing rigorous and inclusive learning environments for all students. DCPS is focused on accelerating growth for students of all identities and abilities by ensuring equitable access to opportunity and removing barriers to learning. This policy conveys DCPS requirements related to credit recovery courses.

II. Authority

D.C. Code § 38-174(c): The DCPS Chancellor is authorized to organize DCPS for efficient operation, exercise the powers necessary and appropriate to operate the schools and school system, implement applicable provisions of District and federal law, and promulgate and implement rules and regulations necessary to accomplish these duties and functions. The establishment of this policy relates to the Chancellor's authority to promulgate and implement rules for the operation of schools and the school system.

DCMR § 2203.7: Beginning with School Year 2016-2017: (a) The District of Columbia Public Schools ("DCPS") or the Public Charter School Board ("PCSB") may waive the Carnegie Unit requirement set forth in Subsection 2203.3 for a school seeking to award competency-based unit(s), as defined in this chapter, accordingly:

- (1) A school that seeks a waiver from the Carnegie Unit requirement to award competency-based unit(s) shall submit an application to either the DCPS or PCSB. If a charter school is part of an LEA, the application must be submitted to the PCSB through the LEA;
- (2) Applications for a waiver to award competency-based unit(s) shall be in the format established by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education ("OSSE") and contain the information required by OSSE; and
- (3) The DCPS or PCSB, respectively, shall review the school's application in accordance with the standards and requirements established by OSSE. If the school's application meets the standards and requirements established by OSSE, the DCPS or PCSB, respectively shall approve the school's application for a waiver to award competency-based unit(s);

A seat hour waiver application for each course must be submitted by the school and approved by DCPS prior to the award of any credit beyond the Carnegie Unit, including credit recovery.

III. Key Terms and Definitions

- A. **Competency-based:** An approach to teaching and learning within a flexible structure, allowing students to progress as they demonstrate mastery of academic content, regardless of time or pace of learning.
- B. **Credit recovery:** An alternative to course repetition for students who have previously failed a course required for High School graduation. Credit recovery targets the course standards in which students are deficient.
- C. **Subject and content area:** A particular course of study, such as math, English language arts, science and social studies.
- D. **Mastery:** A level of performance that students must demonstrate to show grade level understanding of course content and standards.

IV. Required Activities

General requirements

All students in high school who fail a course required for graduation may be considered for enrollment in credit recovery.¹ Credit recovery will allow students an opportunity to earn course credit by demonstrating mastery of content at the same level of rigor as the original course, consistent with DCPS curriculum. Students may be enrolled in only one credit recovery course at a time unless they have a schedule that is able to accommodate additional courses and receive permission from the school to enroll in additional credit recovery courses.

Credit recovery courses are individualized and competency-based. Students in credit recovery are mastering course standards and units of study they failed to master during the original course. In order to earn course credit, all students must complete an identified set of required assessments. Credit recovery students are not required to re-take content they have already mastered in their original credit course if they have passing marks on all prescribed assessments related to specific course content. Credit recovery courses must not be the first line of intervention. Students who are struggling in their original classes must be provided the necessary classroom and staff supports as they work to pass the original class before being enrolled in a credit recovery course (see [DCPS secondary grading and reporting policy](#) for details).

Credit recovery fits into a continuum of interventions for students who are at risk of falling off-track for graduation, or who are already off-track. Credit recovery itself shall not be seen as the only intervention; rather, guidance counselors, Pathways coordinators, and others will provide additional, necessary supports for students to ensure their success at high levels of performance.

This policy pertains to credit recovery courses offered before school, after school, during evening time, on Saturdays, and over the summer. Students may participate in credit recovery during traditional school hours only if they have an approved abbreviated schedule and are not enrolled in a traditional course during that time. As a part of DCPS' high school summer school programming, credit recovery courses are available to all students who failed a course during any previous school year.

¹ This policy applies to all high schools in DCPS, with the exception of Twilight Academies and Opportunity Academies.

Note: In order for credit recovery students to develop their individualized plans for credit recovery courses, teachers of original courses will have to adhere to DCPS and school-based policies around use of our student information system, Aspen, and curriculum platform, Canvas, to capture what content the student mastered in the original course, and the remaining gaps.

Allowable courses

Schools may offer credit recovery courses for any of the following credit-bearing courses required for graduation from DCPS:

- English
- Mathematics, including Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II
- Science, including lab sciences
- Social Studies, including World History 1 and 2, United States History, United States Government, and District of Columbia History
- World Language
- Art
- Music
- Health

Courses required for graduation but *not included* in allowable credit recovery offerings include the following:

- Physical Education
- Electives

Eligibility

Students eligible for credit recovery include only those who have taken and failed the original course. Students may not take a credit recovery course concurrently with or in lieu of the same original credit course.

Students must be referred to a credit recovery course through a process involving the guidance counselor and including the provision of written parent/guardian consent.

Allowable formats of instruction

Credit recovery courses are individualized, each focused on the specific content of which a student has not yet demonstrated mastery. Schools have limited flexibility to determine their instructional approach to credit recovery courses based on the specific needs of individual students, provided the standards are equivalent to the standards of the original course, and adhere to DCPS curriculum.

The two allowable instructional approaches are:

1. **Teacher-led**, whereby classes enrolled with students participating in the same or similar courses receive teacher-guided instruction in that course(s).

2. **Blended**, whereby teachers combine the use of approved online credit recovery courseware to supplement their teacher-led one-on-one, small group, and whole-class instruction.

See the Scheduling and Staffing section below for more details on the default model.

Approved online credit recovery courseware for each content area is identified by central office in alignment to standards for each course.

In all cases, schools must regularly monitor and assess students' progress toward mastery of the specific standards on which the students are working.

Schools must submit a list of credit recovery courses and the school's chosen instructional approach for each course each term to the Central Office for approval.

Scheduling and staffing

Each high school will develop its own schedule for credit recovery courses, and submit that schedule to central office for approval.

The default staffing model for DCPS credit recovery courses shall be as follows:

- Credit recovery classrooms shall be staffed by teachers certified in relevant content areas.
- Credit recovery classrooms may contain students who are working on different courses, provided that the teacher is certified to instruct across all courses within her/his classroom.
- The teacher to student ratio should not exceed 1:15 in credit recovery classes up to two courses. Teachers may be responsible for up to three courses but may only serve a total of 30 students between the three courses.

In addition, DCPS will consider alternative staffing models developed by schools and submitted to the central office for approval. In all cases, credit recovery classrooms shall be staffed by certified teachers.

Attendance

Students in credit recovery are engaged in individualized, competency-based courses focused on the standards and units that they failed to achieve in their original course. They are not enrolled in a "whole-class" experience, and are not required to adhere to the same period attendance policy as students in regular courses.

In credit recovery courses, the teacher will work with students on their individual plans, including in-class supports and instruction, any additional out-of-class instructional supports such as tutoring, and the use of online platforms. Teachers will monitor students' use of online platforms and out-of-class instructional supports. For each student, the balance of in-class, supplemental, and virtual instructional support will be determined by the teacher of record, with each student attending a minimum of 3 (three) in-person classes per week. Teachers shall work with students to determine an attendance plan comprised of between 3 and 5 days of in-class attendance, plus supplemental instructional time, plus online work as relevant. This plan needs to be documented in each student's educational file. As part of this plan, students shall attend for all assessments and teacher-designated assignments and required

instructional time. Students shall demonstrate the general equivalent of a week's worth of work regardless of their attendance plan.

Teachers shall inform students of their progress on an ongoing basis. Teachers shall inform parents/guardians when students are at risk of not completing the course successfully.

If students are absent without a valid excuse for 18 or more of the 3-day-minimum required credit recovery in-person class sessions, they shall be withdrawn from the course and receive a grade of "W." Absence notification will be provided to families after 6, 9 and 15 unexcused absences.

Completion and grading

Consistent with the general DCPS Grading and Reporting Policy, marks/grades of A through F shall be assigned by the teacher in credit recovery courses to indicate the degree of mastery by a student of the content on which s/he is working. Students who attain a course grade of "D" or above will have successfully passed the credit recovery course and earned course credit.

Credit recovery courses shall not replace original credit courses or their grades on a student's transcript.

Grades in credit recovery courses are determined based on the following:

- **50% Student practice & application**
- **50% Assessment**, including regular teacher-monitored assessments and end-of-course exams.
 - Consistent with DCPS Secondary Grading and Reporting Policy, if teachers administer an end of course exam it can total no more than 20% of the final grade.

Because credit recovery is a hands-on, individualized and performance-based learning experience, there will be no "participation" component of the final grade, as successful demonstration of mastery in competency-based courses is considered an indication of self-management and responsible decision-making.²

Appeals process³

Consistent with the DCPS records appeals process, a parent or student has the right to seek to amend educational records believed to be inaccurate or misleading. An initial grade appeal for credit recovery courses, consistent with grade appeals in regular courses, shall be in writing and shall be directed to the school principal within ten school days of receipt of the grade.

The school principal shall immediately notify, in writing, the affected teacher of the challenge and ask the teacher to provide all tangible, pertinent, detailed, and dated records to substantiate the grade given, and shall meet with the teacher to discuss the grade.⁴ Within ten school days of receipt of the appeal, the principal shall review and consider all submitted records with the challenging party or

² In traditional courses, typically grades (before any end of course exam) are comprised of: 50% student practice and application, 40% assessment, 10% participation.

³ 5-E DCMR § 2602 provides regulations related to this process.

⁴ Collective Bargaining Agreement Between The Washington Teachers Union Local #6 of the American Federation of Teachers and The District of Columbia Public Schools; October 1, 2016 – September 30, 2019; Art. 19.1.1.

representative and the teacher, and issue a determination in writing. *Please note that if any grade modifications are made pursuant to this grade challenge process, the principal must notify the affected teacher in writing prior to the grade modification and include the reasons for the modification.*

A parent or student may appeal the principal's decision by submitting a written appeal to the Instructional Superintendent within five school days of receipt of the principal's decision.

When an appeal is submitted to the Instructional Superintendent, the Instructional Superintendent shall have ten school days within receipt of the appeal to review and consider all submitted evidence and issue a final determination in writing. The following procedural guidelines shall apply:

- The burden to show why the grade(s) in question should be changed shall be on the student or his or her parent; and
- Strict rules of evidence shall not apply.

Special considerations

English Learners and students with disabilities are included as eligible for credit recovery under this policy. Students with disabilities, identified through the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) 2004, are eligible for credit recovery as determined in accordance with the goals and objectives, accommodations and modifications as it relates to the content standards developed and agreed upon by the IEP Team. For English Learners, any decision on credit recovery must be made in conjunction with the bilingual/English Second Learner (ESL) teacher.

V. Requirements for Policy Implementation

All DCPS employees are required to comply with the requirements set forth in this policy. In order to support its implementation, principals are expected to make all staff aware of required activities on an annual basis.

Implementation of this policy requires that principals use existing central office course guidance or obtain approval from central office to use alternative course guidance. All schools must submit school-based credit recovery plans, including approval of credit recovery courses, and approval of credit recovery staffing plans when using a staffing model other than the default model.

Implementation of this policy will be reinforced through a central oversight process which includes regular data reviews, record sampling, reviews of underlying documentation, and, as needed, site visits. Data reviews will be conducted monthly to ensure appropriate use of credit recovery.

This framework will ensure that, together, we build a system of continuous improvement and prevent noncompliance. For key guidance and support with questions, training, or implementation, please visit dcps.dc.gov.

DCPS is committed to serving every student with equity, excellence, transparency, and accountability. For any concerns or violations about this directive, contact the Chief Integrity Officer either by completing the [Online Referral Form](#) or send your concern via email to dcps.cio@dc.gov.