

WORTHINGTON SCHOOLS
CREDIT FLEXIBILITY PLAN
2011-2012

Absolute Excellence | Exponential Impact

Quality education
shaping quality of life.



www.worthington.k12.oh.us

WORTHINGTON 2020: Creating Tomorrow for ALL Students

Sincere appreciation is extended to the following people who served on the Worthington Credit Flexibility Design Team. They devoted time and expertise in the development of the Worthington Credit Flexibility Plan.

Worthington Credit Flexibility Design Team

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Worthington Credit Flexibility Planning Team

Sincere appreciation is extended to the following people who currently serve on the Worthington Credit Flexibility Planning Team. They have devoted time and expertise in the refinement and monitoring of the Worthington Credit Flexibility Plan.

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New Emphasis on Learning

Ohio’s credit flexibility plan shifts the focus from “seat time” to performance

In 2006, the Ohio General Assembly established the Ohio Core Curriculum (Senate Bill 311), which raised expectations for what all Ohio students must know and be able to do to earn a high school diploma. At the same time, SB 311 directed the State Board of Education to develop a statewide plan for implementing methods for students to earn units of high school credit based on the demonstration of subject area competency. In addition to raising the expectations for graduation, lawmakers provided flexibility to students and educators to successfully meet these higher expectations.

Developed by the Ohio Credit Flexibility Design Team, Ohio’s Credit Flexibility Plan shifts focus from evaluating student learning based on seat time to assessing students’ demonstrated academic and skill level or performance. The plan does not eliminate Carnegie units or “seat time” requirements altogether. Rather, it retains seat time as one option and expands the number of options for earning credit by adding demonstration of subject area competency and structures that support it irrespective of any time requirements.

Credit Flexibility:

- Offers learning opportunities not found in the one-size-fits-all factory process model;
- Focuses on performance, not seat time;
- Acknowledges and addresses students’ differing learning styles, paces and interests;
- Offers students opportunities to demonstrate creativity, explore academic and career interests, and practice critical thinking;
- Recognizes that measures of engagement and ownership are as important for achievement as measures of attendance and access.

Ohio’s plan for credit flexibility is designed to broaden the scope of curricular options available to students, increase the depth of study available for a particular subject, and tailor the learning time or conditions as needed (to shorten or lengthen the time necessary to complete a high school diploma and/or postsecondary degree). In these ways, students can customize learning around more of their interests and needs.

With credit flexibility, students can earn credit in three ways, or in a combination of these ways:

1. By completing traditional coursework
2. By testing out or otherwise demonstrating proficiency of the course content; or
3. By pursuing one or more educational options (e.g., distance learning, educational travel, independent study, an internship, music, arts, afterschool program, community service or engagement project).

Credit flexibility has numerous benefits for students and families, teachers and counselors, school administrators, employers, community leaders and Ohio taxpayers.

For students and families . . . Credit Flexibility

means more choice and autonomy in deciding how, when and where students learn; more options for individually suited pathways to postsecondary and career goals; acceleration and convenience including more options for courses in school schedules (especially for fitting in electives).

For teachers and counselors . . . Credit Flexibility

offers increased flexibility and autonomy to choose the best paths to support individual learning; increased opportunity for collaboration and interdisciplinary work; shared accountability for student learning and performance.

For schools and districts . . . Credit Flexibility

broadens and deepens access to electives that engage students; it allows administrators to make maximum use of community resources to meet student needs.

For business and the community . . . Credit Flexibility

creates options for educating and building relationships with students and educators about industry opportunities, competencies and trends; generates opportunities to attract and retain Ohio students as future employees and community partners; directly adds value to the education system by engaging them in meaningful partnership in support of education, workforce development and community outcomes.

For the State of Ohio . . . Credit Flexibility

produces a strong return on taxpayers' investment in education (e.g. accelerated learning and fewer dropouts) and helps students prepare themselves for postsecondary education and the workplace.

The Case for Credit Flexibility

In the course of their work, members of the Ohio Credit Flexibility Design Team examined the flexible time and credit earning practices of schools and districts both in Ohio and across the nation. They looked at a variety of Ohio policies and practices, including those in the areas of educational options, dual enrollment and accelerated learning. Team members concluded the following:

1. **Carnegie structures as currently designed do not guarantee learning for all students.** Ohio's statewide aggregate graduation rate is 87 percent. Among our graduates who become first-year college students, remediation rates in mathematics and/or English run about 45 percent. Other students never make it to graduation day—about 20,000 students drop out of Ohio schools every year.
2. **At least five provisions in the Ohio Revised Code already allow some flexibility, but they operate as exemptions to standard procedures and practices.** Not accounting for dual credit, less than five percent of all high school credit is earned through these provisions.
3. **Most states have provisions permitting flexibility, but they are not widely used.** System structures such as testing, scheduling, funding and accountability act as barriers to flexibility.

4. **Although there is evidence that schools, certain models and some states use flexibility to meet the needs of individual students and groups of students, on the whole, Ohio does not record, measure or disseminate these efforts.** Alternative education, credit recovery, dropout prevention/intervention, enrichment/acceleration, independent study, early college and dual credit have all produced positive results in Ohio, yet they are largely seen as outside the *regular* system.

Accelerating and Empowering Student Learning

With credit flexibility, 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. They will be able to learn subject matter and earn course credit in ways not limited solely to seat time or the walls of a school building. They will be able to customize their learning around their interests and needs, which might include flexible schedules and a choice of modalities (e.g. online learning and community-based projects), as well as options to pursue niche interest areas, combine subjects and graduate early.

Why credit flexibility? Research and experience shows that credit flexibility encourages student self-direction and motivates learners to develop new skills to fulfill their potential. It lets students ask questions, solve problems and manage the continuous change that underscores life. And it recognizes that while learning experiences must be high quality, not all learning happens inside the classroom or in formal education settings.

Key Facts about Ohio's Credit Flexibility Plan

The plan adopted by the State Board of Education includes the following provisions:

- The Carnegie Unit will be retained, along with options for demonstrating subject area competency and earning credit.
- All students will have opportunities to earn credits through flexible methods, although credit flexibility will pertain only to high school credit.
- There is no limit to the kinds of course work, nor to the number of credits that can be earned.
- Credit will be reported on student transcripts in the same way that seat time credit is recorded.
- Teachers will determine when credit should be awarded, but other mechanisms (e.g. the use of a multi-disciplinary teaching team, a professional panel from the community or a state performance-based assessment) may be used to determine credit.
- Local boards of education will establish implementation policies, and will be prohibited from setting policies that negate or otherwise prohibit access to the plan.

Credit Flexibility and Interscholastic Athletics

Credit flexibility plans for students participating in cocurricular activities governed by the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) shall include procedures for documenting ongoing participation and satisfactory progress on the part of the student for the purpose of satisfying academic eligibility requirements established in OHSAA bylaws 441 and 448. Student athletes should check with their school counselor (NCAA Clearinghouse) and the school's athletic director (OHSAA eligibility) for more information.

High School Athletes – To be eligible to play interscholastic high school sports, a student must:

- be officially enrolled in school
- be enrolled in at least five one credit courses or the equivalent, each of which counts toward graduation
- have received passing grades in at least five one credit courses or the equivalent, each of which count toward graduation, during his or her last grading period

A student enrolled in credit flexibility courses must, at the conclusion of the high school's grading period, be "passing" all credit flexibility courses used to establish athletic eligibility. The student may not yet have completed the courses, but it must be determined that the student was "passing" the course(s) at the time the grading period ended. If it is determined that the student is not passing, no credit toward the five credits (or equivalent) required for eligibility can be awarded.

College Athletics – Recent information sent to schools from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Eligibility Center regarding prospective Division I student-athletes and coursework taken in nontraditional classroom settings may impact school district credit flexibility plans. The NCAA guidance applies to all student-athletes entering a Division I NCAA college or university on or after Aug. 1.

Specifically, schools are advised to counsel prospective Division I student-athletes not to use the "test-out option" of credit flexibility. They also should advise students that any coursework earned via credit flexibility needs to be comparable in length, content and rigor to credits earned in a traditional classroom setting. The course also must be four-year college-preparatory in nature and have a defined time period for completion.

Although, in general, ODE recommends that districts list credit flexibility credits on student transcripts in the same manner as credits earned via traditional classroom settings, the NCAA requires that any credits earned through nontraditional ways (e.g. distance learning, online, credit recovery, educational options) must be so designated on the transcripts of potential Division I student athletes. Schools should note on student transcripts submitted to the NCAA for review which course credits were earned through nontraditional ways, or attach an addendum with the explanation. The designation of credits on the transcript applies only for NCAA purposes. If in doubt, contact the [NCAA Eligibility Center](#) for specific advice on this issue.

Credit Flexibility Waiver

With passage of Senate Bill 311 and the State Board of Education's adoption of a credit flexibility plan on March 10, 2009, districts, community schools and chartered nonpublic schools are required to implement a credit flexibility plan beginning in school year 2010-2011. However, a district may obtain a one-year waiver to request the delay of full implementation of the credit flexibility plan if full implementation of and access to the plan creates a difficulty to the district. Worthington Schools has requested and received a waiver from the Ohio Department of Education for the component of Demonstration of Mastery – Test Out. Test Out options will be available beginning in the 2011-2012 school year.

Worthington Schools

Credit Flexibility Plan

Vision

The Worthington Credit Flexibility Plan will motivate and increase student learning through greater access to more resources, customizations of curriculum around individual learning needs, and demonstrate achievement through multiple measures of learning.

Mission

The Worthington Credit Flexibility Plan is a tool to forward the renewal of schools and provide options and alternatives for all students.

Goals

1. To allow student pursuit of interest-based education that motivates and engages.
2. To provide greater relevancy to students' daily lives.
3. To empower students to design their education to meet their individual needs/interests.
4. To cultivate effective habits of the mind.
5. To provide purposeful connections between education and the community (local and global).
6. To support students' learning in high school through graduation and beyond.
7. To strengthen instruction to ensure that all students are college and career ready.
8. To ensure Worthington graduates are equipped with the skills, knowledge and dispositions necessary to thrive in the current century.

Objectives

1. Expand learning opportunities beyond those found in our high school course offerings.
2. Effectively address student learning styles.
3. Shift the focus in learning to performance and demonstration.
4. Create a positive culture that supports creativity, innovation, career exploration, acceleration and interest-based curriculum.
5. Create incentives for students to pursue and master core curriculum in an interest-based context.
6. Provide opportunity for students to take more responsibility for their learning.

Expectations

1. Credit flexibility is for all students and all classes.
2. Credit flexibility will be promoted frequently and through many different avenues.
3. Students will take ownership and responsibility for the plan.
4. Additional costs will be passed on to the family.
5. Staff will maintain responsibility for approval and oversight of any approved credit flexibility plan.
6. Staff will engage and support those students who wish to pursue this option.

What Credit Flexibility Option Is For You?



Have you already learned the material?

YES

NO

Testing Out

or

Testing Out +
Project/Lab/
Performance

How do you want to learn the content?



Online Learning

Design my own
experience

Internship

Matching

Options For Earning High School Credit

Middle and high school students may earn high school credits in any combination of the following methods:

- a. Successfully completing traditional high school level courses for which one credit shall be granted per 120 hours of class time;
- b. Successfully completing an educational option plan as described in the Board's approved educational option policy and the section of the Board's policy on credit flexibility, or another approved educational experience as described in the policy on credit flexibility;
- c. Successfully completing college-level course work for dual credit in accordance with the Board's policy on post secondary educational options;
- d. Successfully completing an online course offered by a provider accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities or equivalent state/regional accreditation association;
- e. Successfully demonstrating proficiency on an examination or examination + performance approved by the district;
- f. Successfully completing a portfolio of work that demonstrates mastery of academic standards.
- g. Successfully demonstrating proficiency through a combination of the above methods.

The district shall not limit the number of credits earned by a student through any of these methods. All credits earned will apply toward graduation. The district will not cap the total number of credits a student may earn or compel a student who does not wish to do so to graduate after completing fewer than four years of high school. Students may earn credit or partial credit in multiple content areas by successfully completing interdisciplinary educational options that address content standards in more than one subject area.

The district shall not prohibit access to accredited online programs, postsecondary options, or services from another accredited institution, nor deny credit earned under credit flexibility by students transferring from another accredited district.

Procedure:

- Students may apply for a credit flexibility option on a rolling basis each month.
- Students must submit their credit flexibility application indicating their intent to test out in advance of testing. Application dates and testing for 2011-2012 are:

Application Due: June 15	Testing: The week of August 8th
Application Due: November 15	Testing: The week of January 2nd
Application Due: April 15	Testing: The week of June 4th
- Application for options b, f or g may be submitted at any time to any teacher employed by the district who is certified to give credit in the area sought. Upon the teacher's approval, the plan will be submitted to the department chairperson for final approval.
- Application for option c shall be done through the school counseling center in accordance with the timeline of the cooperating institution.
- Application for option d should be made directly to the credit flexibility building team at the time of enrollment for an online course.

UNDERSTANDINGS:

- Individual teacher of record is responsible for the credit flexibility for Educational Options
- Before attempting to test out, students must declare if they are taking the attempted credit for a grade or pass/fail. Pass/Fail options are not permitted for credit flexibility options unless students earning credit in the traditional class have a pass/fail choice. Please refer to the course planning handbook to determine if a course is eligible for a pass/fail grade alternative.
- Students can test out after failing a class rather than retaking class.
- Students may work through semester or yearlong courses by a partial test-out by quarter.
- Students may have unlimited test out attempts, with each previous grade appearing on transcript.
- Changes in credit flexibility circumstances beyond the student's control will not penalize the student. Partial credit may be earned for work completed.
- Each department determines which course, if any, are eligible for test out options.

Educational Options

Through credit flexibility, one way students can earn credit is by pursuing one or more educational options (e.g. distance learning, educational travel, independent study, an internship, music, arts, afterschool program, community service or engagement project).

An educational option will be defined in each individual student's credit flexibility application and proposal. This application and proposal is subject to approval by the student's teacher of record and content department chairperson. Prior approval for the proposal is required; there will be no rewarding of retroactive credit. The educational option must be correlated to and cover the span of knowledge contained in the State of Ohio Academic Content Standards and the Worthington Graded Course of Study. To be accepted, a student must provide an equivalent educational experience to the traditional Worthington classroom. While the Worthington School District seeks to provide a number of options for students, a comparable academic rigor and challenge must exist in order to ensure students' college and career readiness.

The Worthington School District shall award, to students choosing educational options, an equal number of credits as awarded to students who successfully complete the equivalent traditional course.

The Worthington School District reserves the right to reassign a student participating in an educational option to a traditional course or other placement at its discretion if the student fails to meet the standards for ongoing participation and satisfactory progress as defined in his or her educational options plan.

Online Credit Flexibility

The option of online credit flexibility offers a number of unique policy and regulation requirements for the Worthington Schools. Due to the flexible nature of the online courses, and course offerings it is nearly impossible for every scenario to be predicted. The hope is that these guidelines will address the majority of the options students will choose and give guidance on the unpredictable options that may also arise.

Regulations:

Online courses offered by an organization outside of the Worthington School District (WSD).

- Students are free to arrange for an online course offered from an educational institution other than the WSD. The student is responsible for all aspects of this course including payment for the course, access to the course, internet access, computer equipment, textbooks or other course materials, etc.
- The WSD will grant credit for the course which may or may not apply towards the credits a student needs for graduation.
- Students must be eligible to take the online course by completing the all of the prerequisites.
- Students need to complete a credit flexibility application prior to taking the online course so they will know what course credit will be granted from the WSD, how much credit will be granted, and when the credit will be awarded. In some cases, students will also be able to learn what the requirements will be to earn each letter grade in the class.
- All online courses must be offered by an accredited educational institution (North Central Association of Colleges and Universities or equivalent state/regional accreditation associations).
- Students should know that online courses may or may not meet the requirements of NCAA or OHSAA eligibility.
- Course credit will be awarded upon the successful completion of the course.

Online courses offered by WSD. Students that choose to take classes from the WSD which are offered online must abide by the following regulations:

- Students must submit an application for the online courses prior to attempting to take the course.
- Students must meet all requirements of the course. For example, if a course has a laboratory requirement the students must participate.
- Students must be eligible to take the online course by completing all of the prerequisites.
- Students will be monitored for progress with the online course by the assigned teacher. This progress monitoring will meet the eligibility requirements for the OHSAA.
- Course credit will be awarded upon the successful completion of the course.

Demonstration of Mastery (Proficiency)

*Test Out and Test Out Plus

Objective

To provide guidance for sound practice in designing and selecting appropriate assessment activities/instruments under Worthington's credit flexibility policy and regulations.

Policy and Regulations

A district may design and/or select paper-and-pencil, performance and other kinds of assessment instruments for purposes of awarding credit and assigning course grades for students accessing credit flexibility. Design, selection and use of test instruments involve proper alignment, the setting of performance levels and sound practice in educational testing. Students should be advised of the testing and performance expectations prior to applying to a program of credit flexibly. Traditional paper-and-pencil test results can be combined with other forms of assessments (the determination of which should be based on the totality of the learning targets and performance expectations of the course being tested) to determine a student's grade.

A student may apply for partial or full course credit.

Definitions

- **Proper Alignment:** The degree to which coursework expectations (learning targets), Academic Content Standards, Worthington Graded Courses of Study and assessments are in agreement and work together to guide the learning of students of what they are expected to know and be able to do.
- **Setting of Performance Levels** Establishing categories, scores and grades indicating the expected quality of a student's work in a content area.
- **Sound Practice in Educational Testing:** The appropriateness of the assessment activities, test reliability and validity, proficiency in scoring the assessment, opportunities for the student to learn the material, and other factors related to ensuring student access and fairness.
- **Testing Out:** One end of semester and/or end of course test can be used to determine a student's level of mastery of the key learning targets for a course.
- **Testing Out + Performance:** Performance assessments are required in addition to test activities in order to determine a student's level of mastery of key learning targets for a course.
- **Performance:** Performance assessments can be used.

Timeline

All departments will their assessment plan designed and ready for implementation by the beginning of 2011-2012 school year. Each course should have only one assessment at each school site. While it is not required that all three high schools have the same assessment, it is

expected that the departments collaborate and have a common understanding of each sites assessment plan. The department head and designated site principal will have final approval of the assessment plan for each course.

Teachers are not required to but may use their PLC time to work collaboratively on the design of the assessments.

Guidance in Testing Design

In designing assessment activities, teachers should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Alignment with the Ohio Academic Content Standards;
- Alignment with the Worthington Graded Courses of Study
- The extent to which categories (themes) of content appear in the standards, syllabus and matching those themes in the assessments;
- The complexity of the learning targets and matching that complexity to the assessment activities;
- The span of knowledge stated in the standards and course syllabus and matching that to how students need to correctly answer test questions or demonstrate mastery through performance;
- That the emphasis given on the Testing Out option be comparable to the emphasis of the learning targets and assessment activities in the traditional seat time course;
- The rigor of the assessment activities should be significantly related to the level of learning as represented in the Worthington Graded Courses of Study and course syllabus.

Grading

To the extent possible, teachers will follow the district grading policy when administering testing out options through credit flexibility.

Format for Testing Out

Each teacher will submit the following to their department chairperson and assigned principal for approval:

Course Name:

Teacher(s):

Learning Targets To Be Assessed:

Suggested Materials to be provided to students upon approval of the Test Out option to include, but not limited to, the following:

- Testing Out Blueprint
- Materials (textbooks, etc.)
- Consumable materials and supplies will be the responsibility of the student
- Other

Assessment Plan

Each department will develop an assessment plan of any course available for Test Out, Test Out Plus, and Performance.

Assessment Schedule

Students must submit their credit flexibility application indicating their intent to test out in advance of testing. Application dates and testing for 2011-2012 are:

Application Due: June 15	Testing: The week of August 8th
Application Due: November 15	Testing: The week of January 2nd
Application Due: April 15	Testing: The week of June 4 th

* Worthington Schools has requested and received a waiver from the Ohio Department of Education for the component of Demonstration of Mastery – Test Out. Test Out options will be available beginning in the 2011-2012 school year.

Credit Flexibility Building Teams

The approved credit flexibility plan will be forwarded to the respective Credit Flexibility Building Teams (Linworth, TWHS, and WKHS). Responsibilities of the Credit Flexibility Building Teams include, but not limited to:

- Documentation
- Data collection
- Monitoring
- Tracking
- Problem solving
- Ensuring continuity of approved plans among departments
- Guidance on plans
- Suggestions for improvement
- Appeals
- Liaison to the Worthington Credit Flexibility Design Team

The Credit Flexibility Building Teams shall be composed of Department Chairs with the exception of Linworth. The team will meet a minimum of once per month.

Additional Information

Appeals Process

Students may appeal decisions regarding the denial of a proposed alternative learning credit (credit flexibility). This appeal will be reviewed by the Credit Flexibility Building Team. The decision by the team shall be final.

Students may submit an appeal to the Ohio Department of Education if there is a complaint about having access to or implementation of the credit flexibility policy. The Department's appeal may be held by a third party and will evaluate the extent to which students were given fair and equitable treatment or process.

Transfer of Credit Flexibility Plan

Credit earned from a completed credit flexibility option will transfer between school districts. Approved credit flexibility plans that are incomplete at the time of a student transfer from or into the Worthington Schools will no longer be valid. Students will need to re-submit the incomplete credit flexibility plan upon enrollment to the new school district. While the credit flexibility plan may be accepted, the plan will be governed by the guidelines and approval processes of the new school district.

Students transferring into the Worthington Schools with an approved credit flexibility plan from another school district must submit their credit flexibility plan to their school's Credit Flexibility Building Team.

Review Process for Credit Flexibility

A review process will be conducted at every two (2) years, and performance data will be submitted to the Ohio Department of Education. The data will include the methods and frequency of communication with students and families, the number of participating students, total credits earned and the extent to which student participation reflects the diversity of the student body.

Library of Courses

Working with the Credit Flexibility Building Teams, Worthington school personnel will maintain a library of credit flexibility courses that were previously accepted in order to assist students, parents, and teachers with construction and availability of options.

Communication

Credit Flexibility Communication Plan

BUILDING

Traditional Media	When	By Whom	Target
Direct Mailing	August	Office Staff	All
Course Planning Handbook	August	Teaching and Learning Staff	Students/Parents
Announcements	Weekly	Activity Director	Students
Newsletter	Monthly August-June	Office Staff	All
Parent Meetings	Monthly August-June	Group Liaison	Parents
Open House	September	Staff	Students, Parents, Community
Bulletin Boards	August	Counselors	Students, Parents, Community
School Newspaper	September	Editors	Students, Parents, Community
Staff Meetings	August Retreat	Leadership Team	Staff
State of School	August	Principal	All
Flyers	Available Continually	Counselors	All

Non-Traditional Media	When	By Whom	Target
Outdoor Signage	Begin September	Duty Teacher	All
School Website	Begin September	Web Master	All
E-Mail Blasts	Begin August	Activity Director	All

DISTRICT

Media	When	By Whom	Target
Website	July	Director of Communications	All
Twitter and Facebook	August	Director of Communications	All
District Communications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent's Newsletter • <i>Staff Matters</i> • <i>Communication Matters</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September, January, May • Monthly • Monthly 	Director of Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community, Parents • Staff • Community
Local Newspapers	June, July, September	Director of Communications	All
District Committees	Begin September	District Administrators	Parents, Staff, Community
Board of Education Meetings	March, June, July	Administrators, Staff	Board of Education Members
Pamphlet	July	Director of Communications	Students, Parents

**Credit Flexibility
(Board of Education Policy)**

The Board recognizes that an effective educational program is one that provides opportunities for students to customize aspects of their learning around their respective needs and interests. Credit flexibility is one method to motivate and increase student learning by allowing access to more resources, customization around individual student needs and the use of multiple measures of learning.

Credit flexibility shifts the focus from seat time to performance. Students can earn units of high school credit based on an individually approved credit flexibility plan. The intent of credit flexibility is to meet increased expectations for high school graduation in response to globalization, technology and demographics, and to meet the demand for 21st century skills.

In accordance with State law, the District must develop and implement a credit flexibility plan that enables students to earn high school credit by:

1. completing coursework;
2. testing out or showing mastery of course content;
3. pursuing an educational option and/or an individually approved option and/or
4. any combination of the above.

The Superintendent/designee develops the District's credit flexibility plan consistent with the provisions of the following regulations.

[Adoption date: March 8, 2010]

LEGAL REFS: Carnegie Design Team Report to the State Board of Education, *New Emphasis on Learning: Ohio's plan for credit flexibility shifts the focus from "seat time" to performance* (June 2009)

ORC 3313.60; 3313.603; 3313.609; 3313.6013; 3313.611; 3313.613;
3313.614; 3313.90
3321.04
Chapter 3324
Chapter 3365
OAC Chapter 3301-34
3301-35-06
Chapter 3301-46
Chapter 3301-51
Chapter 3301-61

**Credit Flexibility
(Board of Education Regulations)**

In accordance with State law, the District's plan for Credit Flexibility must:

1. identify the multiple methods of communication and frequency of each method the District will use to communicate the credit flexibility policy and plan to students and parents on an on-going basis;
2. allow for demonstration of subject area competency on an on-going basis;
3. allow for graded options for subject area competency;
4. allow demonstration of proficiency to count towards course requirements for graduation;
5. determine credit equivalency for a Carnegie unit;
6. prohibit limiting the number of courses or credits earned through credit flexibility;
7. allow for both simultaneous credit and/or partial credit to be earned;
8. allow access to online education, postsecondary, options or services from another district, as approved by the Board (BOE Policy File: IKF);
9. allow for the acceptance of credit from other accredited districts and accredited educational providers;
10. establish procedures students who do not or cannot complete requirements;
11. establish a review process and submit data to the Ohio Department of Education about the methods and frequency of communication with students and parents;
12. collect and submit to the Ohio Department of Education performance data including, but not limited to, the number of participating students, total credits earned, and extent to which student participation reflects diversity of the student body;
13. maintain a "library" of courses that were previously accepted to assist students, parents, and teachers with understanding available options; and
14. demonstrate alignment in upholding the standard of students making progress towards academic achievement and graduation in relationship to student eligibility for athletics (Reference: OHSAA bylaws (441, 448));

[Adoption date: August 9, 2010]



Worthington Schools

Credit Flexibility – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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Q: What is Credit Flexibility?

A: Credit Flexibility is a program that allows students to earn high school credits in the following ways:

- Completing coursework in the traditional setting
- Testing out or showing mastery of course content
- Pursuing educational options such as online courses, independent study, internships, service learning, research-based projects, dual credit college-high school programs, distance learning, educational travel

Q: Which courses are available through Credit Flexibility?

A: All high school credit-generating courses are eligible for credit flexibility but approval for each course will be dependent upon the Worthington City School District's capacity to monitor and assess the plan and the student's ability to meet the academic requirements of the course.

Q: What educational opportunities are available under Credit Flexibility?

A: Students may pursue educational options such as online courses, independent study, internships, service learning, research-based projects, dual credit college-high school programs, distance learning, and educational travel in addition to testing out or demonstrating mastery learning in specific course content.

Q: How many credits can I earn through Credit Flexibility?

A. Under the provisions of credit flexibility, students are not limited in the number of courses or the number of credits earned through Credit Flexibility. Students may also earn simultaneous credit (e.g. more than one academic content/course area, secondary and postsecondary) and partial credit, as proposed and approved. Approval of credit flexibility plans and credits earned will be dependent upon the Worthington City School District's capacity to implement them.

Q: Which online courses can be used for Credit Flexibility options?

A. Students choosing online options are limited to those providers accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities or equivalent state/regional accredited institutions.

Q: Where can students and parents go to find information about Credit Flexibility?

A: Information about Credit Flexibility can be found on Worthington City School District's website (www.worthington.k12.oh.us), the Ohio Department of Education website (www.ode.state.oh.us) and from their school counselor.

Q: Where can I find the curriculum needed to write my Credit Flexibility proposal?

A: The curriculum can be found on the Ohio Department of Education’s website (www.ode.state.oh.us) – Academic Content Standards well as Worthington City School District’s website (www.worthington.k12.oh.us) – Grade Level Guides and Graded Courses of Study.

Q: How do students test out of a course or demonstrate proficiency of content?

A: The Worthington Schools has applied and received a testing out waiver from the Ohio Department of Education. The test out option will be fully implemented in the 2011-2012 school year. Once fully implemented, students who choose to test out of a class or demonstrate proficiency of course content instead of taking the traditional coursework will be permitted to do so. In addition to a comprehensive examination, a portfolio of assignments indicating a proficiency of course content may also be used as defined in individual student proposals and approved by the appropriate school personnel. The teacher/chairperson will work collaboratively to decide what type(s) of evaluation will be appropriate for each student’s proposal. If a collaborative decision cannot be reached, the Worthington City School District has the final decision on determining the assessment method(s).

Note: The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has limitations for testing out of courses that apply to student athletes planning to play at the Division I and II levels. Student athletes should consult their school’s athletic director and school counselors for additional information on athletic eligibility.

Q: How do students apply for Credit Flexibility?

A: Students choosing to earn high school credit through a credit flexibility option must meet with their teacher and school counselor prior to completing a credit flexibility application. This session is designed to inform students of all aspects of credit flexibility as well as determine how the proposal aligns with the students’ college and career readiness. During the session, students will receive a credit flexibility student application which they will complete under the supervision of their parents. The application will then be reviewed by the appropriate credit flexibility personnel. Credit flexibility personnel consist of a school counselor, department chairperson, principal, and the Worthington Schools content teacher of record.

Q: What are the deadlines for applying for Credit Flexibility options?

A: Students may apply for credit flexibility on a “rolling” basis each month. Students must submit their credit flexibility application indicating their intent to test out prior to the testing out date.

Q: When does the Credit Flexibility course have to be completed?

A: Typically, the same completion timeline as a traditional course will be used. All credit flexibility plans proposed by students must include benchmarks for monitoring progress to ensure steady progress towards their academic learning goals. Included in the student's proposal and approved by the teacher of record or department chairperson will be a completion deadline. If a student does not complete the credit flexibility plan by the predetermined deadline, a determination of partial credit or failing grade will be considered.

Q: What if I decide I can't finish the course and want to transfer into a traditional class?

A: Students can drop a credit flexibility course before a predetermined deadline (the same as a traditional course) without penalty. Ability to enter into a traditional class will depend on space availability.

Q: If a student drops a Credit Flexibility option, does it turn into an F?

A: Students can drop a credit flexibility course before a predetermined deadline (the same as a traditional course) without penalty. If a student drops a credit flexibility course after the drop deadline, a grade of F will be earned and placed on the student's transcript.

Q: Who reviews my Credit Flexibility Plan?

A: The application for the credit flexibility option will be reviewed by the appropriate credit flexibility personnel. Credit flexibility personnel consist of a school counselor, department chairperson, principal, and the Worthington School teacher of record.

Q: How do students get a teacher to be the teacher of record?

A: Each student is responsible for contacting and obtaining agreement from a Worthington teacher to serve as the teacher of record who will approve, monitor and assess the credit flexibility option.

Q: Does the teacher of record for a Credit Flexibility option have to be a Worthington teacher?

A: The teacher of record must be a Worthington teacher who is licensed by the State of Ohio to teach the course being accessed through credit flexibility.

Q: Are there fees that accompany Credit Flexibility options?

A: Students and/or their families are responsible for all costs incurred with credit flexibility options that occur outside the normal student schedule. Material and supplies needed beyond those typically provided by the school will be the responsibility of the student.

Q: How will Credit Flexibility affect a student's GPA?

A: Credits for courses that students take through any of the credit flexibility options will be reported on students' transcripts as regular classes, complete with letter grades which will figure into the GPA. Students should refer to the course planning handbook and check with the teacher of record to determine if the course is eligible for a pass/fail grade alternative. There will be no notation about the way in which the credit was earned.

Q: How will Credit Flexibility affect graduation?

A: Credit flexibility may allow some students to graduate early from high school. The Worthington City School District shall evaluate requests for early graduation in accordance with its policy on Early Graduation (Policy IKFA).

Q: How will Credit Flexibility impact a student's written educational plan (IEP, 504, etc.)?

A: Taking advantage of credit flexibility options requires careful consideration of both long-term and short-term academic goals. Students with any kind of written education plan should meet with the teacher who facilitates the plan before any decisions are made about accessing credit flexibility options.

Q: Can a student who participates in sports outside of the school day earn Physical Education credit for these activities?

A. Simply being a member of a sports team -- whether sponsored by the school or by a community group -- in and of itself is not a basis for earning Physical Education credit through the use of credit flexibility. Participation in a sports program not sponsored by the school could be a basis for creation of a credit flexibility option (e.g. competitive AAU swimmer at a school without a swimming team, private club gymnast at a school without gymnastics, private ballet dancer who practices under the direction of professional dance instructor and performs with a dance troupe). In all instances, the credit flexibility option must be developed with components that address the Worthington Graded Course of Study and the elements within the Physical Education Academic Content Standards.

Q: Can a student who participates in marching band, interscholastic athletics, or cheerleading earn Physical Education credit for these activities?

A. Participation, in and of itself, is not a basis for earning Physical Education credit through the use of credit flexibility. Participation in any of these activities could be a basis for the creation of a credit flexibility option. In all instances, the credit flexibility option must be developed with components that address the Worthington Graded Course of Study and the elements within the Physical Education Academic Content Standards.

Q: Can students take courses through Credit Flexibility and still play sports and/or participate in cocurricular activities?

A: Yes. Students using credit flexibility options are eligible for interscholastic athletics as long as they meet the eligibility requirements established by the Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA). The student's credit flexibility option must include procedures for documenting ongoing participation and satisfactory progress for the purpose of satisfying the OHSAA academic eligibility requirements. Student athletes should check with their school counselor (NCAA Clearinghouse) and the school's athletic director (OHSAA eligibility) for more information. Credit flexibility students may also participate in non-athletic extracurricular activities as long as they meet requirements established by the Worthington Board of Education in Board policy IGD (Co-curricular and Extracurricular Activities).

Q: Will a student's participation in Credit Flexibility affect their college athletic eligibility or scholarship opportunities?

A: Students who plan to participate in athletics at the college level should be aware that some credit flexibility options may not be included as part of the NCAA Initial Eligibility Center's qualifying core courses required for Division I eligibility. For potential college student athletes, the NCAA eligibility requirements specifically address the types of learning opportunities available through the credit flexibility policy. The NCAA has limitations for testing out of courses and does not allow such courses to be applied to core course eligibility requirements. Again, student athletes should consult their school's athletic director and school counselors for additional information on athletic eligibility.