

Credit Flexibility Policy
Walnut Township Local School District
(Adopted 5/10/10)

1. Options for Earning High School Credit

a. Students in grades 7-12 may earn high school credits using any combination of the following methods:

- i. Successfully completing traditional high school level courses under current existing policies for which one credit shall be granted per 120 hours of class time or 150 hours for lab classes.
- ii. Successfully completing an educational option plan as described in the Board's approved educational options policy and the Board's policy on Credit Flexibility.
- iii. Successfully completing a college-level course for dual credit in accordance with the Board's policy on post-secondary enrollment options.
- iv. Successfully completing an online course offered by a provider approved by the high school principal or his/her designee OR the district credit flexibility committee convened by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
- v. Successfully completing an examination, providing a portfolio of work that demonstrates mastery of academic content standards, or a combination of these methods in accordance with the Board's policy on Credit Flexibility.

(Options must meet or exceed Ohio Academic Content Standards)

b. The district shall not limit the number of credits earned by a student through demonstration of mastery or completion of educational options. The district shall evaluate requests for early graduation in accordance with its policy on Academic Acceleration. However, the district shall 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.

c. Students may earn credit in multiple content areas by successfully completing interdisciplinary educational options that address content standards in more than one subject area.

d. The district shall not prohibit access to online programs, postsecondary options, or services from another district approved by the Board or deny credit earned under credit flexibility options by students transferring to the district from another Ohio public or chartered non-public school.

e. It will be necessary for all students who choose to exercise the Credit Flexibility option to submit all required paperwork and receive approval in

advance of starting the work. Failure to do so may result in denial of credit under the Credit Flexibility Plan.

2. Educational Options

a. Responsibilities and Expectations

i. Educational option plans for students participating in extracurricular activities governed by the Ohio High School Athletic Association 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.

ii. The 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 to make satisfactory progress described in his or her educational options plan. Students who repeatedly fail to meet standards established to document ongoing participation described in his or her educational options plan may be considered truant and subject to penalties for truancy described in the Board's policy on promotion and retention and the student handbook.

iii. Educational options plans may include activities that occur outside of school such as mentorships, internships, service learning, and educational travel. However, parents of students proposing educational options that include such activities will be required to sign a waiver holding the district harmless for any injuries or damages that occur in the course of a student's participation in an educational options activity outside district facilities and without staff supervision as a precondition of the district's approval of the plan.

1. Students participating in field-based educational options-related activities (e.g. mentorships and internships with businesses and community organizations) shall be required to adhere to safety rules and standards of behavior and appearance appropriate for the activity setting.

2. The district may suspend/modify an approved educational option plan and reassign the student to another setting at its discretion if the host organization reports misconduct, tardiness, or absence on the part of the student.

b. Students may appeal decisions regarding access to an educational option and/or standards established for awarding grades and credit for educational options by submitting an appeal to his or her (principal and/or other designee.)

i. Appeals will be reviewed by a committee comprised of a building principal or assistant principal, a teacher in the relevant subject area, and a guidance counselor.

- ii. The student filing the appeal and his or her parent(s) shall be given an opportunity to present concerns and recommendations to the committee.
- iii. Appeals shall be reviewed by the committee within ten working days from the date the appeal was submitted in writing. The decision of the committee shall be final unless overturned by the Superintendent or a directive resulting from an appeal filed with the County Educational Service Center and/or the Ohio Department of Education.

3. Credit by Demonstration of Mastery

- a. The district shall allow students the opportunity to earn credit by demonstrating mastery of the academic content standards covered by any course offered by the district and shall award a number of credits to students demonstrating mastery equal to the number of credits awarded to students who successfully complete the equivalent traditional course.
- b. Students may demonstrate mastery by completing a comprehensive examination covering essential knowledge and skills addressed in an equivalent traditional course, by presenting a portfolio of work demonstrating mastery of knowledge and skills addressed in an equivalent traditional course, or by combining of these methods.
 - i. Tests used for this purpose shall be either comprehensive exams created for the traditional course (e.g. a course final exam), state-approved assessments (e.g. end-of-course exams), published assessment instruments covering relevant content approved by the Superintendent or his or her designee, or a combination of these options. The district shall communicate to students how assessment instruments used will be scored and how the number of credits awarded and grade assigned will be determined based on scores earned before the assessment is administered.
 - ii. The district may require a student to complete examinations in a proctored environment. In such cases, the district shall provide an opportunity for the student to take the assessment during the regular school day in an appropriate setting.
 - iii. Rubrics shall be used for evaluating portfolios of student work. Criteria and scoring methods shall be shared with the student before the portfolio is assessed. Portfolios shall be evaluated by staff with expertise in the relevant content area.
 - iv. After tests and/or portfolios are scored, the student shall be notified of the grade for which he or she would be eligible. The student will then be given the choice of accepting the credit and grade earned based on the assessment or completing a traditional course or other option approved by the district.

c. Students who wish to earn credit by testing out or demonstrating mastery without enrolling in a course should notify the high school guidance counselor by May 1st for a Fall course and by December 15th for a Spring course.

d. Students who wish to test out or demonstrate mastery for credit during a course already under way shall submit a proposal for another educational option in which to participate for the duration of the course in which he or she was originally enrolled.

e. Students may appeal requirements and standards for awarding grades and credit based on examinations or demonstrations of mastery by submitting an appeal to his or her principal or guidance counselor.

i. Appeals will be reviewed by a committee comprised of a building principal or assistant principal and other designees as appropriate.

ii. The student filing the appeal and his or her parent(s) shall be given an opportunity to present concerns and recommendations to the committee.

iii. Appeals shall be reviewed by the committee within ten working days from the date the appeal was submitted in writing. The decision of the committee shall be final unless overturned by the Superintendent or a directive resulting from an appeal filed with the County Educational Service Center and/or the Ohio Department of Education.

4. Credit Flexibility and Special Populations

a. Students with disabilities shall not be excluded from opportunities to earn credit through educational options or by demonstrations of mastery.

Accommodations and supports for students with disabilities participating in educational options and online courses shall be provided consistent with students' Individual Education Plans and/or 504 plans.

b. Educational options may be provided as a form of gifted education service to students identified as gifted if the educational option is consistent with his or her area(s) of identification, documented on his or her Written Education Plan, and monitored by a qualified gifted education coordinator or gifted intervention specialist.

c. Educational options and opportunities to earn credit based on demonstration of mastery may be used in combination with other forms of academic acceleration described in the Board's policy on academic acceleration for advanced students (Walnut Twp. Policy – File: IKEB) and documented on the student's Written Acceleration Plan.

5. Fees Associated with Educational Options, Online Courses, and Credit by Demonstrations of Mastery

- a. No assessment fees shall be charged to students or their families when district-made tests or portfolio review rubrics are used or when instruments provided by the State of Ohio are used in evaluating students for credit based on demonstrations of mastery. The district may require students to pay part or all of the cost of administering a commercial assessment instrument if that instrument is not normally administered free of charge to students participating in equivalent traditional courses. The district shall make every reasonable effort to provide a free or low cost assessment option to economically disadvantaged students requesting the opportunity to earn credit based on a demonstration of mastery.
- b. The district will require parents of students participating in educational options not initiated by the district to pay fees not to exceed the actual cost of participation in that option, including any charges for: tuition and registration fees; books, assessments and materials not typically provided free of charge to students in traditional courses, and; travel costs if transportation is provided by the district.

6. Communication Plan

- a. 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 middle school and high school course catalogs, dissemination of information at parent and teacher conferences and other events open to parents and the district newsletter. Copies of a publication describing opportunities and requirements related to credit flexibility shall also be made available to students, staff and parents upon requests to middle school and high school guidance counselors and principals.
- b. The superintendent or his or her designee(s) shall develop a cumulative record 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 beginning in the 2010-2011 school year.

7. Data Collection and Reporting

- a. The superintendent or his or her designee(s) shall develop and implement procedures for monitoring and annually reporting data to the Board and the Ohio Department of Education.