

Instruction through Online Courses

The Board of Education believes online education courses that are supplemental to the district's education program may serve as an effective tool to expand the educational opportunities for students at all levels of achievement. Online courses can enhance, supplement or enrich the existing curriculum and can also provide an alternative means of instruction.

Online education courses will be part of the district's educational program to increase accessibility and flexibility in the delivery of instruction for students in grades six through twelve. The district will not use online education as the sole medium for instruction in any required subject area for students in grades K-6, unless online instruction is deemed appropriate under the circumstances.

To the extent practicable, an effort will be made to determine that online education courses made available to students are consistent with district instructional goals, aligned with Colorado's academic standards and taught by teachers licensed in Colorado. The administration is directed to periodically review instructional materials of online courses to ensure they meet program standards. Further, such courses must provide the opportunity for substantial, personal and timely interactions between online instructors and students and among students.

Application process

Students shall obtain the written approval of the principal or his/her designee before enrolling in an online course. To obtain permission, a student shall do the following:

- Complete prerequisites and provide teacher/counselor recommendations confirming that the student possesses the maturity level needed to function effectively in an online learning environment.
- Provide information regarding the online course(s) in which the student seeks to enroll.
- Agree to adhere to district policies, procedures and rules, including but not limited to the district's policy on student use of the Internet.
- Agree to adhere to the district's attendance requirements.

Credit toward graduation requirements

High school students may earn a maximum of 10 units of academic credit to be applied toward graduation requirements by satisfactorily completing online courses. The principal may waive this limitation on the number of credits that may be applied toward graduation upon submission of a student's written request explaining unusual circumstances that make it necessary for the student to take additional online courses to satisfy the district's graduation requirements.

Credit to satisfy graduation requirements from an online course may be earned only in the following circumstances:

1. The course is not offered at the student's high school;
2. The high school offers the course, but the student is unable to take it due to an unavoidable scheduling conflict;
3. The course will provide dual-credits or concurrent enrollment credits that are not otherwise available;
4. The principal, with agreement from the student's teachers and parents/guardians, determines the student requires a differentiated or accelerated learning environment;

The school must receive an official record of the student's final grade in the online course before awarding credit toward graduation. Only online courses approved by the district shall be included on student transcripts.

The district will pay the tuition for an online course taken during the academic year that will be used for credit to satisfy the district's graduation requirements. The district's payment of tuition shall be limited to not more than two approved online education courses per student per semester, unless the principal has approved a student's request to take additional courses to satisfy the district's graduation requirements. There may be circumstances where a student is taking an online education course, such as during the summer to make up needed credit, where the student will be responsible for the tuition payment.

Online courses taken pursuant to state law on concurrent enrollment programs shall be taken and reimbursed by the district in accordance with the district's policy on concurrent enrollment not this policy.

Expelled students

Online education courses may be offered as a means to provide educational alternatives for expelled students. The district shall determine the amount of credit the student shall receive toward graduation for the online courses and the amount of tuition that will be paid by the district for these courses, in accordance with state law.

Adopted: July 26, 2011

LEGAL REFS.: C.R.S. 22-11-307 (2.5) (*requires review of any full-time online program's alignment to the State Board of Education's quality standards for online programs*)
C.R.S. 22-32-109 (1) (t) (*board's duty to determine the educational program*)
C.R.S. 22-32-122 (*authorizes the board to contract for educational services*)

CROSS REFS.: IHEDA, Concurrent Enrollment
IKF, Graduation Requirements
JKF*, Educational Alternatives for Expelled Students
JS*, Student Use of the Internet and Electronic Communications

Dolores School District RE-4A, Dolores, Colorado