



# Board Policy Equity Lens Tool

**Title of board policy being reviewed:**

JECDA-Transcript Evaluation

**Describe the purpose of this policy:**

The purpose of this policy is to authorize MESD to evaluate and determine acceptance of academic transcripts for students transferring into MESD schools. It ensures that transfer credits, attendance, and placement are reviewed consistently and in accordance with Oregon law, while allowing the Superintendent and Cabinet to establish administrative procedures for implementation.

**What is your experience with this policy:**

This policy has been reviewed through an equity lens to ensure that transcript evaluation and transfer credit decisions are applied consistently and in accordance with law for all incoming students. The policy recognizes diverse educational pathways, including public, private, DoDEA, home-school, and online learning environments, and provides a framework for evaluating credits and placement in a manner intended to support fair access to educational opportunities. Administrative procedures developed under this policy are intended to promote transparency, consistency, and equitable treatment of transfer students across MESD programs.



**What is the plan to communicate this policy to staff, students, and/or families?**

**What is the plan to communicate this policy to linguistically diverse students and their families?**

**Is this policy:**

Easy to locate for staff?

This policy and a summary of this policy will be available on the MESD web page. The summary of this policy is also available on the MESD website in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Somali, and Vietnamese and, upon request, the summary and/or policy may be translated into other languages.

Accessible to students and families?

This policy and a summary of this policy will be available on the MESD web page. The summary of this policy is also available on the MESD website in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Somali, and Vietnamese and, upon request, the summary and/or policy may be translated into other languages.

Included in onboarding, intake, or other training?

Yes, this policy is included in staff onboarding materials for those that need it.



Clear and easy to understand?

The policy is mostly clear in its intent. Simplifying sentence structure and clarifying terms such as district discretion and credit validation would help ensure consistent understanding and application.

## People

How are people affected positively or negatively by the policy? What potential barriers might people encounter? What barriers might be reduced by this policy?

### **Positive impacts:**

The policy supports students by recognizing credits from a wide range of educational settings and providing a structured process for placement and credit review. It promotes consistency and fairness in transfer decisions and can help students avoid unnecessary credit loss or delayed graduation.

### **Negative impacts:**

The discretionary nature of credit acceptance and the possibility of credit validation may create uncertainty for students and families. Without clear procedures, some students may experience delays, inconsistent decisions, or perceived inequities.

### **Potential barriers:**

Barriers may include unclear documentation requirements, language access challenges, varying interpretations of transcripts, and limited understanding of the process by families unfamiliar with the education system.

### **Barriers reduced by the policy:**

The policy helps reduce barriers for transfer students from nontraditional or alternative educational pathways by formally recognizing diverse learning experiences and establishing district authority to evaluate and place students appropriately.



Can you identify the racial or ethnic groups affected by this policy, program, practice, or decision? Do you know the potential impacts to these populations? If you don't know, how will you find out?

This policy may affect students from all racial and ethnic groups, with particular impact on students from historically underserved communities, including Black, Indigenous, Latino/a/x, Pacific Islander, Asian, immigrant, and refugee students. These students are more likely to transfer between schools, come from nontraditional educational settings, or enroll with transcripts from other states or countries.

**Potential impacts:**

If implemented consistently and transparently, the policy can support equitable credit recognition and reduce disruptions to academic progress. However, if discretion is applied inconsistently or without clear guidance, these populations may experience disproportionate credit loss, delayed placement, or barriers to graduation.

**If impacts are not fully known:**

MESD can analyze transcript evaluation outcomes by race and ethnicity, review credit acceptance and placement data, and seek feedback from students, families, and community partners. Ongoing monitoring and disaggregated data review can help identify disparities and inform adjustments to implementation to ensure equitable outcomes.

Were these populations involved in any way, at any point in the development, implementation, and evaluation of this policy? If so, when and how?

This policy is legally driven by the Oregon Department of Education. It reflects standard practices for school districts and was not developed through direct engagement with racial or ethnic groups or other affected populations.



What priorities and commitments are communicated by this policy?

This policy communicates MESD's commitment to fairness, consistency, and legal compliance in evaluating transfer student transcripts. It prioritizes recognizing diverse educational pathways, supporting appropriate student placement, and ensuring that credit decisions are made thoughtfully and in accordance with state and federal requirements.

## Place

What kind of positive or negative environment are we creating?

What are the barriers to more equitable outcomes? (e.g. mandated, political, emotional, financial, programmatic or managerial)

### **Environment created by the policy:**

The policy aims to create a fair, consistent, and inclusive environment for transfer students by acknowledging multiple educational pathways and establishing a structured process for transcript evaluation. When implemented well, it can foster trust, clarity, and smoother transitions for students and families. If implemented inconsistently, however, it may create uncertainty or perceptions of inequity for students navigating credit and placement decisions.

### **Barriers to more equitable outcomes:**

Potential barriers include broad discretionary authority without clearly defined procedures, limited transparency in credit validation processes, language and communication barriers for families, time and staffing constraints, and variability in documentation from different educational systems. Programmatic and managerial barriers may arise if staff lack training or guidance, while financial and mandated constraints may limit the district's ability to provide individualized support.



## Power

How is the power of decision-making shared with those it affects?

How have you intentionally involved the communities affected by this policy, program, practice, or decision?

### **Power-sharing in decision-making:**

Decision-making authority under this policy primarily resides with MESD through administrative review of transcripts and credit validation, as required by law. While final decisions rest with the district, the policy allows for consideration of student records, prior coursework, and educational experiences, which provides an opportunity for student and family input during the review and placement process.

### **Intentional community involvement:**

At this time, there is no explicit process outlined in the policy for intentional involvement of affected communities in decision-making.

## Process

Does the policy, program, or decision improve, worsen, or make no change to existing disparities?

Does it create other unintended consequences?



The policy has the potential to **reduce existing disparities** by formally recognizing credits from diverse educational settings and supporting appropriate placement for transfer students. When applied consistently, it can help prevent unnecessary credit loss and disruptions that disproportionately affect historically underserved students.

However, if implementation lacks clear guidelines or transparency, the policy could **maintain or worsen disparities** through inconsistent use of discretion, uneven credit validation practices, or delays in placement. Potential unintended consequences may include student frustration, delayed graduation timelines, or unequal outcomes across schools or programs if procedures are not standardized and monitored.

Ongoing review of implementation data and clear administrative guidance will be important to ensure the policy advances equitable outcomes rather than reinforcing existing inequities.

## Plan

How will you reduce the negative impacts and address the barriers?

Negative impacts and barriers will be reduced through clear, consistent, and accessible enrollment procedures. Residency requirements will be communicated in plain language and multiple languages, and staff will be trained to apply them equitably and in alignment with state and federal protections.

MESD can also offer flexible documentation options where allowed by law, provide enrollment support to families, and review disaggregated data to monitor for disparities and ensure equitable access.