4850 LEARNER VALIDATED PROGRAMS

I. PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE

The Weber School District Board of Education is committed to strengthening the quality and oversight of the learner validated programs operated by Weber School District (WSD) and its schools. This policy presumptively applies to all learner-validated programs operated by WSD and its schools.

II. POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to promote and maintain participating students' academic accountability and progress by establishing requirements and standards for learner validated programs consistent with applicable law, including accountability for student participation, academic progress, and instructional quality.

III. DEFINITIONS

A. "Blended learning program" means a formal education program in which a student learns:

1. at least in part, through online learning with some element of student control over time, place, path, and pace;

2. at least in part, in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home; and

3. in a program in which the modalities along each student's learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience.

B. "Educational service provider" means a third-party entity contracted to provide:

1. courses or instructional services that:

i. generate average daily membership for the district; or

ii. count toward graduation requirements; or

2. curriculum, grading services, or educator services for courses.

C. "LEA" means Weber School District and its schools.

D. "Learner validated program" means any educational program specifically designed for competency-based or self-paced learning where student participation is measured by demonstrated academic progress and completion of learning objectives, rather than by attendance at scheduled instructional periods, including an online courses, a blended learning program, or a personalized competency-based learning program.

E. "Online course" means a course delivered primarily through digital or internet-based platforms where instruction occurs outside a traditional classroom setting.

F. “Personalized competency-based learning program” means a system of learning in which the following principles influence the daily actions of the educational community:

1. students are empowered daily to make important decisions about the students' learning experiences, how the students will create and apply knowledge, and how students will demonstrate the students' learning;

2. assessment is a meaningful, positive, and empowering learning experience for students that yields timely, relevant, and actionable evidence;

3. students receive timely, differentiated support based on the students' individual learning needs;

4. students progress based on evidence of mastery rather than by hours of attendance;

5. students learn actively using different pathways and varied pacing;

6. strategies to ensure equity for all students are embedded in the culture, structure, and pedagogy of schools and education systems; and

7. rigorous, common expectations for learning, including knowledge, skills, and dispositions, are explicit, transparent, measurable, and transferable.

G. “State Board” means the Utah State Board of Education.

I. “Teacher of record” means a licensed educator employed by WSD who:

1. has direct responsibility for a student's educational progress;

2. maintains oversight of curriculum quality and alignment with state standards; and

3. documents the student's academic participation and progress.

IV. MEASUREMENT OF STUDENTS’ CONTINUING ENROLLMENT, AND PACING OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES, COURSEWORK, AND ASSESSMENTS

A. Each student enrolled in a course taught as part of a learner validated program must complete the course within the district’s school year.

B. Each course taught as part of a learner validated program must include a recommended or mandatory pacing guide that supports student progress toward timely completion, which may be adjusted by the teacher of record.

C. The teacher of record assigned to a student enrolled in a course taught as part of a learner validated program will verify the student’s initial and continued enrollment in the course. If the course is taught using instructional services provided by an education service provider or online course provider, the teacher of record will coordinate as necessary with the provider to make the required verifications.

D. A student's course participation and academic progress will be measured in accordance with the following:

    1. completion of learning objectives as provided in the course's pacing guide, subject to adjustments made by the teacher of record;

    2. completion of assigned coursework as provided in the course's pacing guide, subject to adjustments made by the teacher of record, and tracked in the course's gradebook;

    3. completion of required formative and summative assessments:

        i. as provided in the course's pacing guide, subject to adjustments made by the teacher of record, and tracked in the course's gradebook; and

        ii. using methods that verify student identity and support academic integrity;

    4. Student mastery of course content will be demonstrated through performance on assignments and assessments consistent with course requirements.

E. If a student falls behind the pacing requirements established in a course pacing guide, as adjusted by the teacher of record, and/or fails substantially to meet the course participation and academic progress standards set forth above in Subsection IV.D, then the assigned teacher of record will contact the student and their parent/legal guardian about the student's participation and progress and may place the student on an intervention plan.

V. TEACHERS OF RECORD

A. The school will assign a teacher of record for each student enrolled in a learner-validated program and ensure the teacher of record complies with this policy.

B. Each teacher of record must:

    1. verify each assigned student's initial and continued enrollment as provided above in Subsection IV.C.

    2. regularly monitor and review each assigned student's completion of course assignments and assessments to monitor the student's growth, validate their academic engagement, document their academic progress, and ensure that the student meets academic proficiency standards established by the State Board;

    3. initiate additional student intervention as provided above in Subsection IV.E;

    4. ensure that the assigned student's learning activities, coursework, assessments, and participation in tutoring programs or other instructional supports are appropriately documented;

    5. provide regular opportunities for student interaction and support; and

6. respond to communications or inquiries from an assigned student or their parent/legal guardian within a reasonable time.

VI. USE OF, AND COORDINATION WITH, EDUCATIONAL SERVICE PROVIDERS AND ONLINE COURSE PROVIDERS

A. The district may, in its discretion, contract with an educational service provider or online course provider for instructional services supporting the learner validated program, subject to the district's compliance with the teacher of record requirements set forth above in Subsection V.A and the other requirements set forth in this policy and applicable law and rules adopted by the State Board. If a learner validated program uses the instructional services of a contracted educational service provider or online course provider, then:

1. the teacher(s) of record assigned to the student(s) to whom the provider furnishes instructional services will coordinate with the provider to ensure that the contracted instructional services, curriculum, and grading align with applicable state standards and the district's expectations set forth in the district's contract with the provider, provided that the district and teacher of record may reasonably rely on the provider's systems, data, and processes;

2. the provider will provide progress data to the teacher(s) of record as often as the teacher(s) of record reasonably request; and

3. the teacher(s) of record will retain final authority over grading, credit issuance, and verification of course completion, and maintain oversight of curriculum quality and alignment with state standards, though the teacher(s) of record may rely on the provider's grading determinations absent a documented basis for review.

VII. COURSE ALIGNMENT AND ACADEMIC RIGOR REVIEWS

A. The district will periodically review each course to evaluate and confirm a course's alignment with any applicable state standards and demonstration of equivalent academic rigor for a course offered in an attendance-validated program. If a course is provided by an education service provider or online service provider, then the district may reasonably rely on documentation provided by the provider substantiating the course's alignment with applicable state standards and academic rigor.

VIII. RECORDS AND REPORTS

A. The district will maintain documentation demonstrating compliance with the requirements set forth in this policy and will submit the documentation to the State Board upon request. Documentation may be maintained through the district's or provider's systems.

IX. EQUIVALENT INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS

A. Equivalent instructional hours shall be calculated based on a student's demonstrated completion of course learning objectives, assignments, and assessments, with hours allocated proportionally or by defined instructional units. The district may also consider

additional indicators of academic engagement as appropriate. The teacher of record shall review and validate the calculation of instructional hours based on documented student progress.

B. Classroom teachers are required to record and verify daily student attendance as outlined in WSD Policy 4170. The individual school/teacher will, where appropriate, develop grading and credit policy that promotes attendance, class participation, and academic achievement.

    1. Learner-validated attendance, in accordance with Utah Board Rule R277-419 Pupil Accounting, should be entered into the district's student information system (SIS) daily and reviewed weekly as follows:

        i. In-person or live (streaming) online instruction

            a. Attendance will be recorded in the SIS at least once per day (elementary) or each class period (secondary).

        ii. Virtual at home (online only) instruction (including competency-based instruction)

            a. Students will be considered "virtually present" if they have met the minimum criteria for participation. A variety of measures may be used to determine if a student participated in the learner validated program in an online, virtual at-home, blended or competency-based learning environment (digital or analog) including but not limited to:
                1. Evidence that validates student learning (e.g., online or offline assignment submission; rubric-scored written work; presentations; artistic performances and products; research projects; formative assessment results; progress toward academic goals; student portfolios; demonstrated competency assessments; explicit self-reflections on what students have learned related to institutional programs such as service learning; student ratings of their knowledge, skills, and reflections on what they have learned over a course of a specified period of time)

                    i. Evidence that validates student participation (e.g., login data; discussion boards; completion of math and literacy supplemental software; virtual conferencing participation; classroom response systems (surveys/polls/quick checks); observations of field work; internship performance; service learning; clinical experiences; feedback from computer-simulated tasks; Social/Emotional Learning tools; number of student hours spent on activities related to a course)

                    ii. Evidence that validates student communication (e.g., emails from students or other electronic messages; student surveys; conversations by phone; feedback exchanges via learning management system; assignment pick-up/drop-off)

iii. Duration/Frequency minimums for student participation (e.g., minimum student login or teacher contact requirement; minimum hourly requirement, per day or week, when students are engaged in course work; required periodic contact with a licensed educator)

b. Virtual students who have not met the minimum criteria to be considered present by the last day of the school week will be marked “unexcused absent” for the entire week.

C. Continued Enrollment Status-Learner validated attendance will be determined weekly on the last school day of the week. A student will be marked present if it is determined they have sufficiently engaged in coursework as outlined in IX.A. above. A student will be marked absent, if it is determined they have not engaged in coursework as outlined in IX.A. above for the week in question.