

Instruction

High School Credit for Non-District Experiences; Course Substitutions; Re-Entering Students¹

Credit for Non-District Experiences²

A student may receive high school credit for successfully completing any of the listed courses or experiences even when it is not offered in or sponsored by the District:

1. Distance learning course, including a correspondence, virtual, or online course
2. Courses in an accredited foreign exchange program
3. Summer school or community college courses³
4. College or high school courses offering dual credit at both the college and high school level⁴

The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.

¹ State law requires that several of the programs in this policy be covered in policy. State law controls this policy's content. Note that 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.420(b) requires "[e]very school district [to] have an organized plan for recording pupil progress and/or awarding credit, including credit for courses completed by correspondence, online, or from other external sources, that can be disseminated to other schools within the State." Section 1.460 requires "[e]ach local board of education with a high school [to] adopt a policy which defines the board's position with reference to the awarding of high school credit on the basis of local examinations to pupils who have achieved the necessary proficiencies through independent study, either with or without private tutoring, or for work taken in or from another institution." 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.460.

Sample policy 6:185, *Remote Educational Program*, provides for educational programs **delivered by the district** in a location outside of the school.

Sample policy 6:315, *High School Credit for Students in Grade 7 or 8*, allows students enrolled in grade 7 or 8 to enroll in a course required for high school graduation. 105 ILCS 5/27-~~61522-10~~(a), [amended and renumbered by P.A. 104-391](#); 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.440(c)(3).

² Each board may choose for which, if any, of the listed non-district experiences the district will grant high school credit. If a district does not grant credit for any of the listed activities, substitute the following alternative for all text in the entire section: "The District does not grant graduation credit for learning experiences that an enrolled student does not complete through the District."

³ 105 ILCS 5/27-~~90522-1~~, [amended and renumbered by P.A. 104-391](#), provides that no fewer than 60 hours of classroom instruction in summer school is required for one semester of high school course credit. Districts may accept courses completed in a community college (CC) toward graduation. 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.440(f). Superintendents, pursuant to 105 ILCS 5/10-21.4, must annually report to the Ill. State Board of Education (ISBE) the number of students enrolled in accredited courses at any CC along with the name(s) and number(s) of the course(s) each student is taking.

⁴ The Dual Credit Quality Act (DCQA) (110 ILCS 27/, [amended by P.A. 104-12](#)) defines dual credit as a college course taken by a high school student for credit at both the college and high school level. 110 ILCS 27/5 and 105 ILCS 5/10-20.62(a). An instructor who teaches a dual credit course does not need the certification required by Article 21 of the School Code but must meet the [minimum](#) standards set forth in 110 ILCS 27/20(1), (2), (2.5), or (3). Dual credit programs require: (a) a specific partnership agreement between the district and a CC containing specified elements, as long as the district is in the CC's jurisdiction (110 ILCS 27/16), or (b) cooperation between the school district and the [postsecondary institution \(defined as an institution of higher learning under providing the dual credit courses \(see the Higher Education Student Assistance Act, at 110 ILCS 947/10 for a definition of institution\)\)](#). Partnership agreements that are entered into, amended, renewed, or extended after 1-1-23, must allow high school students who do not otherwise meet the CC's academic eligibility requirements to enroll in a dual credit course taught at the high school, but only for high school credit. 110 ILCS 27/16.5(a). [Upon a district's written request for a partnership agreement, the district and community college district must each designate a liaison and begin negotiations on an agreement within 60 calendar days of the district's initial request. Id. at 27/16\(a\), amended by P.A. 104-12.](#) If the district and CC cannot agree within 180 days of a district's initial request to enter into a partnership agreement, the two parties must use the model partnership agreement referenced at 110 ILCS 27/19.

5. Foreign language courses taken in an ethnic school program approved by the Illinois State Board of Education ⁵
6. Work-related training at manufacturing facilities or agencies in a Tech Prep [Partnership for Careers pProgram](#) ⁶
7. Credit earned in a Vocational Academy ⁷

The student must seek approval from the Superintendent or designee to receive graduation credit for any non-District course or experience. The Superintendent or designee shall determine the amount of credit and whether a proficiency examination is required before the credit is awarded. As approval is not guaranteed, students should seek conditional approval of the experience before participating in a non-District course or experience. The student assumes responsibility for any fee, tuition, supply, or other expense. The student seeking credit is responsible for (1) providing documents or transcripts that demonstrate successful completion of the experience, and (2) taking a proficiency examination, if requested. The Superintendent or designee shall determine which, if any, non-District courses or experiences, will count toward a student's grade point average, class rank, and eligibility for athletic and extracurricular activities. When applicable, the Building Principal or designee shall, prior to the

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Out-of-state dual credit contracts are prohibited until a district first offers the CC in the [CC](#) district in which the district is located the opportunity to provide a dual credit course. 110 ILCS 27/17, [amended by P.A. 104-12](#). In addition, a district seeking to enter into an agreement with an out-of-state [postsecondary](#) institution must provide notice to the Ill. [Community College Board/State Board of Higher Education \(ICCB/BHE\)](#) of its intent, to which the [ICCB/BHE](#) will have 30 days to provide the district with a list of in-state [postsecondary](#) institutions that can provide the district an equivalent dual credit opportunity. *Id.* [Beginning 6-30-25, a district may not enter into a contract with an out-of-state postsecondary institution until it demonstrates to the ICCB that it has taken appropriate steps to consider the listing of in-state postsecondary institutions and provides a rationale as to why the course can only be provided by an out-of-state postsecondary institution. Agreements between a district and an out of state institution that were in effect before 1-1-19 were not affected.](#) *Id.* A high school evaluation of a dual credit program must also incorporate the analysis of data from the ISBE statewide longitudinal data system (see the P-20 Longitudinal Education Data System Act, 105 ILCS 13/, for more information). *Id.* [at 27/30](#).

105 ILCS 5/10-20.62(c), requires school boards to require the district's high schools, if any, to inform all 11th and 12th grade students of dual enrollment and dual credit opportunities at public CCs for qualified students. Qualified students may enroll in an unlimited amount of dual credit courses and earn an unlimited amount of academic credits from them if the course(s) are taught by an Ill. instructor, as provided by 110 ILCS 27/. *Id.* at (b). In addition, all dual credit coursework completed by a high school student must be transferred to all public institutions in Illinois on the same basis as coursework completed by a public CC student who previously earned a high school diploma in the manner set forth under the Ill. Articulation Initiative Act. *Id.* at 27/189.

The DCQA requires partnership agreements between districts and CCs to address access to dual credit courses by individual students with disabilities. 110 ILCS 27/16(b)(8.5), [amended by P.A. 104-12](#). 105 ILCS 5/14-8.03 also requires districts to provide special education students with information about career and technical education (CTE) opportunities, including at the postsecondary level. See *Increasing Postsecondary Opportunities and Success for Students and Youth with Disabilities* at: www.sites.ed.gov/idea/idea-files/qa-increasing-postsecondary-opportunities-success-for-students-youth-with-disabilities-sept-17-2019/#Letter for information on providing transition services to high school students who have individualized education programs (IEPs), are receiving services under the IDEA, and take courses offered by a community college or other postsecondary education institution program prior to high school graduation.

⁵ 105 ILCS 5/2-3.44 and 5/10-22.43a. An ethnic school is a part-time, private school that teaches the foreign language of a particular ethnic group as well as the culture, geography, history, and other aspects of a particular ethnic group. 105 ILCS 5/2-3.44; 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.465(b). For requirements, see 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.465.

⁶ [Optional. 105 ILCS 5/2-3.115, amended by P.A. 104-261, eff. 1-1-26, authorizes ISBE to make grants to districts to be used for these programs. The State Superintendent and Board of Higher Education were encouraged by 105 ILCS 5/2-3.115 to establish a program of academic credit for Tech Prep work based learning for secondary school students with an interest in pursuing such career training, which could be instituted by school districts.](#) See also 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.445.

⁷ Vocational Academies Act, 105 ILCS 433/. The Act's purpose is to "integrate workplace competencies and career and technical education with core academic subjects." School districts are permitted to partner with CCs, local employers, and community-based organizations to establish a vocational academy that functions as a two-year school within a school for grades 10 through 12. Grant funds may be available from ISBE when the vocational academy meets statutory requirements.

first day of class, inform individual high school students enrolled in a mixed enrollment dual credit course that includes students who have and have not met the community college's criteria for dual credit coursework of whether or not they are eligible to earn college credit for the course.⁸ This section does not govern the transfer of credits for students transferring into the District.

Substitutions for Required Courses

Vocational or technical education.⁹ A student in grades 9-12 may satisfy one or more high school courses (including physical education) or graduation requirements by successfully completing related vocational or technical education courses if: ¹⁰

1. The Building Principal approves the substitution(s) and the vocational or technical education course is completely described in curriculum material along with its relationship to the required course; and
2. The student's parent/guardian requests and approves the substitution(s) in writing on forms provided by the District.

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⁸ 110 ILCS 27/16.5(c). Written notification is not required by the law, but it is a best practice to show compliance with this requirement.

⁹ Allowing for this substitution is optional, but, if offered, must be included in board policy. 105 ILCS 5/27-[61022-05](#), [amended and renumbered by P.A. 104-391](#). [By 7-1-26, ISBE is required to post on its website a form for organizations to submit opportunities for externships, internships, or volunteer work related to career and technical education pathways. After its review and approval, ISBE will annually post a list of approved opportunities on its website. 105 ILCS 5/2-3.206, added by P.A. 104-249, eff. 1-1-26.](#)

¹⁰ The *related* requirement is met if the course contains at least 50% of the content of the required course. *Id.* 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.445 requires that the vocational or technical education course be completely described in the policy along with its relationship to the required course. The sample policy satisfies these requirements by referring to the courses as described in curricular material.

ISBE requires that the parent/guardian of a student under the age of 18 request the course substitution “on forms that the school district makes available” and that the request must be maintained in the student’s temporary record. 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.445. See sample exhibit 6:310-E, *Class Substitution Request*. There is no parallel recordkeeping requirement in the rules for registered apprenticeships; however, it is best practice to maintain all types of substitution requests as evidence of compliance with the form requirement.

Registered Apprenticeship Program.¹¹ The Superintendent or designee will ensure that the District complies with State law requirements for registered apprenticeship programs.¹² The opportunities and requirements for registered apprenticeship programs contained in this policy will be posted on the District's website, and parents/guardians and students will also be notified of such opportunities in the appropriate school handbook(s).¹³

A student in grades 9-12 who is 16 years or older may satisfy one or more high school courses (including physical education) or graduation requirements by successfully completing a registered apprenticeship program if:

1. The registered apprenticeship program meets all criteria contained in State law;
2. The registered apprenticeship program is listed by the District, or the student identifies a registered (but not listed) apprenticeship program with a business or organization if one is not offered in the District;
3. The student enrolled in a registered apprenticeship program has the opportunity to earn post-secondary credit toward a certificate or degrees, as applicable;
4. The student's parent/guardian requests and approves the substitution(s) in writing on forms provided by the District and on its website;¹⁴
5. The Building Principal approves the substitution(s); and

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¹¹ Allowing for this substitution is optional, but, if offered, must be included in board policy. 105 ILCS 5/2-3.175; 23 Ill.Admin.Code §255.200. A *registered apprenticeship program* is an industry-based occupational training program of study with standards reviewed and approved by the U.S. Dept. of Labor that meets characteristics set forth in State law and ISBE rules. The introductory sentence and listed items 1, 3, 4, and 6 are required to be in the policy if a board decides to allow students to participate in registered apprenticeship programs. See 23 Ill.Admin.Code §255.200(b). Item #2 is not required to be stated in policy, but is required to be included in a district's website notification (if any) to parents/guardians about registered apprenticeship opportunities. See f/n 13, below.

If a board adopts a policy to allow for student participation in registered apprenticeship programs, the policy must be posted on the district's website (if any) for students, parents, and members of the business and industry community to access. 23 Ill.Admin.Code §255.200(c)(1). See sample exhibit 2:250-E2, *Immediately Available District Public Records and Web-Posted Reports and Records*, and f/ns 13 and 14 below for other related website posting requirements.

Employers providing apprenticeships may be eligible for tax credits for certain educational expenses they incur on behalf of qualifying apprentices. 35 ILCS 5/231(b), amended by P.A. 103-1059. Districts that carry out registered apprenticeship programs should, but are not required to, aid an employer in claiming an available credit by providing a written receipt documenting the apprenticeship education expenses paid to the school by the employer. 14 Ill.Admin.Code §522.50(e). See <https://dceo.illinois.gov/expandrelocate/incentives/ilapprenticeshiptaxcredit.html> for more information about the credit.

¹² 105 ILCS 5/2-3.175; 23 Ill.Admin.Code Part 255. In addition to the requirements listed in the policy, districts allowing for student participation in registered apprenticeship programs must also: (1) submit data on participating students through ISBE's Student Information System, (2) identify and attempt to eliminate any barriers to student participation, and (3) include the program in the Career Pathway Endorsement if the district awards endorsements under the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act (110 ILCS 148/). 23 Ill.Admin.Code §255.200(d)-(f).

¹³ 23 Ill.Admin.Code §255.200(c). The Illinois Principals Association maintains a handbook service that coordinates with PRESS material, *Online Model Student Handbook (MSH)*, at: www.ilprincipals.org/msh. The notification to students and parents on the district's website must include: (1) a statement that a student may participate in any registered apprenticeship program listed by the district; and (2) a statement that a student may find a registered, but not listed, apprenticeship program with a business or organization, if a registered apprenticeship program is not offered in the district. 23 Ill.Admin.Code §255.200(c)(2). See sample exhibit 2:250-E2, *Immediately Available District Public Records and Web-Posted Reports and Records*. For districts that do not maintain a website, use the following alternative sentence:

Parents/guardians and students will be notified of opportunities for registered apprenticeship programs in the appropriate school handbook(s).

¹⁴ 23 Ill.Admin.Code §255.200(b)(4). See sample exhibits 6:310-E, *Class Substitution Request*, and 2:250-E2, *Immediately Available District Public Records and Web-Posted Reports and Records*. If the district does not maintain a website, delete ~~and on its website~~.

6. All non-academic requirements mandated by the School Code for high school graduation that would otherwise prohibit or prevent the student from participating in the registered apprenticeship program are waived.

Advanced placement computer science.¹⁵ The advanced placement computer science course is equivalent to a high school mathematics course. A student in grades 9-12 may substitute the advanced placement computer science course for one year of mathematics, in accordance with Section 27-22 of the School Code. The transcript of a student who completes the advanced placement computer science course will state that it qualifies as a mathematics-based, quantitative course.

Substitutions for physical education. A student in grades 9-12, unless otherwise stated, may submit a written request to the Building Principal to be excused from physical education courses for the reasons stated below.¹⁶ The Superintendent or designee shall maintain records showing that the criteria set forth in this policy were applied to the student's individual circumstances, as appropriate.¹⁷

1. Ongoing participation in a marching band program for credit;¹⁸
2. Enrollment in Reserve Officer's Training Corps (ROTC) program sponsored by the District;¹⁹
3. Ongoing participation in an *interscholastic* or *extracurricular athletic program*;²⁰

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¹⁵ Optional, but allowed by 105 ILCS 5/27-~~60522~~(e)(3) and 5/27-~~60522~~(f-5), both renumbered by P.A. 104-391.

¹⁶ Optional, but allowed by 105 ILCS 5/27-~~7106~~(b), renumbered by P.A. 104-391; 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.425(e). A board that wants to allow any of these P.E. exemptions must include the ones it selects in a policy that excuses students on an individual basis.

¹⁷ 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.425(e).

¹⁸ 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.425(e)(4)(A). This policy excuses students from P.E. only during the marching band season because the statute allows the exemption "for ongoing participation in such marching band program." Thus, if the marching band season is over, the student's *ongoing participation* has ceased and the student no longer qualifies for the P.E. exemption. Common sense, however, would allow the exemption to continue until the end of the current grading period.

¹⁹ 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.425(e)(4)(B).

²⁰ 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.425(e)(2) and (e)(3)(A). Prior to P.A. 100-465, the statute only allowed students in grades 11 and 12 to be excused from P.E. "for ongoing participation in an interscholastic athletic program." ~~105 ILCS 5/27-6(b)(1)-105 ILCS 5/27-7106(b)~~ now, renumbered by P.A. 104-391, states "on a case-by-case basis, excuse pupils in grades 7 through 12 who participate in an interscholastic or extracurricular athletic program." While the statute no longer requires such participation to be *ongoing*, 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.425(e)(3) requires *ongoing participation*. Thus, if the athletic program is over, the student's *ongoing participation* has ceased and the student no longer qualifies for the P.E. exemption. Common sense, however, would allow the exemption to continue only until the end of the grading period during which the athletic program is active. 23 Ill. Admin. Code §1.425(e)(2) limits interscholastic and extracurricular athletic programs to those that are sponsored by the school district as defined in school board policy. Boards do not have the "authority to honor parental excuses based upon students' participation in athletic training, activities or competitions conducted outside the auspices of the school district." Id. at §1.425(e)(6).

State statutes do not define *interscholastic athletic program* or *extracurricular athletic program*; however, 105 ILCS 5/22-80 defines *interscholastic athletic activity* as "any organized school-sponsored or school-sanctioned activity for students, generally outside of school instructional hours, under the direction of a coach, athletic director, or band leader, including, but not limited to, baseball, basketball, cheerleading, cross country track, fencing, field hockey, football, golf, gymnastics, ice hockey, lacrosse, marching band, rugby, soccer, skating, softball, swimming and diving, tennis, track (indoor and outdoor), ultimate Frisbee, volleyball, water polo, and wrestling." 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.425(e)(2) defines *interscholastic* and *extracurricular athletic programs* as "those programs that are sponsored by the school district as defined by school district policy." Boards have no authority to honor parental excuses based upon students' participation in athletic training, activities or competition conducted outside the auspices of the school district. 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.425(e)(6).

For boards that want to explain the meaning of *interscholastic or extracurricular athletic program*, insert the following option at the end of #3:

4. Enrollment in academic classes that are required for admission to an institution of higher learning (student must be in the 11th or 12th grade);²¹ or
5. Enrollment in academic classes that are required for graduation from high school, provided that failure to take such classes will result in the student being unable to graduate (student must be in the 11th or 12th grade).²²

A student who is eligible for special education may be excused from physical education courses pursuant to 7:260, *Exemption from Physical Education*.

Volunteer service credit.²³ A student participating in the District's Volunteer Service Credit Program, if any, may earn credit toward graduation for the performance of community service. The amount of credit given for program participation shall not exceed that given for completion of one semester of language arts, math, science, or social studies.

Re-Entering Students²⁴

Individuals younger than 21 years of age may re-enter high school to acquire a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate, subject to the limitations in Board policy 7:50, *School Admissions and Student Transfers To and From Non-District Schools*. Re-entering students may obtain credit through the successful completion of the following (not all of these may be available at any one time):

1. District courses
2. Non-District experiences described in this policy
3. Classes in a program established under Section 10-22.20 of the School Code, in accordance with the standards established by the Illinois Community College Board
4. Proficiency testing, correspondence courses, life experiences, and other nonformal educational endeavors
5. Military service, provided the individual making the request has a recommendation from the American Council on Education

The provisions in the section **Credit for Non-District Experiences**, above, apply to the receipt of credit for any non-District course.

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(organized school-sponsored or school-sanctioned activities for students that are not part of the curriculum, not graded, not for credit, generally take place outside of school instructional hours, and under the direction of a coach, athletic director, or band leader)

For unit districts, ensure the definition matches the definition in policy 7:260, *Exemption from Physical Education*.

²¹ 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.425(e)(3)(B).

²² 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.425(e)(3)(C).

²³ Optional. The credit given for one semester may not exceed that stated in this policy. 105 ILCS 5/27-[103522-3, renumbered by P.A. 104-391](#). The program may include participation in the organization of a high school or community blood drive or other blood donor recruitment campaign. Id. ISBE must provide assistance to districts opting to offer the program. 105 ILCS 5/2-3.108.

²⁴ Required by 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.470(a). While the sample policy does not provide for it, a school board may permit adults 21 years of age or older to re-enter high school. 23 Ill.Admin.Code §1.470(b). Items #4 & #5 are optional, but must be included in a policy if credit will be granted for them. 105 ILCS 5/27-6; 27-[61022-05, amended and renumbered by P.A. 104-391](#).

LEGAL REF.: 105 ILCS 5/2-3.44, 5/2-3.108, 5/2-3.115(b), 5/2-3.142, 5/2-3.175, 5/10-22.43a, 5/10-20.62, [5/27-610](#), [5/27-7106](#), and [5/27-103522.3](#), and [5/27-22.05](#).
110 ILCS 27/, Dual Credit Quality Act.
23 Ill.Admin.Code §§1.425(e), 1.440(f), 1.470(c), and Part 255.

CROSS REF.: 6:180 (Extended Instructional Programs), 6:300 (Graduation Requirements), 6:315 (High School Credit for Students in Grade 7 or 8), 6:320 (High School Credit for Proficiency), 7:50 (School Admissions and Student Transfers To and From Non-District Schools), 7:260 (Exemption from Physical Education)

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