

Why award partial credit to students with educational disruptions?

Students face numerous barriers, often these are beyond their control, to successfully complete school in a timely manner.

- **Frequent school transfers**
- **Moves during semester - credit has not yet been awarded**
- **Loss of attendance**
- **Changes in curriculum/grad requirements from school to school**
- **Lack of support/advocacy**
- **Loss of educational records**
- **Anxiety associated with uncertainty/instability**
- **Potential health (physical and mental) concerns**
- **Increased risk of failure/dropping out**
- **Etc.**

Benefits of awarding partial credits to students who experience educational disruptions:

1. Prevents “penalizing” for disruptions
2. Prevents the repeating of coursework already completed
3. Allows room in student’s schedule to take classes needed to meet graduation requirements.

Please remember along the way:

- **Strive for equity (equity vs. equality)**
- **Fair is not always equal/same**
- **Sometimes it is easier to ask for forgiveness than permission – do what is right by students and for students**
- **We are here to serve all students – the ones with barriers need our service the most**

Creative but equitable ways to award credit:

- Online course work
- Written packets
- Credit by exam (EOC, SAT, ACT, PSAT, WorkKeys, etc. – develop a policy for at-risk students) – benefits MANY, not just those who experience homelessness
- Work experience and/or community service – CTE
- Mastery of skill credit – if student passes algebra II but you have no record of algebra I being completed – provide assessment to award credit by exam
- Be open to alternative options – common sense approach



Other Things to Keep in Mind:

- End of Year Assessments
- If course was completed in prior district exempt status – if absolutely necessary, students CAN take assessment if they completed “equivalent” course at a prior school/district
- Repeated course
- If a student took and passed a course twice, should have received proper credit for both courses – students should NOT be penalized for scheduling errors or historical record errors on the part of adults.
- Give a “P”
- Students can be given P for credit earned to avoid awarding “unearned” letter grade/GPA points.

Montana Office of Public Instruction

SB 18: A New Tool to Help Students Graduate

Montana State Minimum High School Diploma



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SB 18: The Law

“AN ACT ALLOWING CERTAIN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WHO MEET THE STATE MINIMUM GRADUATION CREDIT REQUIREMENT TO RECEIVE A DIPLOMA FROM A DISTRICT THAT HAS A HIGHER CREDIT REQUIREMENT; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE.”



Applies to state graduation requirements

- For students who meet the state minimum high school credit requirement for graduation, as set forth in Chapter 55 by the Montana Board of Public Education, but will not meet the local requirement.
- The district must award the student a diploma.

<http://www.mtrules.org/gateway/ruleno.asp?RN=10.55.905>

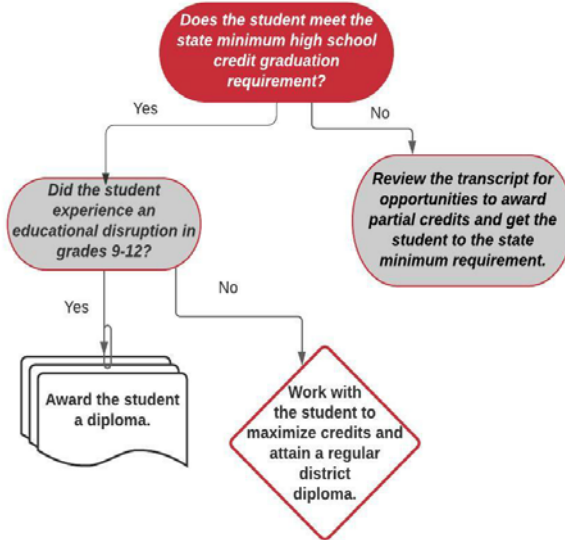
Educational Disruptions:

Educational disruptions include:

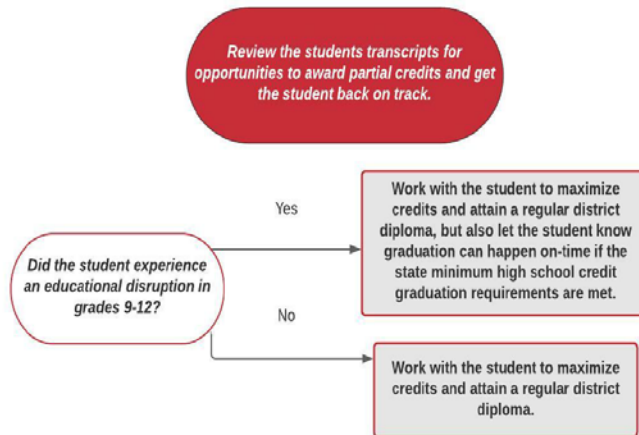
- Homelessness
- Child Welfare System Involvement
- Juvenile Justice System Involvement
- Medical or Mental Health Crisis
- Another event approved by the Board of Trustees

These educational disruptions must have occurred some time during grades nine through twelve.

Review all current seniors to determine those who do not have enough credits to graduate from the district.



At the start of the next school year, review all seniors to determine those who are at risk of not having enough credits to graduate from the district.



Post-Secondary Readiness

A student who receives the state minimum diploma and is under age 19 may continue to attend school for “any reasonable curriculum designed to advance postsecondary success, including courses for postsecondary credit and career training.”

The McKinney-Vento Act

- States must have procedures to “identify and remove barriers that prevent [students experiencing homelessness] from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, in accordance with State, local, and school policies.” 42 USC 11432(g)(1)(F)(i)
- Liaisons must implement those procedures. 42 USC 11432(g)(6)(A)(x)(II)

Eliminating Barriers

- What is the district’s current credit and local requirement waiver policy?
- What is the district doing that eliminates barriers?
- Identify building-level staff who are going to track and enter partial credit.
- Communicate with staff best practices or expectations multiple times a year.
- Review procedures annually as part of the needs assessment.