

School District Guide for Developing Concurrent Credit Policy

Considerations for school districts to develop policy & practice



School districts should develop comprehensive Accelerated Learning Policies; however, this document outlines key considerations for the development of policy governing concurrent credit, dual enrollment, and associated academic and financial implications for students. The goal is to promote transparency and accountability, fiscal responsibility, and long-term student success - including implications for state and federal financial aid eligibility.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Students and families must clearly understand that academic performance, attempted credit hours, and withdrawals from college courses may affect future state scholarship eligibility and federal financial aid status.

Higher Education Definitions

Concurrent Credit - is a college-level course offered by an institution of higher education in Arkansas that upon completion would qualify for academic credit in both the institution of higher education and a *public* high school.

Concurrent Enrollment – is the enrollment of a high school student in a college course for high school credit and college-level credit. Concurrent enrollment allows students to obtain credit toward a high school diploma at the same time they earn college credit.

Dual Enrollment – is the enrollment of a high school student in postsecondary education exclusively for college credit. High school students enrolled in a dual enrollment course may petition the district or high school to consider allowing the college-level dual enrollment credit to be considered for high school credit.

Satisfactory Academic Progress - is a mandatory policy used by postsecondary institutions to ensure postsecondary students receiving financial aid maintain minimum standards, generally requiring a 2.0+ GPA, a 67% completion rate of attempted courses, and degree completion within 150% of the normal timeframe. Failing to meet these standards can result in losing federal, state, and institutional financial aid.

Concurrent Course Withdrawal – is voluntary or administrative removal from a course – typically occurring later in the semester, after the designated college “drop” deadline. Withdrawal removes

the student from the course but leaves a “W” on the student’s transcript. There may be GPA and financial aid implications for withdrawing from a course.

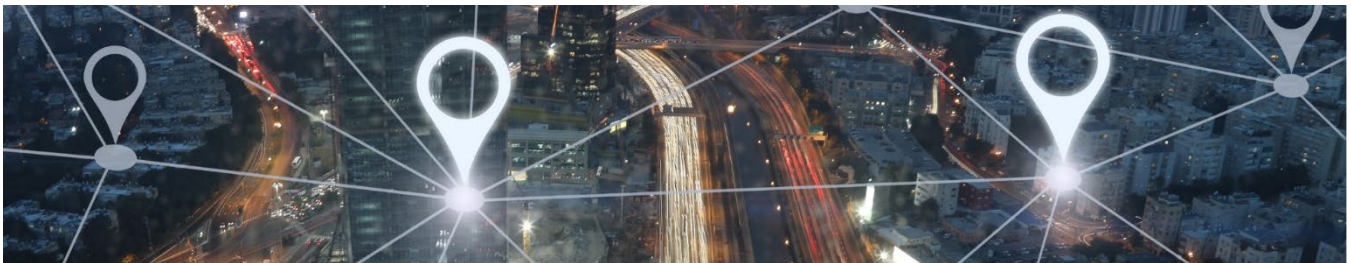
Concurrent Course Drop – is removing a concurrent course from the student’s college transcript and/or schedule. Whereas the course will not be reflected on the student’s academic record if removed prior to the college’s designated deadline.

Accelerated Learning – an organized method of learning that enables students to meet individual academic goals and graduation requirements while pursuing higher levels of skill development, including without limitation the following coursework:

- A College Board pre-Advanced Placement and Advanced Placement course
- An International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme course
- A Cambridge Advanced International Certificate of Education course
- A concurrent credit course
- A substantively similar course or program approved by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

Student Success Plans – A working plan that is dynamic and visited periodically by the students and an advisor or mentor. Modern Student Success Plans are being built into the LAUNCH for Students platform.

Postsecondary Pathway – An intentional set of courses that result in a postsecondary credential. Appropriate and successful postsecondary pathways result in the achievement of merit and distinction diplomas outlined in the [Success-Ready Pathway Guide](#).



Navigating Student Eligibility for Concurrent Enrollment Participation

When determining concurrent student enrollment, a school district should create policies and practices that ensure alignment with ADHE policy and DESE regulations governing concurrent credit.

- [ADHE Concurrent Policy](#)
- [DESE Rules for Grading and Course Credit](#)
- [Accelerated Learning Guide](#)

When developing robust policies, processes, and practices, below are some additional tips and resources that may need to be addressed with your partners, students, and/or guardians. It will be helpful for your district/school to think through the following:

- Clarify how college-level coursework transfers and articulates toward:
 - High school graduation requirements
 - Postsecondary degree pathways
- Address transportation, technology, and scheduling barriers. Many post-secondary institutions require multi-factor authentication.
- Refer to [Quick Start Guide to Concurrent Advising in Arkansas](#) for helpful information on the importance and high-quality academic advising and alignment with student success planning.



Concurrent Course Withdrawals and Drops

Clear communication regarding enrollment and grading is essential to protecting a student's academic standing and long-term financial aid eligibility. Given the complex nature of concurrent credit simultaneously awarding both high school and college credit, schools/districts have increased burden and responsibility to 1) fairly implement policies, processes, and practices 2) clearly communicate current and future implications of concurrent participation. It will be helpful for your district/school to think through the following:

- Clarify academic transcripts and grading implications that typically result in no academic college credit award. Remember to consider both high school and college credit for each of the following:
 - Course “drop” is the removal of a student from a course during an allowed add/drop period (or registration period) that happens before transcript implications occur.
 - Withdrawal is the official removal of a student from a course after the add/drop period has ended and is recorded on the student's transcript as a “W.” A withdrawal indicates that the student attempted the course but did not complete it and does not typically affect the student's grade point average, though it may count toward attempted hours for purposes such as financial aid eligibility, satisfactory academic progress, or program completion requirements.
 - (F) Grade of “F” or “Fail” is considered an academic failure and results in zero credit.
 - (D) Grade of “D” while technically still considered a passing grade is often considered non-transferable and will not satisfy the grading requirements to progress to the next course in the course sequence. For example, and grade of “D” in a Composition I course will not allow the student to take a Composition II course.

- Some postsecondary courses may utilize a “pass/fail” (P/F) or “credit/noncredit” (CR/NC) grading scale instead of traditional letter grades.
- Establish, define, and clearly communicate course add and course drop deadlines.
 - While uncommon, if a high school has multiple postsecondary partners, it is important to clearly articulate differing timelines and academic calendars.
- Establish procedures for both a student-initiated concurrent course withdrawal and/or administrative withdrawal.
 - How will the concurrent course withdrawal impact a student’s academic plan/schedule? Consider:
 - Mid-semester schedule/block changes
 - Potential loss of credit
 - Transportation implications
 - Regulations for instructional time/mandatory attendance
 - Graduation implications
 - Administrative withdrawal processes for high school and postsecondary courses could differ.
- Consider financial liability if the course is dropped after postsecondary refund deadlines.
 - Public school students may not be held financially responsible for the cost of concurrent enrollment courses, regardless of whether the course is completed or the grade earned.



Current and Future Financial Aid Eligibility

Navigating the transition to college-level coursework requires a clear understanding of the financial aid available and the long-term implications for future funding. The following section provides guidance on the requirements for maintaining these awards and how your current academic performance shapes your long-term available financial aid opportunities.

- [Access to Acceleration Scholarship \(A2A\)](#) may be used on behalf of students taking concurrent and dual enrollment
 - A2A funding is available for students in grades 9 through 12.
 - A2A may be used to offset tuition costs up to 15 credit hours per semester, not to exceed 30 credit hours per academic year (fall, spring, and summer terms).
 - A2A may be utilized for both concurrent and dual enrollment. For concurrent classes, the student may not be assessed any fees. Dual enrollment charges beyond the scholarship may be the responsibility of the student/guardian.
- Continuing Eligibility for A2A
 - Students must maintain a 2.5 GPA on college transcripts
 - If a student falls below the 2.5 GPA threshold, the student is allowed a probation semester to recover their GPA.

- If a student does not successfully complete a course, the student is allowed to retake the course one additional time.
- Acceleration policies should consider downstream impacts on:
 - [Arkansas Academic Challenge Eligibility](#)
 - Beginning with the high school graduating class of 2028, students will receive their postsecondary Academic Challenge Scholarship while still in high school through Access to Acceleration (A2A). For the purpose of determining remaining eligibility, the student's postsecondary award will be considered utilized based on the number of credit hours funded through A2A in thirty-hour increments.
 - Students are only allowed to use 5 semesters of scholarship aid at a community college
 - [Governor's Distinguished / Non-Distinguished Scholarship Eligibility](#)
 - Students who earn certain credentials from a post-secondary institution may qualify for a Diploma of Distinction, which then qualifies the student for the Non-Distinguished version of the Governor's Scholarship.
 - Students are only allowed to use 5 semesters of scholarship aid at a community college
- Federal Pell Grant and Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)
 - Attempted vs. completed credit hour accumulation.
 - Impact of withdrawals or failures on:
 - Completion rate (67% requirement)
 - Maximum timeframe (150% rule)



Special Cases and Extenuating Circumstances

While standard policies provide a framework for most students, the complexities of individual academic journeys often require a more nuanced approach to ensure all students have a fair path to success. The goal is to maintain consistency and accuracy in decision making while providing the necessary flexibility to address unique student needs and protect their long-term academic and financial standing. Consider that schools/districts and institutions of higher education may have differing policies and definitions; therefore, the school/district should be prepared to communicate to students/parents about the complex nature of these types of situations.

- If not otherwise defined, for the purposes of concurrent enrollment, defining what constitutes extenuating circumstances (e.g., medical emergencies, family crisis, military deployment, hardship).
 - Establish documentation requirements (if any).

- In the case of extenuating circumstances, appeals may be available for academic and financial aid probation/suspension status. Students and schools should carefully consider the differences between academic and financial aid status changes.
- It is common for colleges to have formal review process and appeals processes including appeals committees and decision timelines.
- Dually Enrolled Students
 - Regardless of enrollment designation, courses taken through concurrent or dual enrollment will be reflected on the student's official college transcript and will carry all associated academic, post-secondary institutional, and financial aid implications.
 - Determine whether dual enrollment coursework will be transcribed for high school credit.
 - Establish consistency across students and district campuses.
- Students with disabilities (IEP/504 accommodations in coordination with postsecondary institutions).
 - See [*Accelerated Learning Guide*](#) for more information and guidance
- Students enrolled in technical certificate pathways or workforce pathways.
- Out-of-district or homeschool participants (if applicable).
- Students may participate in multiple forms of accelerated learning and varying pathways.
- Special cases need consideration for unforeseen institutional program discontinuation or course cancellation.