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MEMORANDUM

To: District School Superintendents
From: Betty Coxe
Date: June 5, 2003
Subject: DEFINITION OF CREDIT

According to section 1003.436, Florida Statutes (Definition of credit), for the purposes of requirements for high school graduation, one full credit means a minimum of 135 hours of bona fide instruction in a designated course of study that contains student performance standards. This definition provides the parameters for developing a course and the amount of curriculum and content that must be mastered before a student is awarded credit for the course. For the purposes of course design, statutes require that courses should be developed that would take most students approximately 135 hours to complete under most circumstances.

Florida law also references flexible options that differ from traditional educational programs in scheduling, administrative structure, curriculum, alternative teaching methodologies, and learning activities in order to more effectively meet the needs, interests, and abilities of students. This includes modified curriculum, summer school, and other methods for improving student achievement.

BETTY COXE
Deputy Chancellor

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Therefore, a student may be awarded credit for less than 135 hours of instruction if he or she has demonstrated mastery of the course requirements and Sunshine State Standards as provided by the school district student progression plan. This clarification includes awarding credit for courses taken in summer school, through performance-based instruction, block scheduling, or course modifications that combine courses. The district school board must establish policies for these non-traditional programs and must verify student achievement of the course requirements in accordance with the state high school grading system.

If a school combines two courses for multiple credit during a single instructional period, it is recommended that the combination be approved by the school board after analysis of the course modifications and assurance that the course requirements and appropriate Sunshine State Standards for each of the courses integrated are included in the combination and that the combined course is taught by instructors with appropriate certification.

If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Mike Tremor at (850) 245-0423 or Mary Jo Butler at (850) 245-0479.

BC:mjb

cc: Assistant Superintendents for Instruction
Student Services Directors
Dropout Prevention Coordinators