

Transfer of Credit Guidelines

Purpose

The State Board of Education Rule was intended to establish uniform procedures relating to the acceptance of transfer work and credit for students entering Florida's public high schools. The rule increases consistency in the credit transfer process and fulfills the State Board's responsibility to prescribe "procedures relating to the acceptance of transfer work and credit for students" as required by s. 1003.25(3), Florida Statutes.

Discussion

The State Uniform Transfer of High School Credits Rule states that credits and grades earned and offered for acceptance shall be based on official transcripts and shall be accepted at face value subject to validation if required by the receiving school's accreditation. The rule does not require that the transferring school be accredited in order for the credits to be accepted at face value.

If validation of the official transcript is deemed necessary for accreditation purposes by the receiving school, the student does not possess an official transcript, or the student is a home education student, credits shall be validated through performance during the first grading period. A student transferring into a school shall be placed at the appropriate sequential course level and to receive credit, a student should have a minimum grade point average of 2.0 at the end of the first grading period.

The State Board of Education Rule specifically requires credits to be accepted at face value, establishes limited exceptions where validation can be used, and provides procedures for validation. The rule, therefore, precludes districts and individual schools from placing any additional requirements or procedures on the transfer of high school credits.

Questions and Answers

Q1: Why is the SBE Rule so important to students in Florida?

A1: Florida provides several legal options for meeting compulsory attendance. Parents may elect a private, parochial, denominational or religious school, home education program or private tutor to meet regular attendance as defined in s. 1003.01(13) Florida Statutes. School choice programs, such as the McKay Scholarship Program, Corporate Tax Credit Scholarship and virtual schools provide parents of public school students additional choices for meeting regular attendance. If these students have taken advantage of a scholarship and enrolled in an unaccredited private school that is eligible to participate in the state-funded programs, and chooses to return to the public school, they must be able to receive credits and grades for their work at the private school.

Q2: Does the SBE Rule preempt school and school district policy and the Pupil Progression Plan for transfer of credit?

A2: Yes, the SBE Rule establishes the policy for all public high schools and school districts. The SBE Rule supersedes district policy.

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- Q3: When must a public high school grant credit and grades at face value?**
A3: According to the State Board of Education Rule, credits and grades shall be granted at face value when submitted on an official transcript.
- Q4: What is an official transcript?**
A4: An official transcript is a document that is sent directly from the administrator of the school where the credit is earned to the receiving school administrator. An official transcript shall be sent by mail or electronically signed by a school administrator, and be on school letterhead, and/or be embossed with the school's seal. An official transcript should clearly identify the school, the student, course #, date the course was taken, credit earned and grade in each course. An unofficial transcript is one that is hand delivered by the student or parent, or is delivered to the designated school administrator in an opened envelope, or is on plain paper.
- Q5: Does the SBE Rule permit a school to validate credits and grades on an official transcript?**
A5: Yes, but only in situations where validation is required because of the receiving school's accreditation requirements.
- Q6: Must a school accept credits and grades from public or private schools that are not accredited?**
A6: Yes, credits and grades earned from unaccredited schools shall be accepted at face value if submitted on an official transcript. The SBE Rule states that validation of the official transcript may be done if required by the receiving school's accreditation. If required, validation of the official transcript (credits and grades) will be done through performance during the first grading period.
- Q7: Must a school accept credits when a student does not have an official transcript or is a home education student?**
A7: Yes, the Rule states that in this situation these credits (not grades) shall be validated through performance during the first grading period.
- Q8: Must credits submitted on an unofficial transcript be validated through performance only at the receiving school?**
A8: Yes, the SBE Rule was intended to validate the overall integrity of the transcript. The student shall be placed at the appropriate sequential course level, and overall performance in classes at the receiving school validates the credits from the previous school or home education program in their entirety.
- Q9: How does the receiving school determine placement of the student?**
A9: Based on the transcript, the student shall be placed at the appropriate sequential course level.
- Q10: How does a school determine if the placement of the student is correct?**
A10: If the student's classroom performance during the first grading period reflects that the student has the educational foundation to be successful in that class, then the placement is correct.
- Q11: Can a school change the placement of a student?**
A11: Yes, the SBE rule requires that the student be placed at the "appropriate" sequential level. If the student's performance in the classroom during the first grading period does not indicate that the student has the necessary educational foundation to be successful in the class, the school, parent, and teacher may reconsider whether the student was placed at the "appropriate" sequential level.
- Q12: When are the alternative methods of validation appropriate to use?**
A12: Alternative Validation Procedures are to be used when the student does not meet the 2.0 GPA scholastic performance standard at the end of the first grading period.

Q13: How long does a school have to validate the transcript if deemed necessary?

A13: A school has until the end of the first grading period to validate an official transcript, and then all credits and grades are to be accepted at face value. For students who do not have an official transcript or are from a home education program, the credits will be validated and granted at the end of the first grading period based on scholastic performance.

Q14: What happens if a student does not meet the scholastic performance standard of a 2.0 GPA?

A14: The Alternative Validation Procedures are utilized to validate credit. The Alternative Validation Procedures specified by SBE rule include:

1. Portfolio evaluation by the superintendent or designee;
2. Written recommendation by a Florida certified teacher selected by the parent and approved by the principal;
3. Demonstrated performance in courses taken through dual enrollment or at other public or private accredited schools;
4. Demonstrated proficiencies on nationally-normed standardized subject area assessments;
5. Demonstrated proficiencies on the FCAT; or
6. Written review of the criteria utilized for a given subject provided by the former school.

Students must be provided at least 90 days from date of transfer to prepare for either nationally-normed standardized subject area assessments or the FCAT.

Q15: Does a parent have to agree to the alternative validation procedure used to validate credit?

A15: Yes, the SBE rule states that the validation procedures must be determined by the teacher, principal and parent.

Q16: Can a public school require that a student take the FCAT as the only option for granting credit?

A16: No, students must be allowed all options listed in question 14.

Q17: How is high school credit granted for courses taken in 8th grade at a private school?

A17: A high school can grant credit based on performance in sequential courses. For example, if a student comes from a private K-8 school and has completed Algebra 1, then placement of the student in Algebra II and a 2.0 GPA in Algebra II at the end of the grading period allows the school to grant credit for Algebra I.

Q18: Does a public school have to grant credits to a student who attended a private school which allows parents or teachers who are not state-certified to educate the students?

A18: Yes, Florida Statutes do not regulate the curricula, teacher qualifications or academic programs of private schools. If the private school is listed with the Department of Education as a private school and has a school number, then the public school must treat the credits from this school in accordance with the SBE Rule.

Contacts for Additional Information

The State Uniform Transfer of High School Credits Rule can be found at:

<http://www.firn.edu/doe/rules/6a-1-10.htm#6A-1.09941>

The Florida Department of Education, Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, website can be found at <http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org>

For questions or information on home education, contact Mary Lou Carothers at 850-245-0502 or MaryLou.Carothers@fldoe.org