

## INTERNET-BASED COURSES/ONLINE COURSES

Western Heights Public Schools has established policies and procedures for Internet-based, online courses that conform to rules set forth by the State Board of Education. Web-based and two-way interactive video instruction are viewed as methods by which the district can expand course offerings and access to instructional resources. These new technologies are not viewed solely as substitutes for direct, face-to-face student and teacher interactions, but as a means of expanding the ability of the district to bring the world of knowledge to all students. Online instructional programs offered for instructional purposes and/or high school credit shall be approved by and under the supervision of the Western Heights Board of Education. The proposed course(s) may be evaluated by the State Department of Education. Current courses include, but are not limited to: English I, IV, Physical Science, Earth Science, Environmental Science, Geography, World History, Government, Economics, Geometry, Algebra II, Math of Finance, Modern American History, Civil War, Health, Personal Finance, Art Appreciation and Music Appreciation.

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

1. "Synchronous instruction" means the instructor and student's primary interactions are in real time. Regular classroom instruction is synchronous instruction, as well as two-way interactive video. Web-based instruction that requires real-time interaction between student(s) and instructor as the primary format of instruction is also synchronous instruction.
2. "Asynchronous instruction" means instructor and student interaction is not dependent on real time. Asynchronous instruction allows the student to engage in learning activities anywhere at anytime. For instruction to be considered asynchronous, the primary format of instruction does not depend on real-time interaction of the participants.
3. "Web-based instruction" means the use of the World Wide Web as the primary medium of instruction, with a computer serving as the primary tool of instruction. Web-based instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous.
4. "Two-way interactive video instruction" means real-time (synchronous) interaction between student(s) and instructor by means of an electronic medium that provides for both audio (sound) and video (sight) signal. Students and instructors participating in two-way interactive video instruction may both see and hear each other in an approximation of real-time.
5. Supplemental online course is an online program that allows students who are enrolled in a public school to supplement their education by enrolling part time in online courses that are educationally appropriate for the student, which are equal to the equivalent of classroom instruction time required by student attendance and participation in the district.
6. Educationally appropriate means an instructional delivery method best suited for an individual student to advance the student's academic standing toward meeting the learning expectations of the district and State graduation requirements for the student. The determination of educationally appropriate will be made at the local school district level.

### ELIGIBILITY FOR ENROLLMENT

Full-time students who are legally enrolled in the Western Heights School District will be eligible to enroll in Internet-based courses. Students participating in Internet-based courses from a remote site will be responsible for providing their own equipment and Internet access, unless the district chooses to provide the equipment. For legally enrolled students who are homebound or home-based pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the IEP/504 team for each individual student will determine the appropriateness of the course and the arrangements to be made for access to computer equipment and Internet connection.

Other students who may be eligible for enrollment are as follows:

1. Students who have dropped out of school or are or have been suspended from school, provided such student was enrolled at any time in a public school in the state during the previous three school years. State Aid will be calculated for such students based upon the percentage of the total school day in which the student is enrolled, multiplied by the appropriate grade-level weight.
2. Students placed in a residential facility, such as a treatment program or center, a therapeutic foster home or a specialized foster home. Provided, if the facility is located outside the boundaries of the Western Heights School District, the entity operating the facility must contract with the Western Heights Board of Education for receipt of educational services by means of remote Internet-based courses. In such cases, the entity may not contract for the provision of such services with any other school district.

Internet-based courses offered by a technology center that are taught by a certified teacher and focus on the teaching of the skills and knowledge in the Priority Academic Student Skills may, upon approval of the Western Heights Board of Education, be counted for academic credit and toward meeting state graduation requirements. Internet-based courses or vocational-technical courses utilizing integrated or embedded skills for which no Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS) have been adopted by the State Board of Education may be approved by the Board if such courses incorporate standards of nationally recognized professional organizations and are taught by certified teachers.

#### COURSES OFFERED FOR CREDIT

The board of education will grant students credit for completion of courses offered by means of online instruction. School district policies governing grading scales and credits earned shall be applied to Oklahoma Supplemental Online Course Program courses under the same criteria as courses offered by the school district. A grade assigned for course credit that was completed through the supplemental online program shall be treated the same as any other course offered by the district.

Only students who are legally enrolled in the Western Heights School District shall be allowed access to, or attain credit through the district for completion of courses offered via supplemental online courses.

The principal or designee of the respective Western Heights school site shall evaluate and approve/disapprove all students' requests to participate in courses delivered by means of Internet-based instruction. Only those enrollments approved by such a process shall be eligible for credit granted by the local school district. Written parent permission shall be required for enrollment by any student who is under the age of majority. Prior to the beginning of instruction, contractual agreements shall be established between the school district and parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of students participating in alternative instructional delivery system courses. These contracts will address such issues as grading criteria, time allotted for course completion, student attendance, and the responsibility for course costs and equipment.

If the supplemental online course is not deemed to be educationally appropriate, notification shall be provided to the student in writing as to the reasons in support of the principal's recommendation and the student shall be afforded the opportunity to appeal the principal's decision to the local school board. The decision of the local board with regard to whether a course is educationally appropriate is final and nonappealable. A copy of the notification shall be provided to the Director of Instructional Technology at the State Department of Education.

A certified staff member shall be identified by the local school principal to serve as the building level contact person to assist students enrolling in online courses and serve as a liaison to the online teachers and provider(s). Students shall have a grace period for withdrawal from a supplemental online course of fifteen (15) calendar days from the first day of a supplemental online course enrollment without academic penalty. A written request for withdrawal should be provided to the principal from the student prior to the expiration of the fifteen (15) day period.

Students earning credit by means of online instruction shall participate in required state level academic assessments in the same manner as other regularly enrolled students in the district. No student, including regularly enrolled and alternative education students, shall be allowed to participate in these assessments at a place other than the school site at which the student is enrolled. Test results will be disaggregated and reported according to all requirements of state law and State Board of Education regulations; data shall not be provided to commercial entities.

Student progress shall be monitored on a weekly basis by the supplemental online course provider. Attendance /participation in a supplemental online course shall be monitored in accordance with local district policy and determined by documented student/teacher/course interaction that may include, but is not limited to, online chats, emails, posting/submission of lessons. The student may be counted "present" or "in attendance" when the supplemental online course provider provides evidence of student/teacher/course interaction that demonstrates student progress toward learning objectives and demonstrates regular student engagement in course activity. Supplemental online course providers shall make available to students, parents, and the school district reports that reflect daily attendance/participation, progress reports, and grades. Such attendance/participation reports, progress reports, and grades shall be provided on a regular weekly basis to parents and the school district via electronic format. The district will review progress reports and grades twice per month.

The security of individual student data and records shall be governed by the same procedures as outlined in Western Heights Board of Education Policy 5.500, JetNet Acceptable Use Policy. No individual student data obtained through participation in Internet-based instruction courses shall be used for any purposes other than those that support the instruction of the individual student. All federal and state statutes pertaining to student privacy, the posting of images on the World Wide Web, copyright of materials, and Federal Communications Commission rules pertaining to the public broadcasting of audio and video shall apply to all Internet-based courses offered by the Western Heights Board of Education. District-level aggregated data obtained through participation in Internet-based instruction courses shall be maintained and reported in the same fashion as data obtained in the course of regular classroom instruction.

Prior to the beginning of instruction, cooperating school districts sharing courses by means of two-way interactive video technology shall, by means of contractual agreement, address such issues as the instruction costs, bell schedules, school calendars, student behavior, teacher evaluation, textbooks, class periods, student grades/grading policies, teacher load, and instructor employment.

Contractual agreements shall be established between the school district and parent(s), or legal guardian, of students participating in alternative instructional delivery system courses prior to the beginning of instruction. These contracts may address such issues as grading criteria, time allotted for course completion, student attendance, and the responsibility for course costs and equipment.

Instructors of Internet-based courses shall be certified in Oklahoma or another state to teach in the content area of the course offered, or be a faculty member at an accredited institution of higher education, possessing the specific content expertise necessary to teach the course.

Annually, the board of education shall establish fees or charges for the provision of alternative instructional delivery system courses. The district shall not be liable for payment of any fees or charges for any online course for a student who has not complied with district policies and procedures.

## CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL OF COURSES

The Western Heights Board of Education shall be the entity granting student credit for completion of courses offered by means of Internet-based instruction; therefore, the Board will assume all responsibility for such coursework. Courses offered for credit shall be approved based on the *Essential Principles of Quality* listed below and developed by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). These Essential Principles are intended to ensure that courses complying with the principles will be high-quality courses that effectively assist students to meet academic goals. The principles also are intended to ensure that the characteristics of good teaching and learning are addressed during the development and use of electronically delivered courses.

The following criteria for approval will be used:

- I. Curriculum, Instruction and Student Assessment
  - A. The course content and assessment are aligned with Oklahoma's Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS).
  - B. The course engages students in learning activities that address various learning styles.
  - C. The course provides students with opportunities to engage in abstract thinking and critical reasoning.
  - D. The course structure includes fair, adequate, and appropriate methods and procedures to assess students' mastery of content.
  - E. Each course will provide appropriate teacher-to-student interaction, including timely, frequent feedback about student progress.
  - F. Each course will provide appropriate student-to-student interaction and a plan for monitoring that interaction.
  - G. The teacher of the Web-based course can adapt learning activities to accommodate students with disabilities.
  - H. Students have access to resources that enrich the course content.
  - I. A complete, clearly written course syllabus is available for review.
  
- II. Management
  - A. The course provider is authorized to operate by the state where the course originated or is received, or the provider is accredited by a regional accrediting agency.
  - B. The course will be reviewed to ensure quality before it is used.
  - C. The school or school district where the student is enrolled or resides will determine whether to accept the course for credit.
  - D. Procedures for fees and payment are established before students enroll in a course.
  - E. Student work and personal data are secure from access by others.
  - F. Students are monitored to ensure academic honesty.
  - G. A teacher or other educator in the school will coordinate and assist students with instructional, technical and management requirements.
  - H. The company or organization that offers the Web-based course will provide the course teacher and school coordinator with technical and course-management assistance.
  - I. Necessary, relevant learning materials are available to help students meet the course requirements.
  - J. The course provider has identified prerequisites technology skills for students.
  - K. The teacher is trained to use the course and resources effectively to deliver instruction.
  - L. The teacher and students receive technical support to ensure easy use of the course.
  - M. The academic calendar of the students and course completion time is established before the course begins.

III. Evaluation

- A. A Web-based course's success will be measured by the achievement of the students taking the course.
- B. Each course will be re-evaluated over time by the school district for instructional effectiveness.
- C. A new course will provide documentation that validates its reliability and completeness.
- D. A company or other organization offering a Web-based course that was taught previously will provide evidence of its effectiveness, reliability and completeness.
- E. The school and the state will have the ability to verify a student's participation and performance in a Web-based course during the course and upon its completion.

Adopted: 03-11-02

Revised: 09-10-02

Revised: 12-10-12