Online Learning

A. Definitions

Online Courses: An “online course” is one in which more than half of the content is delivered online and more than half of the instruction is delivered online by a teacher from a different location than that of the student.

Online School Program: “Online school program” is delivered by a school district or cooperative of school districts, and provides an online, comprehensive and sequential program of courses or grade-level coursework and instruction in which more than half of the program is delivered online and more than half of the instruction is delivered online by a teacher from a different location than that of the student.

Online Learning Support Team: Students will be provided assistance in accessing courses, understanding coursework and maintaining successful progress in their online courses.

B. Student Access to Online Courses and Online School Programs

The district will facilitate access to the following types of online learning opportunities:

1. Online courses:
   a. District-created and taught online courses;
   b. District-taught online courses created by a third-party contracted provider; and
   c. OSPI-approved online courses created and taught by third-party course providers.

2. Online school programs:
   a. District-created and -taught online school programs;
   b. District-sponsored programs created and taught by third-party course providers;
   c. District-sponsored programs created by third-party course providers and taught by district teachers; and
   d. Out-of-district online school programs accessed pursuant to appropriate standards through an interdistrict transfer.

C. Types of Online Courses Available

The district will facilitate access to the following types of online courses:

1. Credit recovery courses allowing students to make up failed credits needed for graduation;
2. Advanced Placement courses;
3. Foreign language courses;
4. Courses which may already be offered in the student’s school but are now accessible to the student online;
5. Courses not available at the student’s school that meet four-year college entrance requirements;
6. Elective and Career and Technical courses;
7. Standard-level courses meeting high school graduation requirements;
8. Grade level coursework for K-8; and
9. A course that meets the criteria for district use of a non-approved course.

D. Student Eligibility Criteria

Students requesting permission to take an online course or participate in a district-created online school program must adhere to the following criteria:

1. Have completed any required prerequisites and provide teacher/counselor recommendations to confirm that he/she possesses the academic level needed to function effectively in an online learning environment;
2. Comply with existing district policies for registering/enrolling in a course or district program.
3. Students interested in attending an online school program in another district must follow the interdistrict transfer procedures in policy and regulation 3140: Release of Resident Students prior to entering that program.
4. Students interested in attending Tacoma’s online program who reside in another district must follow the procedures for nonresident admissions in policy and regulation 3141: Nonresident Admission.

E. Supporting Student Success

The district will provide the following support to students to help ensure a successful online learning experience:

1. All online students will receive assistance from the local online learning support team;
2. Counselors will advise students in selecting and registering for online learning options to which the district facilitates access;
3. Staff (district or contracted provider) will monitor online students regularly, with interventions as appropriate, to ensure they are connecting to the online coursework and the online teacher and are making satisfactory progress in their online coursework;
4. The district may offer a dedicated class period during the school day in which the student may connect to an online course.

F. Costs/Fees

1. The district will not charge for online courses offered to students for which the district claims state education funding or that are included as part of the legally-required annual average total instructional hour offering.
2. The district will charge for online courses offered to students for which the district claims no state education funding.
3. The district may charge fees for direct costs related to certain course.

G. Granting of High School Credit for Online Courses

1. Credit for online courses will be granted in the same manner as other course offerings in the district.
2. Currently enrolled students must seek approval prior to enrolling in an online course provided outside of the district. The student will seek prior approval and will be informed whether or not the course is eligible for academic credit from the district.

3. For students transferring credit from online courses or programs taken while enrolled outside of the district, credit will be granted according to the district transfer credit procedure in policy and regulation 2255: Alternative Learning Experience Programs.

4. For eligible courses, if course credit is earned, the course will be recorded on the transcript as an online-learning course.

H. Information to Students and Parents or Guardians

The district will use a variety of methods to provide information to parents/guardians and students regarding online learning opportunities.

Information will be provided about online learning opportunities through the district Web page, counseling office brochures, newsletters, the student handbook and other appropriate district communication resources.

Information provided will include descriptions of online courses or online school programs, enrollment information, potential fees, a description of credit awarded for courses, and student eligibility requirements.

I. Criteria for District Use of Non-OSPI Approved Online Courses

1. The district may offer courses to students from online providers not on the OSPI approved list only after ensuring that they meet the criteria for district approved curriculum.

J. Student Responsibilities

1. Adhere to the district’s code of conduct in policy and regulation 3200: Student Rights and Responsibilities, and any code of conduct of the online service provider.

2. Comply with course/program participation and completion requirements.

3. Maintain high academic involvement.

4. Notify the district if participation in an online course/program ceases or changes.

5. Maintain agreed-upon levels and kinds of communication with the local advisor throughout the term of the online course.

6. Participate in an online course/program orientation, when provided.

K. Parent or Guardian Responsibilities

1. Parents or guardians are responsible for seeking appropriate technology for student participation in coursework outside of the school day or designated online learning period.

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