

Pittsfield School District

EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Purpose

The Board encourages students to pursue extended learning opportunities (ELO's) as a means of acquiring knowledge and skills through instruction or study that is outside the traditional classroom methodology. ELO's may include, but are not limited to, independent study, private instruction, performing groups, internships, community service, apprenticeships, online courses / distance education, or other opportunities approved by the superintendent or his / her designee, in conjunction with board policies.

The purpose of ELO's is to provide educational experiences that are meaningful and relevant, and that provide students with opportunities to explore and achieve at high levels. In order to maximize student achievement and meet diverse pathways for learning, this policy permits students to employ ELO's that are stimulating and intellectually challenging, and that enable students to fulfill or exceed the expectations set forth by the state minimum standards and applicable board policies.

ELO's may be taken for credit or may be taken to supplement or in place of regular academic courses. ELO's may also be used to fulfill prerequisite requirements for advanced classes. If the ELO is taken for credit, the provisions of Policy ILBA, *Assessment of Educational Programs*, and ILBAA, *High School Competency Assessments* apply. ELO's must be supervised by a certified educator in the content area. The supervising certified teacher must authorize the granting of credit for learning accomplished through ELO's when students are taking the ELO for credit.

Roles and Responsibilities

All programs of study must meet or exceed the proficiencies and skills identified by the New Hampshire State Board of Education, applicable rules and regulations of the Department of Education, and all applicable board policies. All programs of study proposed through this program shall have specific instructional objectives aligned with the State minimum standards and district curriculum standards. All ELO's will comply with applicable laws and regulations, including child labor laws and regulations governing occupational safety.

Students in grades seven through twelve wishing to pursue programs of study under these guidelines must first present their proposal to the school's ELO coordinator(s) for approval. The name and contact information for the school's ELO coordinator(s) will be found in the Student and Family Handbook or by contacting the school office or the director of college and career readiness. The ELO coordinator will assist students in preparing the application form and other necessary paperwork.

The director of college and career readiness will have primary responsibility and authority for ensuring the implementation of ELO's and all aspects of such programs. The director of college and career readiness will determine who will be responsible for approving student eligibility and such approval will include a consideration of the overall benefits, costs, advantages, and disadvantages to both the student and the district.

The director of college and career readiness, in consultation with the supervising certified teacher, will review and determine credits that will be awarded for ELO's toward the attainment of a high school diploma. Parents/guardians and/or students may appeal decisions rendered by the director of college and career readiness within the provisions below (see Appeal Process).

Students approved for an ELO must have parental/guardian permission to participate in such a program. Such permission will be granted through a completed ELO application signed by the parent/legal guardian and returned to the district before beginning the program.

All ELO's not initiated and designed by the district shall be the financial responsibility of the student or his/her parent/legal guardian. Students electing independent study, college coursework, internships, or other ELO's that are held off the middle high school campus will be responsible for providing their own transportation to and from the off-campus site. However, the district may provide transportation if feasible.

Students who have a financial or transportation need that would prevent such participation may request school assistance through the director of college and career readiness. Such requests may be granted if district resources are available and at the discretion of the superintendent. The ELO coordinator will assist students in seeking alternative means of financial or transportation assistance if so needed.

Students approved for off-campus ELO's are responsible for their personal safety and well-being. ELO's at off-campus sites will require a signed agreement between the school, the student, and a designated agent of the third-party host. The agreement would specify the roles and responsibilities of each party.

Evaluation Criteria

The director of college and career readiness will evaluate all applications. At a minimum, all applications must meet the following criteria:

1. Provides for administration and supervision of the program;
2. Provides that certified school personnel will oversee and monitor the program;

3. Requirement that each ELO meets rigorous standards, including the minimum standards established by the State Board of Education and other applicable district standards.

Awarding of Credit

Credit for an ELO is based on mastery of course competencies. Students must demonstrate mastery on all competencies identified for the ELO to be awarded credit.

The district reserves the right to determine the number of credits to be awarded. Any credits earned may be calculated toward the overall grade point average. The course name and final course grade earned will be entered onto the student's official transcript.

Appeal Process

A student whose application has been denied may request a meeting with the director of college and career readiness. The director of college and career readiness will provide the students with rationale as to why the proposal was denied. Students may resubmit alternate proposals for consideration if such proposals are made within the timelines established by this policy. If the director of college and career readiness rejects the resubmitted proposal, the student may appeal to the superintendent. All decisions made by the superintendent shall be final.

Program Integrity

To ensure the integrity of the learning experience approved under this program, the student will be required periodically or upon demand to provide evidence of progress and attendance. The director of college and career readiness will be responsible for certifying course completion and the award of credits consistent with the district's policies on graduation.

If a student is unable to complete the ELO for valid reasons, the director of college and career readiness will evaluate the experience completed to date and make a determination for the award of partial credit or recommend an alternative experience.

If a student ceases to attend or is unable to complete the ELO for insufficient reason (lack of effort, failure to follow through, indecision, etc.), the director of college and career readiness may determine that the student's transcript be adjusted to reflect the experience as a failure.

To certify completion of co-curricular programs and activities based upon specific instructional objectives aligned to the standards, the school will develop appropriate mechanisms to document student progress and program completion on student personnel records.

Students transferring from other schools who request acceptance of course credits awarded through similar ELO programs shall have their transcripts evaluated by the director of college and career readiness.

It shall be incumbent upon the student or his/her parent/legal guardian to request that copies of the student's official transcript be sent from the former school.

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