



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Senior Year Plus and Dual Enrolled Students

Date:

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The Iowa Department of Education has received concerns from the private instruction community about difficulties dual enrolled students have had in accessing Senior Year Plus (SYP) programs. Senior Year Plus serves as an umbrella for a variety of programs designed to provide high school students access to courses that have the potential to generate college credit, and include Advanced Placement courses, Postsecondary Enrollment Options, Concurrent Enrollment, and Career Academies. While the Department further explores those fact-specific situations involved in those concerns, the Department offers the following general information as a reminder.

1. Students who are dual enrolled to access Senior Year Plus programs must be offered an equal opportunity to participate in the district's Senior Year Plus programs. A district may not set different standards for dual enrolled students to access Senior Year Plus programs, and any standards set must comply with the Senior Year Plus law. While the rules require a district's board to approve Senior Year Plus requests for students, including those students who are dual enrolled, the board must act reasonably and must not frustrate the statutory right of dual enrolled students to access Senior Year Plus programming. Iowa Code § 299A.8(1) (2015) ("shall be permitted to participate in any academic activities in the district").

Example: A school board has a policy of refusing all requests for Senior Year Plus programming made by dual enrolled students. This is impermissible.

Example: A school board has a policy of fulfilling all Senior Year Plus requests for fully enrolled students before acting on requests made by dual enrolled students. This is impermissible.

Example: A school district refuses to allow a dual enrolled student to enroll in a Postsecondary Education Options [as noted above, one variety of Senior Year Plus] course. The requested course is comparable to one available in the public school, and no student is approved to enroll in that course, consistent with Postsecondary Education Options rules. This is a required outcome.

Example: A school district refuses to pay for Postsecondary Education Options courses offered on evenings and weekends. A dually enrolled child requests permission to take Advanced Statistics from a local college during the evening. The request is denied. This is impermissible. Although this policy is applied to all students, not just dually enrolled students, the policy is not authorized by the Postsecondary Education Options rules.

2. Students who are dual enrolled must be permitted to demonstrate academic eligibility to participate in Senior Year Plus programs by Iowa Assessment scores or by any of six alternative means. Iowa Code § 261E.3(1)(e); see also Iowa Admin. Code r. 281—22.2(2). A district must allow a dual enrolled student to demonstrate proficiency through any of these six alternative means. A district does not have the discretion to refuse to consider any of the alternative means of demonstrating proficiency.

Example: A school district refuses to acknowledge a written recommendation from the licensed practitioner who is supervising the child's private instruction as evidence of the child's proficiency. This is impermissible.

Example: A school district refuses to consider assessment results presented by the family. The assessment instrument is on the Iowa Department of Education's list of acceptable assessments for compliance with Iowa Code section 299A.4. The district rejects the assessment because it is "not the Iowa Assessment." This is impermissible.

Example: A school district declares a dually enrolled student ineligible to access Senior Year Plus programs because the student's score on the ACT college readiness exam was 19. The proficiency cut-off in the Senior Year Plus rules is 21. This is a required outcome.

3. Districts are to give timely information to all students and their parents, including dual enrolled students and their parents, regarding Senior Year Plus programs, including responding to information requests. All students and parents, including dual enrolled students and their parents, must receive information about Senior Year Plus programs in an effective manner. Withholding information from parents is improper.

Example: A parent of a dually enrolled student requests information about Senior Year Plus programs, including registration deadlines. The school does not respond. When the parent follows up, the school informs the parent that she missed the registration deadline. This is improper.

Example: A parent of a dually enrolled student requests information about Senior Year Plus programs, including registration deadlines. The school informs her that the deadlines are in the student handbook and on the district's web page. The parent misses the deadline and then complains. The district's actions were allowable.

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