

NWLSD Credit Flexibility Handbook



2024-25 School Year
Board Approval pending



CREDIT FLEXIBILITY HANDBOOK

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BOARD POLICY

2370 - Educational Options

The Board of Education recognizes the need to provide alternative means by which students achieve the goals of the District.

Educational options are learning experiences or activities that are designed to extend, enhance, supplement, or serve as an alternative to classroom instruction.

The Superintendent shall prepare a plan of educational options for use in meeting a variety of student needs. Such options will include the District's Credit Flexibility Plan and may include, but not be limited to, distance learning, on-line coursework, tutorial programs, independent study, correspondence courses, educational travel, project portfolios, internships, mentorship programs, summer school, and early college entrance.

Prior approval of the educational option application by the Superintendent shall be required before a student participates in one of the available educational options. Prior permission of a parent or guardian shall also be required before a student under age eighteen (18) participates in one of the available educational options.

Participation in an educational option shall be in accordance with an instructional and performance plan which will be developed based on the individual student's needs. The instructional plan will include:

- A. instructional and performance objectives that align with District's curriculum requirements;
- B. a description of the criteria and method for assessing student performance;
- C. an outline of specific instructional activities, materials and learning environments.

Participation must be subject to the oversight of a credentialed teacher who will review the instructional plan which may include providing, supervising, or reviewing instruction or learning experiences, and the evaluation of student performance.

Credit for approved educational options shall be assigned according to student performance relative to stated objectives of the approved instructional and performance plan and in accordance with District policy and established administrative guidelines.

The District shall communicate information and procedures related to credit flexibility and educational options available in the District to students, parents, and interested stakeholders.

The Superintendent shall develop the administrative guidelines necessary to implement this policy.

Legal References: ORC 3313.60; 3313.603; 3313.609; 3313.6013; 3313.611; 3313.613; 3313.614; 3313.90 3321.04 Chapter 3324 Chapter 3365 OAC Chapter 3301-34 3301-35-06 Chapter 3301-46 Chapter 3301-51 Chapter 3301-61



CREDIT FLEXIBILITY HANDBOOK

What is Credit Flexibility?

Credit Flexibility is the customizing of educational delivery to the learning styles and interests of individual students. Students show what they know and move on to higher-order content they are ready to learn and have not yet mastered. They learn subject matter and earn course credit in ways not limited solely to “seat time” or the walls of a school building. They customize aspects of their learning around their interests and needs, which might include flexible schedules and a choice of modalities (e.g., online learning, work-based learning and community-based projects), as well as options to pursue niche interest areas, combine subjects, and potentially graduate early.

Benefits of Credit Flexibility

Credit Flexibility has benefits for students, parents, business and schools:

- Personalizes the learning by accommodating learning styles, paces and interests
- Recognizes the importance of student engagement and ownership
- Focuses on mastery versus time; it’s not how the student learns but what the student demonstrates
- Promotes integration of learning
- Matches pacing to learning capacity
- Recognizes learning occurs outside of predetermined classes and schedules

Eligibility

- Any student in grades 7-12 who has progressed through the curriculum to the high school level may earn credit through Credit Flexibility
- All courses and credits are eligible to be satisfied through Credit Flexibility

Timelines

- Students must obtain approval prior to proceeding with a Credit Flexibility plan. Retroactive credit will not be awarded.
- All credit flexibility applications must be approved no later than **April 1st** the school year prior to actual participation.

Testing Out

Students wishing to “Test Out” of a course will be required to demonstrate mastery on a comprehensive exam identified by the Northwest Local School District. The student must earn an 80% or above on the exam to receive credit for the course. The student may not retake the test to attempt to earn an improved score once the 80% level has been obtained. The student who initially earns a score below 80% may retest only one time for a course. Students wishing to “Test Out” of a course should complete the [Short Application Form](#) which can be found at the end of this handbook or online.

- All credits earned through the Testing Out option will receive a weight no higher than the “Advanced” level.



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Credit Flexibility Plans

The Credit Flexibility plan (Long Application Form) documents the learning to be demonstrated and the criteria for the evaluation of that learning. The actual learning is the responsibility of the student, whereas the evaluation of the learning is the responsibility of the appropriate school staff. The plan serves as a record of the established agreements. The plan may only be modified if all parties agree.

Work-Based Learning (WBL)

- The purpose of work-based learning is to expose students to future options and develop skills over time. The stages of work-based learning can be described as (1) learning about work, (2) learning through work, and (3) learning for work.
- Work-based learning activities are overseen by the school and an employer or business partner.
- Students can earn elective credits, which may also count towards meeting graduation competency requirements for career-focused activities. Students engaged in work-based learning can earn 0.5 credits for every 75 hours completed, with a maximum of 3 credits per school year and 6 credits in total.
- To verify student hours, pay stubs or other reliable methods must be used. Students who accumulate 250 WBL hours (3.5 credits) can use these hours in two ways:
 - To fulfill the competency requirement for graduation.
 - As a student strength demonstration for the Honors Diploma.

Grading

The Northwest Local School District will award a numeric grade based on the District's grading scale for the Credit Flexibility option. Pass/Fail options are not permitted for Credit Flexibility. The grade awarded for the Credit Flexibility option will be decided by Northwest Local School District personnel based on the level of mastery demonstrated by the student. The grade the student earns will appear on his/her transcript. **Weighted credit (e.g., Honors, AP) will not be awarded for Credit Flexibility options.**

All Credit Flexibility plans proposed by students submitting the Short Application Form for Testing Out will be graded according to the actual numeric score obtained on the comprehensive exam identified by the Northwest Local School District. Credit will not be awarded automatically for students who score below an 80% on the comprehensive exam, however students who earn a score at or above a 60% (passing grade) may develop a Credit Flex plan to complete the learning required to address gaps shown in the assessment or may be eligible for a course placement that honors their demonstrated skill level, with the approval of the teacher of the course (examples: direct placement in Spanish II).

All Credit Flexibility plans proposed by students submitting the Long Application Form must include benchmarks for monitoring progress to ensure steady gains towards their academic learning goals. A completion deadline will be included in a student's Credit Flexibility proposal. If a student does not complete the Credit Flexibility plan by the established deadline, a failing grade will be given and placed



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on the student's transcript. Students can drop a Credit Flexibility course before a predetermined deadline (the same as a traditional course) without penalty. If a student drops a Credit Flexibility course after the drop deadline, a grade of F will be awarded and be placed on a student's transcript.

Awarding Credit

The Northwest Local School District shall allow students the opportunity to earn credit by demonstrating mastery of the academic content standards. The Northwest Local School District shall award a number of credits to students demonstrating mastery equal to the number of credits awarded to students who successfully complete the equivalent traditional course. The number of credits to be awarded will be identified in the Credit Flexibility Plan. The Northwest Local School District will not limit the total number of courses or credits earned through Credit Flexibility.

- The only stipulation the district mandates is that the student will not be able to create a credit flexibility plan which would allow that student to take the same course for which credit has already been earned (e.g., for the purposes of getting a higher grade).
- The grade earned for a failed course retaken using credit flexibility may not replace the original failing grade earned on the student transcript. The transcript must reflect an accurate representation of the student's academic performance.
- Students may receive credit for multiple courses with the completion of one credit flexibility plan.

The district reserves the right to reassign a student participating in Credit Flexibility to a traditional course or other placement at its discretion if the student fails to meet the standards for ongoing participation and satisfactory progress described in his or her Credit Flexibility plan. Students who repeatedly fail to meet standards established to document ongoing participation as described in his or her plan may be considered truant and subject to penalties for truancy described in the Board's policy on attendance, promotion and retention. Also, a student who has been suspended and/or expelled from school will not be eligible to apply for Credit Flexibility until the student returns to school or re-enrolls.

Credit Flexibility plans may include, but are not limited to, activities that occur outside of school such as mentorships, internships, service learning, and educational travel. Parents of students proposing non-traditional educational off-campus options will be required to agree to hold the district harmless for any injuries or damages that occur involving their student as a precondition of the district's approval of the plan. Students may earn simultaneous credit (e.g., more than one academic content/course area, secondary and post-secondary) and partial credit.

Prior Approval Requirement

The Northwest Local School District requires prior approval for all Credit Flexibility proposals, including those involving Work-Based Learning. Your school counselor is the best person to work with as you are developing your plan. There will be no awarding of retroactive credit.



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Transfer of Credit Flexibility Plans

Credit earned through a completed Credit Flexibility Plan will transfer between school districts in the same manner currently being used for transfer credit. Approved Credit Flexibility plans that are incomplete at the time of a student transfer into or out of the Northwest Local School District are no longer valid. Students will need to re-submit the incomplete Credit Flexibility plan to the new school district following established procedures and timelines. While the Credit Flexibility plan may be accepted at the new school district, the plan will be governed by the guidelines and approval processes of the new school district.

Data Reporting

While Credit Flexibility Applications will be approved at the building level, the District personnel will maintain a copy of all Credit Flexibility Plans to track performance data including, but not limited to: the number of participating students, courses taken or tested out of through credit flexibility, total credits earned through Credit Flexibility and the extent to which student participation reflects diversity of the student population. Building administrators and counseling staff are encouraged to collaborate with the Director of Curriculum regarding unique circumstances and/or innovative uses of Credit Flexibility.

Athletic Considerations

Both OHSAA and NCAA operate independently from the Ohio Department of Education and each set specific eligibility rules for participation in high school and college sports.

OSHA: The OHSSA provides a *Student-Athlete Eligibility Guide* which provides specific eligibility requirements for participation in interscholastic sports. Students and parents should discuss OHSAA eligibility requirements with school staff, including guidance counselors, coaches, and athletic directors prior to the development of a student's Credit Flexibility plan to ensure compliance with OHSAA rules.

NCAA: The NCAA provides information regarding specific eligibility requirements through the *NCAA Eligibility Center*. In addition, the NCAA has developed a Frequently Asked Questions document for athletic eligibility. Students and parents should discuss NCAA eligibility requirements with school staff prior to the development of a student's individual learning plan to ensure compliance with NCAA rules.

The Northwest Local School District recommends that any student-athlete considering participation in college athletics, at any level, NOT participate in Credit Flexibility options.



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Appeals Process

Students may appeal decisions regarding access to a Credit Flexibility option and/or standards established for awarding grades and credits for Credit Flexibility by submitting an appeal to his or her guidance counselor who will forward it to an appeals committee consisting of Northwest Local School District personnel. The appeals committee will consist of a district administrator, building administrator, a teacher in the relevant subject area not involved in the original decision, and a guidance counselor. The student filing the appeal and his or her parents shall have an opportunity to present concerns and recommendations to the committee. Appeals shall be reviewed by the committee within 10 days from the date the appeal was submitted in writing. The decision of the committee shall be final unless overturned by the Superintendent or a directive resulting from an appeal filed with the Ohio Department of Education.

Frequently Asked Questions

Can End-of-Course test results be used to validate learning?

Yes, the results of state tests may be used wholly or partially as evidence of learning. Credit will not be awarded for EOC performance levels that are not at least at the proficient level because mastery of the required content has not been demonstrated. The following criteria will be applied for all students seeking to receive credit based on their scores on the Ohio End of Course exams for: Algebra I, Geometry, English II, Biology, American History, American Government.

EOC Performance Level	Grade Equivalent	Percentage Grade
Proficient (3)	C	75%
Accomplished (4)	B	85%
Advanced (5)	A	95%

Can districts charge students a fee for materials and supplies used for credit flex coursework?

Generally, it is permitted in accordance with local policies on fees for materials, assessments, or other supplies used in the traditional classroom setting. No fees will be issued unless they are identified up front in the Credit Flexibility Plan. Fees that are assessed will be the same for all students and will be for activities that occur outside of the regular instructional program or materials that are in addition to those provided for all students.

How will credit flexibility affect class standing?

Credits will be reported in the same way that seat time credit is recorded, however weighted credit (e.g., AP/Honors) will not be awarded for courses completed through a Credit Flexibility Plan.



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Can Credit Flexibility be used for completing course requirements or gaps in learning?

YES. Credit Flexibility allows the flexibility to designate the learning needed to recover credits, to complete courses not finished for whatever reason, or to fulfill learning based upon a local assessment, including placement procedures. The key is to use the learning expectations required of all students and usually articulated in a course of study.



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Credit Flexibility Application - Short Form Testing Out

School Year: School:

Student Name: Student ID:

Current Grade: Expected Year of Graduation:

School Counselor:

	Credit Flexibility Option	Course Name/Number for which you are seeking credit:	Credits Sought: (circle one)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Testing Out		0.25 0.50 1.0

Resources requested from Northwest Local Schools to support an IEP/504 plan:

To the STUDENT:

Please read the following statements and then INITIAL next to the statements indicating that you have read and understand the policies related to Credit Flexibility.

I understand that:

_____ If my credit flexibility proposal is accepted, I will earn a numeric grade based upon Northwest Local School District's grading scale and the score that I earn on the assessment that I took.

_____ The grade that I earn will appear on my transcripts.

_____ Credit will be granted at the end of the Northwest Local School District's grading period for all flexible credit courses.

_____ Weighted credit will not be awarded for courses which I test out of.

_____ Academic honesty rules apply just as they do in a traditional class setting.



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Credit Flexibility Application - Short Form

Your signature indicates that you have discussed the above statements with your parents, understand the commitment you are endeavoring to make, and agree to the policies set forth by Northwest Local School District.

Signature of Student:

Date:

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To the PARENT / GUARDIAN:

Please read and discuss the above policies with your student.

Signature of Parent

Date

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Date Submitted: _____ Approved: _____ Denied: _____

Final Grade for Credit Flexibility Course: (grade earned on assessment) _____

Course Name/Number for which Credit was awarded: _____

Number of Credits Awarded: _____

Comments:

Signature of Counselor: _____

Signature of Teacher evaluating assessment result: _____

Signature of Building Administrator: _____

**Please email a scanned copy of this completed document to the Director of Curriculum.*



CREDIT FLEXIBILITY HANDBOOK

Credit Flexibility Application - Long Form

School Year:	School:

Student Name:	Student ID:

Current Grade:	Expected Year of Graduation:

School Counselor:

	Credit Flexibility Option	Course Name/Number for which you are seeking credit:	Credit(s) Sought (circle one)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Distance Learning		0.25 0.50 1.0
<input type="checkbox"/>	Educational Travel		0.25 0.50 1.0
<input type="checkbox"/>	Independent Study		0.25 0.50 1.0
<input type="checkbox"/>	Work Based Learning 0.5 credits for every 75 hours completed, maximum of 3 credits per school year		0.25 0.50 1.0
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Service		0.25 0.50 1.0

Required Components of the Credit Flexibility Plan:

Using additional paper, please respond to the following: (responses should be attached)

1. List the learning standards that you will address during your credit flexibility option. Content standards for most courses can be viewed from the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce website.

2. What is your purpose for taking a credit flexibility class, and how does it relate to your future goals?



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Credit Flexibility Application - Long Form

3. What prerequisite courses / additional experiences have you completed to prepare you to successfully experience this credit flexibility option?
4. Provide a detailed explanation of the methods and activities for achieving credit.

Activities

These are the actions that you are planning to take to acquire essential knowledge. They can include end-of-course exams, distance learning, on-line education, post-secondary options, educational travel, independent study, work-based learning, internships, music/arts programming, after school programs, community service, work experience, sports, and/or other approved activities.

5. List methods for demonstrating mastery for credit.

Assessment. Project. Presentation. Evaluation

The Northwest Local School District will allow students to demonstrate mastery by completing a comprehensive examination (created locally, by the state of Ohio or nationally) covering essential knowledge and skills addressed in an equivalent traditional course, by presenting a performance or a portfolio of work demonstrating mastery knowledge and skills addressed in an equivalent traditional course or through a combination of these methods. The committee and student will decide what types of evaluation will be appropriate for the particular proposal.

6. Indicate a timeline for achieving credit including checkpoints and completion. Be specific. Provide a rationale for this sequence of checkpoints.

Progress Checkpoints: (Check one)

- Three weeks
- Six weeks
- Nine Weeks
- Other: _____

7. List anticipated costs associated with this plan if any.
8. Have you spoken with this teacher about your credit flex plan? YES NO
If YES, please identify that individual here by name: _____
9. Additional Resources requested from Northwest Local Schools to support an IEP/504 plan or other student needs:

10. If your plan includes components that will impact your attendance at school, please explain.



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Credit Flexibility Application - Long Form

To the STUDENT:

Please read the following statements and then INITIAL next to the statements indicating that you have read and understand the policies related to Credit Flexibility.

I understand that:

_____ Many traditional classes are offered at various times throughout the year in the Northwest Local School District and I have discussed with my guidance counselor how the outcome of this flexible credit class will impact any traditional classes I subsequently take and/or my ability to schedule other courses.

_____ I will participate in the traditional scheduling process with all students. The schedule of classes established during this process will not change until my credit flexibility proposal has been accepted.

_____ I must meet attendance requirements set forth by Northwest Local School District and outlined in my plan (if different).

_____ If my credit flexibility proposal is accepted, I will earn a numeric grade based upon Northwest Local School District's grading scale.

_____ The grade that I earn will appear on my transcripts.

_____ Credit will be granted at the end of the Northwest Local School District's grading period for all flexible credit courses.

_____ Weighted credit will not be awarded for courses which I test out of.

_____ I am responsible to ensure that I have met graduation requirements by established deadlines to participate in senior graduation.

_____ Academic honesty rules apply just as they do in a traditional class setting.

_____ I may not drop a flexible credit course after the drop date without receiving a failing grade and assuming all financial responsibility associated with the course.

For a class lasting two semesters, this date is _____.

For a class lasting one semester, this date is _____.

(Established with Guidance Counselor)

_____ If my proposal is not accepted for a class, I will have one opportunity to make adjustments and resubmit. Additional efforts must be completed through the appeal process.

_____ Fees or costs associated with this credit flexibility option for the student (if any): \$_____ *(Established with Guidance Counselor)*



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Credit Flexibility Application - Long Form

I agree to abide by the conditions set forth in the Northwest Local Schools Credit Flexibility Procedures and Guidelines. I understand that if I do not complete or meet the requirements of the credit flexibility option, I will not receive credit for the course(s). I understand that I will be awarded a numeric grade based on Northwest Local School District's grading scale for the credit flexibility option that will be reported on my transcript and factored into my GPA. No weighted grades will be awarded for credit flexibility. Pass/Fail options are not permitted for credit flexibility options. I understand that I am financially liable for all costs associated with the credit. I understand that I am responsible for completing the credit flexibility option on my own and recognize that I will not receive credit should it be determined that I violated any academic integrity guidelines set forth.

Your signature indicates that you have discussed the above statements with your parent(s)/guardian(s), understand the commitment you are endeavoring to make, and agree to the policies set forth by Northwest Local School District.

Signature of Student:

Date:

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To the PARENT / GUARDIAN:

Please read and discuss the above policies with your student. Your signature indicates that you have read the above statements and agree to the policies set forth by Northwest Local School District. Your signature also holds the district and school harmless of any liability during times in which your student is off-campus due to this credit flexibility proposal.

Signature of Parent

Date

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Teacher of Record for This Credit Flexibility Course: (if applicable)

Your signature indicates that you have reviewed this plan and agree to review the work submitted and any associated assessment results to ensure that mastery was achieved by this student.

Signature of Teacher:

Date:

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To the COUNSELOR:

Your signature indicates that you have reviewed this plan with the student, including all implications associated with this plan.

Signature of Counselor:

Date:

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Credit Flexibility Application - Long Form



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Date Submitted: _____

Approved: _____ Denied: _____*

*Reason for Denial: _____

Date Decision Appealed: _____

Date Appeal Heard: _____

Appeal Team Participants: _____

Approved: _____ Denied: _____**

**Reason for Denial: _____

Comments:

To be completed after student has completed the plan:

Signature of Teacher verifying learning and plan completion: _____

Signature of Building Administrator: _____

Final Grade for Credit Flexibility Course: (grade earned on assessment) _____

Course Name/Number for which Credit was awarded: _____

Number of Credits to be Awarded: _____

**Please email a scanned copy of this completed document to the Director of Curriculum.*



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CREDIT FLEXIBILITY APPLICATION - SHORT FORM End of Course Exam (EOC) 2024-2025

***Internal Use Only**

This form is to be used only after a student has completed a course that has an associated End of Course Exam, failed the course that has an associated End of Course Exam, and earned a score of Proficient (3) or higher on the associated End of Course Exam. The earned grade of F must remain on the student transcript. Demonstrating mastery on the associated End of Course Exam allows for Credit Flexibility to be utilized to document mastery and award credit without completion of an additional credit recovery course.

School Year:

School:

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Student Name:

Student ID:

--	--

Current Grade:

Expected Year of Graduation:

--	--

School Counselor:

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End of Course (EOC) Exam	Performance Score Received (circle EOC Score)	Credit earned (circle one)	Grade earned based on EOC Performance Level*
Algebra I	3 4 5	0.5 1.0	A B C
American Government	3 4 5	0.5 1.0	A B C
American History	3 4 5	0.5 1.0	A B C
Biology	3 4 5	0.5 1.0	A B C
ELA II	3 4 5	0.5 1.0	A B C
Geometry	3 4 5	0.5 1.0	A B C

* Apply the following percentage when transcription additional course: (A = 95%, B = 85%, C = 75%)



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By completing this form you are indicating that you are aware that your earned course grade of an F, along with the EOC Performance Score grade equivalent will be printed on your transcript and calculated into your GPA.

There will be no weighted grades assigned for mastery demonstrated using EOC scores (e.g., Honors, AP).

Signature of Student:

Date:

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To the PARENT / GUARDIAN:

Please read and discuss the above statement with your student. By signing below you agree to allow your student to earn credit based on EOC mastery rather than through completing a credit recovery course please sign and date here.

Signature of Parent

Date

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***Please email a scanned copy of this completed document to the Director of Curriculum.**