

ONLINE COURSES AND ONLINE COURSE/CREDIT RECOVERY

I. PURPOSE

To expand course offerings for students; to provide optional means for students to earn academic credit toward graduation; and to encourage the provision of district offered on-line courses to all students, including students with health related issues, (1) in order to increase academic rigor, (2) for course/credit recovery, (3) for alternative learning settings, (4) to ameliorate issues of education equity, or (5) for any other student need where non-traditional instructional delivery is appropriate.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all course/credit recovery courses, district-offered on-line courses that have been approved by the Tennessee Board of Education and to all general correspondence and virtual/on-line courses taken through a college, university, or a correspondence school.

III. POLICY STATEMENT

The District shall permit eligible students to take district-offered on-line courses that have been approved by the Tennessee Board of Education and general correspondence and virtual/on-line courses taken through a college, university, or a correspondence school which is a member of a regional accrediting association.

Additionally, the District may allow students to voluntarily participate in a course/credit recovery program. Course/credit recovery is designed to provide students an opportunity to recoup credit needed for graduation. Shelby County Schools provides course/credit recovery as self-paced online courses that meet the Tennessee Standards for course credit.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

- A. The Superintendent (or designee) is responsible for administering this policy.
- B. Students are responsible for fulfilling the requirements of this policy, including adhering to registration, log-in, and drop deadlines associated with online courses and online course recovery.
- C. Parents are responsible for adhering to this policy.

Legal References:

1. TCA 49-16-101, *et seq.*
2. Tennessee State Board of Education Policy No. 3.208

Cross References:

ONLINE COURSES

Revised: 11/24/15

Eligible students may take courses and/or earn high school credit from online courses offered through the district and from qualified entities acceptable to the district in accordance with the guidance below.

Provisions Applicable to all Online Courses

1. Only those online courses that have been approved by the Tennessee State Department of Education may be taken by students for credit.
2. All online grades earned according to this policy shall be included as part of the student's official overall grades or grade point average and recorded on the transcript to accurately track the student's enrollment in coursework.

Provisions Applicable to Non-District Offered Online Courses

1. Online courses may be taken **ONLY** through SACS/AdvancED (or equivalent) accredited institutions and **ONLY WITH** prior written approval of the student's principal. Any and all exceptions should be directed to the Superintendent or designee, for approval of the course and the supplying institution.
2. Official transcripts from the online school or university must be submitted to the student's school prior to the beginning of the next semester, unless an exception is granted by the school or district office. It is the responsibilities of the student/parent/guardian to have the institution provide the transcript to the student's home school.
3. All fees and other costs offered outside the school district are the responsibility of the parent/guardian, unless prior written approval of the Superintendent or designee has been granted regarding the fee/cost.
4. Numerical grades provided by an external institution for online courses will be recorded on the student's permanent record exactly as provided, regardless of status (passing, failing, withdrawal.) If the institution only provides letter grades, Shelby County Schools will convert to a numerical grade that is the median of the Shelby County Schools grading scale for the letter grade given.

Provisions Applicable to District-Offered Online Courses

1. District-offered on-line courses that are taken at a school or district facility must be monitored by a licensed Tennessee teacher or a course facilitator as outlined by the Distance Learning and e-Learning policy of the Tennessee State Board of Education. Additionally, learning laboratories (labs) where district-offered online courses take place both during school and non-school hours (e.g., after school) must be supervised by an appropriate person approved by the principal.

District-offered on-line courses that are taken by a student who attends the Virtual School full time or is part of the Virtual School hybrid program must be monitored by the Virtual School Online Monitor.

2. Students may take district-offered on-line courses subject to individual course offerings and space availability.

3. Students must meet the course prerequisites required to take the course or meet district-determined proficiency standards (e.g., testing for credit/proficiency).

4. Students must request and gain approval from the school principal (designee) to take individual district-offered on-line courses; and the school shall determine the appropriate number and type of district-offered on-line courses that the student may take during the school year/summer term, unless the student receives approval from the Virtual Schools Office to enroll in the Virtual School full time or as part of the Virtual School hybrid program.

5. Students who leave the District while enrolled in an on-line course may be allowed to complete their course. Students must contact the District to exercise this provision and tuition cost may apply.

6. Regardless of when a student adds an online course to his/her schedule, the student must complete the course by the course completion deadline. Exceptions must be authorized by the Superintendent or designee.

7. In addition to the provision outlined in this policy and its accompanying administrative rules and regulations, students taking online courses in the areas of dual enrollment/dual credit, advanced placement, and courses with national industry certifications must adhere to the guidelines of those programs.

8. Students who are not successful in the online format must gain approval of the Virtual Schools Office to take additional online courses.

9. The following procedures should be followed should a student encounter difficulty in making adequate academic progress in an online course:

- The student and teacher should conference, to determine next steps to improve the student's outcomes of the course. A plan for improvement should be developed and agreed upon, with scheduled check-ins to assure the student stays on track.
- If inactivity in the course exists, academic difficulty continues, or the student does not make adequate progress in the course; the parent, principal, or Virtual School may request a school meeting/conference to include the teacher, the student, the parent(s), and the appropriate school counselor/district staff and the appropriate assistant principal to develop a plan of action.
- The final approval for a student to drop an online course should only be considered after all interventions have been made, and is then at the discretion of the principal or, when applicable, the Virtual Schools Office and shall be based upon multiple factors, including available space in an alternative class at the time of the request.

Online Course/Grade – Not Recorded

If in the opinion of the principal, counselor, teacher(s), or parent, a student is experiencing extreme difficulty in an online course, a student may drop a district-offered online course **by the end of the first ten (10) days** after the student has:

1. logged in; and
2. shown continuous course activity (e.g., completed regular lessons in accordance with the online course pacing guide),

then that course will not be recorded on the student's cumulative record.

Online Course/Grade – Recorded

If a student should drop a course from his/her schedule **after the end of the first ten (10) days** after the student has:

1. logged in; and
2. shown continuous course activity,

then that course and a failing grade will be recorded on the student's cumulative record.

Withdrawal by School or Virtual Schools Office

Additionally, a student who is scheduled for and/or logs into an online course but shows no activity **by the end** of the first ten (10) days may be withdrawn from the course by the school or the Virtual Schools Office.

10. Students who graduate from Virtual School shall receive their diploma from:

- a. the student's school of record (the school from which the student normally would have graduated) if the student graduates within one year of his/her ninth (9th) grade high school cohort or
- b. the Virtual School if the student's graduation date is beyond one year of the date of his/her ninth (9th) grade high school cohort.

Provisions Applicable to Online Course/Credit Recovery

Eligibility

At a minimum, the student must:

- Complete the district's course/credit recovery application process.
- Provide parent or guardian consent to apply for course/credit recovery.
- Have earned a failing grade not less than 50% in the course.

Requirement/Procedures

- Students are expected to make adequate progress towards completion of the course/credit recovery program and as feasible shall make up missed course/credit recovery sessions or make up missed content during another session.
- SCS student discipline policies apply during course/credit recovery.
- Students may apply a maximum of six (6) credits through course/credit recovery toward graduation. However, exceptions may be granted to the maximum six (6) credits by the Superintendent's designee upon review by a committee which may include the teacher, the student, the parent(s), school counselor, the principal/designee, and appropriate district staff. (SEE SECTION BELOW: Provisions Regarding National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Eligibility and Online Courses/Online Course/Credit Recovery).
- Course/credit recovery may be taken at any available location that supports the course platform. However, semester and final examinations shall be taken at the student's base school.
- Any course taken through course/credit recovery will be honored in any district school. This includes transfers prior to completion of the course.

- Successful completion of course/credit recovery will be recorded as an additional entry on the transcript with a course recovery designation. The original failing grade remains on the transcript and is counted in the student's grade point average (GPA). The grading formula for course/credit recovery shall include: 1) weighting of the original failing grade at 5% and 2) weighting of the course/credit recovery grade at 95%. For example, a student earning an original failing grade of 50 weighted at 5% and a course/credit recovery grade of 71 weighted at 95% would earn a grade of 69.95, rounded up to 70 on his/her transcript for the course/credit recovery course. Course/credit recovery grades shall be posted under the name of the original teacher of record.
- Priority for available seats will be given to seniors and then to juniors needing course credit to graduate.
- Removal from course/credit recovery shall be limited to only extreme cases and based on individual student needs.
- Requirements for course/credit recovery facilitators and diagnostic completion/goal attainment for students shall be in accordance with Tennessee Standards for course/credit recovery.

Provisions Regarding National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Eligibility and Online Courses/Online Course/Credit Recovery

Stringent NCAA course eligibility requirements apply for student athletes. Online courses and online course recovery may NOT meet NCAA core-course requirements or satisfy NCAA legislation. For more information see NCAA Initial-Eligibility Core-Course Requirements: General Guidelines for Software-Based Credit Recovery, Online Courses, and Other Nontraditional Educational Opportunities. http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/OVN/GeneralGuidelinesandTips2.pdf

Legal References:

1. TCA § 49-6-601

Cross References:

1. Tennessee Department of Education
High School Transition Policy
Frequently Asked Questions
Revised: April 26, 2010