

Instruction

Alternative Education

The Board is dedicated to providing educational options for all students within available financial constraints. It is recognized there will be students in the District whose needs and interests are best served by participation in an alternative education program.

A list of alternative programs will be approved by the Board annually. The Superintendent may provide for the involvement of staff, parents and the community in recommending alternative education programs for Board approval. Annual evaluation of alternative education programs will be done.

Alternative education programs implemented by the District are to maintain learning options that are flexible with regard to environment, structure and pedagogy. Such programs include, but are not limited to, a separate school, tutorial instruction, small group instruction, large group instruction, counseling and guidance, computer-assisted instruction, cooperative work experience, supervised community service activities and supervised independent study.

Students, upon parent request, may be placed in an alternative education program within available financial resources if the District determines that the placement serves the student's educational needs and interests and assists the student in achieving district and state academic content standards.

Virtual/Online/College Courses

The Board of Education believes that education through virtual/online courses or through university/college courses is an alternative (effective) means of instruction for students. A virtual school is hereby defined as an educational organization that offers courses at various grade levels through Internet or Web-based methods. These courses can offer courses to enhance, supplement, or enrich the existing curriculum and can also provide an alternative means of instruction in appropriate circumstances. Interactive distance learning does not require the student to be physically present in the same location as the instructor or other students.

Virtual/on-line or college courses taken by students will be part of this district's educational program delivery system to increase accessibility and flexibility in the delivery of instruction. In addition to regular classroom-based instruction, students in the District may earn credit through distance education provided by virtual/online courses or by completion of approved college courses.

In order to earn credits in meeting the requirements for high school graduation through the successful completion of on-line or college coursework, the Board, in compliance with C.G.S. 10-221a (17) shall ensure, at a minimum, that (a) the workload required by

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Virtual/Online/College Courses (continued)

the on-line/college course is equivalent to that of a similar course taught in a traditional District classroom setting, (b) the content is rigorous and aligned with curriculum guidelines approved by the State Board of Education, where appropriate, (c) the course engages students and has interactive components, which may include, but are not limited to, required interactions between students and their teachers, participation in on-line demonstrations, discussion boards or virtual labs, (d) the program of instruction for such on-line/college coursework is planned, ongoing and systematic, and (e) the courses are (1) taught by teachers who are certified by their respective institution, or (2) offered by institutions of higher education that are accredited by the Department of Higher Education or their regional accreditation institution; or (3) toward meeting the high school graduation requirement upon the successful completion of the board examination series permitting students in grades 9 through 12 to substitute achievement of a passing score on a series of examinations approved by the State Board of Education for meeting credit requirements for graduation.

The Board of Education recognizes students may benefit from on-line/college courses to assist students in obtaining credits necessary to earn a diploma, to maintain academic standings or to provide enrichment for those who might require special courses. Online courses will not be the sole medium for instruction for any student in the District. High school students can earn up to four credits to be applied toward meeting graduation requirements. Additional credits may be earned with the principal's permission to support the possibility of unique learning opportunities that may become available. Students must be enrolled in the District to receive credit from an online or virtual course, or a university/college course, only if it meets at least one of the following criteria:

1. The course is not offered at the District's high school.
2. The high school does offer the course, but the student is unable to take it due to an unavoidable scheduling conflict or a unique educational opportunity arises that will benefit the student and with the principal's permission.
3. The course will serve as an alternative or a supplement to extended homebound instruction.
4. The District has expelled the student from the regular school setting, and the student has been offered an alternative educational opportunity.
5. The Principal, with agreement from the student's teachers and parents/guardians, determines the student requires a differentiated or accelerated learning environment.
6. A student has failed a course and wishes to recover credits in that course area with the principal's permission.
7. The student's PPT or Section 504 Team has determined it to be an appropriate means of instruction.
8. The student must maintain enrollment in the minimum number of credits of Stonington High School courses. (7 credits for grades 9/10, 6.5 credits for grade 11, and 6 credits for grade 12)

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Virtual/Online/College Courses (continued)

To receive credit for online/college courses to be used toward high school graduation requirements, students must, prior to registering for the course, receive approval from the high school principal or his/her designee. The decision of the principal or his/her designee with regard to online course credit approval is final. Pre-approval for online/college course credit may be granted only if the requirements set forth above are met. In determining whether to grant approval, the Principal shall determine whether, in his or her professional judgment, the student is appropriately suited to engage in online coursework, based on the criteria set forth herein.

Students applying for permission to take a virtual/on-line course will do the following:

- Submit a request to the counselor identifying the desired course and demonstrate that it meets the requirements listed above.
- Provide a written recommendation from a teacher/counselor to confirm the student possesses the maturity level needed to function effectively in an online/college learning environment.
- Obtain the written approval of the Principal or his/her designee before a student enrolls in a virtual course or the university/college course.
- Adhere to the school code of conduct to include rules of behavior and adhere to our Acceptable Use of Technology Policy.
- Adhere to attendance requirements of the District.

The school must receive an official record of the final grade before awarding credit toward graduation (before June 1 during the senior year.) Only approved courses from institutions that are accredited by their regional accreditation organization will be accepted and posted on student transcripts.

The tuition fee for a virtual/college course shall be borne by the student or his/her parents. The District may provide tuition for such courses for students who have received pre-approval in accordance with this policy on a limited basis. The Board shall pay the fee for expelled students who are permitted to take virtual courses in alternative settings.

The Board of Education shall establish an on-line credit recovery program for those students who are identified as being in danger of failing to graduate. These students, once identified by certified personnel, shall be allowed to complete on-line District-approved coursework toward meeting high school graduation requirements. The Director of Guidance shall be the online learning coordinator to administer and coordinate the online credit recovery program.

The District will evaluate the educational effectiveness of the distance education courses and the teaching/learning process to include assessments based on state curriculum standards as well as student satisfaction. The District will use this evaluation to decide whether to continue or discontinue the use of the distance education course or institution.

Instruction**Alternative Education****Dual Enrollment**

The Dual Enrollment Program allows high school seniors to attend college full-time while earning their high school diploma. To be eligible for this program the following must be completed before the end of the junior year:

1. A letter of intent with rationale must be submitted by the students and parents.
2. The student must already be accepted into a regionally accredited academic institution.
3. A course credit audit must be completed by the school counselor.
4. The student shall have a GPA of 3.0 or higher
5. Two letters of recommendation by core curriculum teachers must be submitted to the principal.
6. A package of items 1-5 listed above shall be submitted to the Board of Education for approval.

Students will not be eligible for athletics at Stonington High School if they are in a Dual Enrollment status

Parent Instruction of Children at Home

Parents wishing to educate children in their home may do so in compliance with Connecticut General Statutes and regulations of the Connecticut State Board of Education. When parents or guardians are willing to discuss their decision for equivalent education at home with school personnel, school district staff shall explain the advantages of a public school education to such parents or guardians without any criticism of parental choices. Furthermore, district staff must ensure that parents/guardians understand that there is no partial enrollment and that the student will not be eligible for special services or be able to participate in extra-curricular programs, activities or sports. Finally, the Superintendent of schools takes no responsibility for the adequacy of the proposed program of home instruction

When parents/guardians choose to educate their children at home Parents or legal guardians are expected to file with the Superintendent of Schools a notice of intent form (Appendix A) which

provides basic information about the program to be provided to their child. A notice of intent will be effective for up to one school year. Filing of this notice of intent should occur within ten days of the start of the home instruction program. Should a parent or legal guardian refuse to fill out a notice of intent form or otherwise establish that the child will receive instruction equivalent to the studies taught in the public schools, the School District may conclude that the child is truant and take appropriate action.

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Parent Instruction of Children at Home (continued)

If decisions are made by parents or guardians to return children who for a time have been educated at home to local schools, school staff shall provide an appropriate return to public schools. To award credit toward graduation for work done at home the student must demonstrate their proficiency through completion of one of the following:

1. Provide the school a transcript from a regionally accredited educational institution indicates a passing grade for each course of instruction that credit is requested.
2. Provide an academic portfolio for review that demonstrates the requisite rigor and academic achievement for each course of instruction that credit is requested.
3. Achieve a passing score on the final examination for each course of instruction that credit is requested.

Children educated at home are considered to be non-public school students and are not part of the systems educational responsibility and are not part of the school system.

School Based Alternative Programs

It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools to identify alternative program opportunities to be made available to students at risk, to recommend such alternative programs to the Board for approval, and to familiarize students and parents/guardians with the availability of such alternative programs. The Superintendent shall, through cooperative efforts with other districts, schools, agencies and organizations, periodically recommend additional or modified alternative educational programs to the Board.

(cf. 6172.11 – Relations with Charter Schools)

(cf. 6172.12 – Magnet Schools)

(cf. 6172.2 – Remedial Instruction)

(cf. 6172.21 – Supplementary Services)

(cf. 6172.41 – Title I Program)

(cf. 6172.6 – Virtual/Online Courses)

(cf. 6141.321 - Computers: Acceptable Use of the Internet)

(cf. 6141.1 - Independent Study)

(cf. 6146 - Graduation Requirements)

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Legal Reference Connecticut General Statutes
10-4p(b) Implementation plan to achieve resource equity and equality of opportunity. Assessment. Reports. (as amended by PA 15-133)

10-15 Towns to maintain schools.

10-16 Length of school year.

10-158a Cooperative arrangements among towns. School building projects. Student transportation.

10-220 Duties of boards of education (as amended by PA 15-133)

10-223h(c) Commissioner’s network of schools. Turnaround committees. Operations and instructional audit. Turnaround plans. Report. (as amended by PA 15-133)

PA 15-133 An Act Concerning Alternative Education

10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules, policies and procedures.

10-221a High school graduation requirements. (as amended by P.A. 00-124, An Act Concerning High School Diplomas and Veterans of World War II, P.A.

00-156, An Act Requiring A Civics Course for High School Graduation and P.A.

08-138, An Act Concerning High School Credit for Private World Language Courses, Other Subject Areas)

10-111, An Act Concerning Education Reform in Connecticut.

10-184 Duties of Parents

PA 15-133 An Act Concerning Alternative Education

Regulations of the Connecticut State Board of Education

Instruction

Alternative Education

**STONINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT
Old Mystic, Connecticut**

**NOTICE OF INTENT
Instruction of a Student at Home**

I DO HEREIN ACKNOWLEDGE AND ACCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE EDUCATION OF MY CHILD IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF CONNECTICUT STATE LAW. I UNDERSTAND THAT MY CHILD WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR SPECIAL SERVICES OR BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS, ACTIVITIES OR SPORTS. I ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ADEQUACY OF THE HOME SCHOOL INSTRUCTION OF MY CHILD.

Father **Date**

Mother **Date**

I DO HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE ONLY THE RECEIPT OF THIS FORM AND RENDER NO OPINION AS TO THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE PLANNED PROGRAM.

Superintendent **Date**