



CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT OF NEW BRITAIN

Board Policy Statement

6141.51 – Policy on Advanced Coursework

BOE Submitted for Approval on March 5, 2024

Purpose

The Board of Education (Board) believes in the basic principle that academic rigor and the opportunity to accelerate learning are powerful motivators for students to meet intellectual challenges and excel in the academic environment. The Board supports advanced courses and programs that promote academic acceleration. As early as middle school, students will be provided an opportunity to participate in a rigorous and academically challenging curriculum.

The Board encourages students to pursue rigorous, challenging academic coursework such as, but not limited to, honors classes, dual enrollment, dual credit, advanced placement classes, International Baccalaureate courses, UCONN Early College Experience, industry credentials and work-based learning opportunities.

The Board, to encourage student participation in advanced courses or programs, will communicate information about advanced courses or programs to students and parents; offer district-wide counseling to students about the benefits of advanced level courses and programs; and annually report on District progress toward increasing students' readiness and participation for advanced courses or programs.

The benefits of advanced coursework opportunities are not limited to one particular model.

Definitions

An “**advanced course or program**” may be defined as one or more of these categories: honors classes, advanced placement classes (AP), Project Lead the Way (PLTW), dual enrollment, dual credit, concurrent enrollment, UCONN Early College Experience, International Baccalaureate program, Cambridge International Program, industry credentialing classes, work-based learning, or any other advanced or accelerated course or program offered by the Board of Education in grades 9-12, inclusive of some courses offered in middle school that can lead to advanced placement in 9th grade.

6141.51(b)

“Prior academic performance” means the course or courses that a student has taken, the grades received for each course, and a student’s grade point average.

“Early College Experience” means a course for which a student is dually enrolled, a course in which a student has the potential to earn dual credit (high school and college), and a course taught online, at a college, or by high school staff.

“Honors Class” means a course whose rigor has been determined to be above and beyond the expectations of the regular course of its kind in middle school or the high school’s Program of Studies. These classes are available to students who desire to work in greater depth and breadth than is offered at other levels. These courses may start as early as middle school.

Procedures/Criteria/Guiding Principles

The Board is aware that students from racially, ethnically, linguistically and economically diverse backgrounds are chronically underrepresented in advanced level high school courses and programs of similar rigor. Low awareness of advanced courses and programs, insufficient preparation, and fear of social isolation prevent low-income students and students from diverse backgrounds from enrolling in such courses or programs. Further, other barriers to participation include the failure to identify students with potential, insufficient motivation and incentives on behalf of teachers and/or students, and funding.

An emphasis on equity must include a focus on increasing students’ access to rigorous learning opportunities to assist all students to be prepared for success after high school. The following District and school-level principles will contribute to fostering greater equity in student participation in advanced courses or programs:

1. Provide a course sequence and foundation-building in middle school grades, ensuring high expectations for all students, that makes later advanced coursework a viable option;
2. Create multiple access points, in middle school, high school, at local universities or with industry partners, to advanced courses and programs, allowing students to access these programs at various points of their middle school and high-school experience;

Procedures/Criteria/Guiding Principles (continued)

3. Use only enrollment access criteria that are educationally necessary such as prerequisites set by our partnering universities and colleges or that are necessary in a course sequence;
4. Use multiple methods by which a student may satisfy eligibility criteria for enrollment, including but not limited to:
 - a. Student interests and persistence;
 - b. Recommendations from teachers, administrators, school counselors, or other school personnel (alone will not exclude entry);
 - c. Criteria not exclusively based on a student's prior academic performance;
 - d. Use of a student's prior academic performance must rely on evidence-based indicators of how a student will perform in an advanced course or program (academic portion of grades only);
 - e. GPA improvement over time;
 - f. Scoring at or near benchmark on local assessments;
5. Offer a robust set of student supports, which can include tutoring, access to technology, and support from school counselors, that help all students succeed in advanced courses or programs; and
6. Publish and disseminate materials in multiple languages that encourage all students to participate in advanced courses and programs.

In order to access advanced courses or programs some students may complete rigorous coursework at the middle school level and receive placement in a more advanced course when they enter high school. This equitable course enrollment policy is based on rigorous learning opportunities for all students in elementary and middle grades.

High school students willing to accept the challenge of a rigorous academic curriculum shall be admitted to an advanced course or program as defined in this policy. Students, who have successfully completed the prerequisite course work or have otherwise demonstrated mastery of the prerequisite content knowledge with a recommendation (preferred not required) from a current instructor to participate, will be allowed to enroll in advanced courses or programs offered by the District. The student must request the course or program through the school counselor.

District administrators and school counselors shall advise students and parents/guardians of the opportunity to participate in advanced courses or programs as defined in this policy. When students' success plans are prepared and revised, the academic component shall include

Procedures/Criteria/Guiding Principles (continued)

appropriate preparatory courses and advanced course and program participation. Teachers shall also encourage students to take advanced courses.

The Board seeks an equitable course enrollment policy that limits prerequisites and entrance requirements to those that are directly related to a student's potential for success. Therefore, multiple measures must be used to identify students for advanced coursework so that no single measure excludes their participation.

Advanced courses or programs must comply with applicable District policies and state standards and this policy must be in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education promulgated guidance.

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall ensure the development and/or identification of program stipulations, eligibility criteria, student attendance and discipline standards/expectations and criteria for continuation in advanced courses or programs, and shall ensure the development and/or identification of procedures for students encountering difficulty and/or wishing to drop advanced courses.

Evaluation

The Board will review annually data on student participation in advanced courses or programs, the data shall be disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, and free/reduced lunch participation. Such data will be used during the planning process for course and program offerings in the upcoming school year.

(cf. 6146.11 - Grading and Weighted Grading for Honors Classes)

(cf. 6146.13 – Academic Credit for Special Programs)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
P.A. 21-199 Section 3
10-221r Advanced placement course program. Guidelines.
District Guidance for Developing an Advanced Course Participation
Policy



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6141.51 – Regulations for Policy on Advanced Coursework

for BOE Approval on March 5, 2024

Regulations:

1. Each Spring, school counselors in middle school and high school will collaborate to promote opportunities for students in middle and high school to enroll into early offerings in the middle school, such as Algebra or Spanish, and in advanced coursework at the high school leading to dual credit or industry recognized certificates.
2. At the high school, counselors must ensure the creation of an academic plan for every student per state statute. The plan must be designed to enroll each student in one or more advanced courses or programs, allowing students to earn college credit or result in career readiness before graduation from high school¹.
3. School counselors and administration will reach out specifically to currently underrepresented groups (by race, by Multilingual Learner status, by Special Education status, and by gender).
4. All early college experience (dual enrollment/dual credit) course offerings will be highlighted each year in the high school's Program of Studies.
5. School Counselors will collect teacher recommendations, starting as early as 5th grade, to schedule students for advanced coursework.
6. Families and students will be made aware of the Policy on Advanced Coursework and will be notified of their right to request access if a student is interested in a course but has not been recommended by staff.
7. School counselors will notify students of the process by which students can request a course and drop a course prior to the start of each semester in high school or trimester in middle school. This process will also be published in the Program of Studies.
8. The high school's Program of Studies will be revised each Spring with the goal of expanding opportunities for students to gain dual credit with partnering institutions such as community colleges and universities.
9. Each Spring, administration will present information to the BOE on the enrollment trends in advanced courses, including all early learning, dual credit courses, and coursework leading to an industry-recognized certificate.

¹ District Guidance for Developing an Advanced Course Participation by CSDE
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