Updated 5/21/2024

WEST FARGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS INTERNATIONAL TRANSCRIPT PROTOCOL

The purpose of the following document is to define the process for obtaining, interpreting, and evaluating international transcripts. Overarching guidelines are included but will not be exhaustive in nature. School staff are encouraged to consult with one another (i.e., school counselor, administration, EL Building Level Representative) when working through issues not covered in this protocol.

Please note several references were used in developing this protocol, which are identified at the end of this document.

It is important to remember to hold students harmless for credits taken in another country. If they are being granted a year of valid credit from outside of the country, they should be granted credit in the same courses that a regular education student would have taken during their 9th- grade year.

If a counselor or any staff feels they need to be educated more on the topics of refugees, immigrants, asylees, and student rights please refer to "Working with Refugee Students in Secondary Schools" in the index.

1. Obtaining and translating transcripts

- **Centralize the intake process** by having all transcripts go to the school's registrar first who will disseminate them to the appropriate counselor and other applicable staff. Families should be made aware that a transcript is necessary in order to give the appropriate credit. Grade level determination as well as which courses the student still needs to take in order to meet graduation requirements are affected by having transcripts as soon as possible.
- **If in-house translation is not possible, contract with outside agencies** such as 3H Interpreting or using the WFPS Interpreter List. Be sure to be specific about your needs when working with interpreters. Please refer to the WFPS Interpreter and Translation Services webpage under Staff-> Curriculum and Instruction more guidance.
    - **https://www.west-fargo.k12.nd.us/Page/8795**
- **Refugee students** may have no way of obtaining their school records from their home country. The counselors can work with the school's EL Building Level Representative to determine which students have refugee status. In these cases, counselors can work with interpreters and the students' family to re-create students' academic histories if transcripts are missing by completing a structured interview with the student and their families to gather additional information about academic history and course content. Gather key information, such as course names, hours of instructional time, length of courses and grades obtained. Use structured interview at the end of this document as a starting point.
- **Grade Placement:** Student age and credits earned are the factors to take into consideration. For grades K-8, students are placed with their age-appropriate peers following district guidelines. For Kindergarten, students should turn 5 before August 1st of the enrollment year. For 6th grade, students should turn 11 before August 1st of their enrollment year. For 9th grade, students should turn 14 before August of their enrollment year.

In grades 9-12, students will be placed in the appropriate grade level based on the number of credits they are transferring with. Follow the general guidance below:

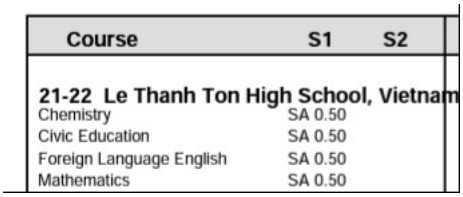
Grade	Typical # of credits they have at time of enrollment
9th	0
10th	6-8
11th	12-14
12th	18-20

Students who are 18 or older at time of enrollment and have no transfer credits from US schools or out of country, may not have time to graduate before they age-out. Students can attend high school as long as they don't turn 21 before August 1st of that school year. For example, a student arriving to one of our schools who is 18 turning 19 in October would have three years to attend high school. In these cases, students have a right to attend school until they age out. Focus should be on helping the student gain as much English language proficiency (and academic skills) as possible and also to help prepare them for taking the GED or getting a job.

- **Graduation Rate:** There is no special consideration for SPED or EL students. Students are expected to graduate on time with their co-hort class to be determined an on-time graduation. Placing students into a grade level in high school based on their credits rather than age help alleviate the issue.

Step 2: Interpreting prior schooling experiences

- Award up to 4 credits per semester of equivalent high school courses. For questions about the equivalent high school in the foreign country they are transferring from, please see the resource titles "Evaluating Foreign Transcripts: The A-Z Manual" in the appendix. This resource will give an overview of the educational system of almost 80 different countries. Additionally, this website is also very valuable in learning about different countries grading and educational systems: https://www.scholaro.com/db/Countries
- In many countries, students take ten to twelve classes a semester so it is often difficult to determine what courses they have completed and how much credit they should receive. When students enroll, they families can fill out a Seat Time Chart (see appendix) of the classes they took in their home country, indicating how many days a week they were in that class and for how many minutes. This information can be used to guide appropriate credit. Schools are encouraged to follow the Carnegies units for seat time: 90 hours of seat time is equivalent to 0.5 credits.
- Students' West Fargo Public Schools transcripts will detail the courses and the credits that they have earned for classes taken in another country. The academic year, the name of the school, and the country should be listed. See example to the right.



Course	S1	S2
21-22 Le Thanh Ton High School, Vietnam		
Chemistry	SA 0.50	
Civic Education	SA 0.50	
Foreign Language English	SA 0.50	
Mathematics	SA 0.50	

- ELs must complete all graduation requirements. Most students transferring to the United States have NOT met the following requirement in their home country: four years (units) of English Language Arts, one year (unit) of U.S. or American History, and one semester of U.S. Government. Other requirements such as mathematics, science, social sciences, and world language may transfer

over more easily. This means that most students—depending on their English level—will need at least two years to meet these requirements.

- Use the chart on the next couple pages as guidance for credit and placement. The EL Building Level Representative or EL teacher at your sight can give a lot of guidance on what courses the student should take. When placing in mainstream classes, put with teachers who are trained with working with English learners. Many mainstream teachers have taken professional development courses or may even hold an EL certification but are not labeled "EL Teachers".

Subject in a foreign country	Guidelines for giving credit in U.S. Schools: (Maximum of 4 credits per semester)	Guidelines for placement.
English	• English courses taken in another country are considered "English as a Foreign Language". EFL classes count as elective credit. • Students with courses that are equivalent to "Literature" can be counted as English Language Arts credit.	• Place in EL or mainstream English classes based on their English Language Proficiency assessment and STAR Reading scores. Work with the site's ELBLR and MTSS Coach to determine placement.
Math	• Give credit for appropriate math courses taken in a foreign country.	• Use the STAR Math assessment and previously earn math credit to determine the appropriate level of math. Work with the site's ELBLR and MTSS Coach to determine placement.
Science	• Give credit for the appropriate science courses taken in a foreign country.	• In some countries, they can choose a traditional "science" track or a "computer science" track. Those who take computer science classes have those credits counted as elective credits. • Place in Physical Science before placing in Biology or a third science if they don't already have it on their transcript.
Social Studies	• Geography and Economics transfer directly to our correlating courses in the U.S. • Courses in their native countries' history (such as History of China) count as World History. • Students must take the U.S. Government or Civics and U.S. History in U.S. Schools	• Consider waiting for a semester or a year for the lowest English proficiency students before placing them in a social studies course so they have time to develop more English proficiency. • Students with higher English proficiency will be ready for more challenging courses sooner. • Geography may be the most appropriate social studies course for students new to the country with lower

		English due to the prior knowledge they are bringing with them.
PE or Health	• Give credit for the appropriate physical education classes and health classes taken in the foreign country.	• Be sensitive to cultural norms when enrolling in PE or Health. Different cultures have different norms about personal health and privacy.
World Languages	• Give credit for native language courses for all years completed in high school.	• Before making decisions about placed of ELs in World Languages, collaborate with both the EL and World Languages teachers.

Step 3: Making Decisions about Credit and Graduation Requirements

Who is responsible?

While the school counselor is ultimately responsible for documenting how credits will be assigned, the school counselor may consult with the district registrar, high school registrar, administrative team, and/or EL representative. Copies of the graduation checklist, documenting how credits are assigned,

How credits should be recorded on transcripts?

Students' West Fargo Public Schools transcripts will detail the courses and the credits that they have earned for classes taken in another country. The academic year, the name of the school, and the country should be listed. See example to the right.

Course	S1	S2
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What is the process for student or guardian appeal for credits award?

If a student or guardian disagrees with the credits awarded, a meeting should occur with family, counselor, and administrator to determine best course of action.

What should be considered for graduation requirements beyond credits?

All students are expected to take and pass the Civics exam. Students have unlimited amount of attempts to take that generally do so while enrolled in U.S. Government or Economics.

Our goal is to help students be "Choice Ready". EL students, or any student arriving from a foreign country, should be given the same opportunity to participate in Choice Ready activities provided by the district to general population students. This means EL students should complete a Profile of a Graduate capstone project. This project can be modified. For example, they can have one artifact per disposition. Each high school should develop a plan to make sure EL students are included.

Resources

- Evaluating Foreign Transcripts: The A-Z Manual Evaluating TEXT (2).pdf (uft.org)
- https://www.scholaro.com/db/Countries
- Working with Refugee Students in Secondary Schools: A Counselor's Companion Working with Refugee Students in Secondary Schools

- Jefferson Country Foreign Transcript Handbook JeffCo Foreign Transcripts
- Seat Time Chart.docx
- WFPS Interpreter and Translation Services: **https://www.west-fargo.k12.nd.us/Page/8795**

Structured Interview Questions

Before conducting interview, make sure the following has been reviewed and set up:

1. Know the student's status: refugee, immigrant, asylee. If you need more guidance on this, please refer to Working with Refugee Students in Secondary Schools
2. Get the transcripts translated and review the information to help guide your questions.
3. Set up an interpreter to be present at the interview if the family needs it. Refer to WFPS's Interpreting and Translation guide: **https://www.west-fargo.k12.nd.us/Page/8795**
4. Get a basic understanding of the educational system used in the country the transcripts and student are coming from. Use Evaluating Foreign Transcripts: The A-Z Manual Evaluating TEXT (2).pdf (uft.org)
5. Make sure student and family understands there are no right or wrong answers. The questions are simply meant to give our school a better understanding of the student's background so we can better meet their needs in our school.

Possible Questions:

1. How many years did you attend school?
2. Did you ever miss any extended time of school?
    a. Two or more consecutive years of missed schooling means this student may be considered SLIFE- Student of Limited or Interrupted Formal Education. Special considerations should be made if so.
3. What was your attendance like? Did you go to school most days (90% of the time)? Or less than that?
4. How many days a week was school?
5. How long was your typical school day?
6. How many classes did you take in a day?
7. How long was each class?
8. What did you learn about in _____ class?
    a. The content learned during the class can help determine which credit to award. This is especially important when determining if a class may be a foreign language credit vs. an "English" or Literature & Composition credit.
9. What subjects were your favorite? Least favorite? Why?
10. What languages can you speak?
11. What language(s) was used in your classes?
12. What languages can you read and write?
13. Were you involved in any activities? Sports? Extracurriculars?

Structured Interview Awarding Credit

Use this document to record all international transcripts. If a learner does not have a transcript and you are basing this off the structured interview, all credits will be awarded as SA.

Student Name: _____ **Date of Assessment: _____**

International Course Name	WFPS Course Equivalent	Year Taken *(i.e. 2023)*	Seat Time	Credits Awarded	Letter Grade or SA	Name of School	Country	Notes
i.e. Swahili	*English LA*	*2022*	*5 days/week 1 hour/*day	*1.0*	*SA*	*Kisra Girls School*	*Kenya*	

Counselor Approval: _____ Date: _____

Administrator Approval: _____ Date: _____

Registrar: _____ Date: _____