



## PLATO Online Course Description

Online courses carry benefits to students with the independence, motivation, and interest to succeed. Westport Public Schools has contracted with the Edmentum learning platform to deliver PLATO online courses. PLATO provides the appropriate content and level of critical thinking expected of students, along with the flexibility to customize courses to the expectations Staples holds in high regard. As the board-sanctioned provider of online educational services, the cost of approved PLATO coursework will be covered by the school system.

A PLATO online course may be taken by Staples students in order to serve the following purposes:

- Exploration of an area of interest through an elective-based course
- Retaking a required course for credit recovery due to failure or loss of credit for poor attendance
- Supporting progress in a current Staples course, remediating skills and/or content knowledge, or serving as an alternative educational program during a formally-approved extended absence, as determined by the RTI, Section 504, PPT or administrative team

The following stipulations apply to elective-based PLATO online course enrollment (*enrollment for other purposes is at the discretion of the RTI, Section 504, or PPT team or school administration*):

- Only students in grades 10-12 are eligible to take elective-based online courses.
- The student must be in good standing in terms of academics, behavior, and attendance and demonstrate fit for the rigorous, independent demands of an online learning environment.
- All prerequisites must be met in order to take the course.
- For online elective courses, the student must select from approved courses where there is no equivalent Staples course.
- An approved PLATO course may count toward the six required courses each semester for a student to be considered fully enrolled.
- Online elective course enrollment cannot exceed 1.0 credit per school year.
- Online elective courses are semester courses. Students are expected to complete the course within the semester they are enrolled.
- Online elective courses may be used to fulfill additional credit requirements only, not to fulfill specific subject area graduation requirements.

Enrollment in PLATO courses, other than elective purposes, must be approved through the RTI, Section 504, or PPT team or by a building administrator (grade-level assistant principal or director of guidance). For credit recovery or elective-based courses outside of the realm of formal student intervention teams (i.e., RTI, 504, PPT), the student will discuss the potential course with his or her parent/guardian and school counselor, then the school counselor will request approval from the grade-level assistant principal and/or director of guidance. The school counselor will work with the Personalized Learning Teacher to enroll the student in the PLATO course.

Students engaging in PLATO courses for elective purposes should be taking the course with the intent of new learning that is not offered by Staples HS. If a student is enrolled in a course that then indicates a strong prior knowledge, the student will not be eligible for course credit. Prior knowledge will be determined by the amount of exemptions a student has in a module based on the pretest assessment. If a student is exempt from 30% or more of the class material, it will be considered ineligible for credit.

PLATO courses will earn Staples High School credit and appear on the student's transcript along with the designation (online). Unless otherwise specified by the RTI, Section 504, or PPT team, the student will receive a letter grade for the course, and the grade will be factored into the grade point average as an elective course (no level weight). For students considering college athletics, Staples PLATO courses are not currently approved as core courses by the NCAA.



## PLATO Online Course Application

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Expected Graduation: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_  
(month/year)

School Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Course: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Date/Term: \_\_\_\_\_

### Reason for taking the course:

- Exploration of an area of interest through an elective-based course
- Retaking a required course for credit recovery due to failure or loss of credit for poor attendance
- Supporting progress in a current Staples course, remediating skills and/or content knowledge, or serving as an alternative educational program during a formally-approved extended absence, as determined by the RTI, Section 504, PPT, or administrative team

### Student Responsibilities and Expectations

Access to PLATO online courses imposes certain responsibilities and obligations. Appropriate use is ethical, honest, and legal. Students must demonstrate respect for physical and intellectual property, system security protocols, and individuals' rights to privacy as well as freedom from intimidation, harassment, and unwarranted annoyance. The Westport Public Schools Acceptable Use Policy applies within this learning environment. This policy is available on the district website.

### Academic Honor Policy

1. I understand that the Staples High School Academic Integrity Policy applies within this learning environment and that no one other than me can complete any portion of an assignment, activity or exam or make revisions to an assignment, activity or exam. Doing so may result in a failing grade and my immediate removal from the course.
2. I understand that I may be assigned proctored assessments, oral quizzes in person or on the phone or be asked to discuss the process used in research for a project or paper. These are standard assessment tools in online courses.
3. I understand that if I am not able to pass the semester exam, credit will not be awarded for the course no matter what grades I earned throughout the course. (Alternate assessment methods may be used at the discretion of Staples High School staff based on individual needs.)
4. I understand that if I do not pass a mastery test within a module, the expectation is that I will not continue to the next module. Instead, I will return to the tutorial and retake the mastery test. Only evidence of completing the tutorial will allow retakes of mastery tests.
5. I understand that in order to be successful in an online course, active learning strategies such as consistent note taking and review must be applied throughout each unit.

### Course Add and Drop Windows

1. I understand that the deadline to enroll in an elective-based online class is the 30th school day of the semester with the expectation that the course will be complete by the end of the semester.
2. I understand that online courses may not be a good fit for everyone. In accordance with the Staples High School course withdrawal procedure, I may drop the course within 30 days from the date of my enrollment without record, and have the course removed from my transcript.



3. I understand that I am taking a place in an online course that is valuable and that prior to dropping the course I will do my best to complete all assessments on time and communicate with my teacher.
4. I understand that I may be administratively dropped for any of the following reasons:
  - a. If I do not successfully submit at least one mastery test of a tutorial within 7 calendar days of my enrollment. (Submitting the pace chart does not count as meeting the requirement for the first week.) If technical problems occur, I am expected to work those out during that first week by accessing technical support. If I have questions regarding content, I should communicate frequently with my online teacher, particularly during the first week.
  - b. If I am not ON PACE by the end of the second week in the course, and have not been making sincere efforts to get up to speed, the Personalized Learning teacher and administrator will schedule a meeting with me to determine if the online course remains an appropriate component of my schedule.

### Course Progress Expectations

1. I understand that attendance for my online course is measured by successful completion of assignments, activities, mastery and unit tests; communication with my teacher; participation in discussion threads; and any other teacher directed activities and interaction with the online lessons.
  2. I understand that the minimum attendance requirement means that I must appropriately complete and successfully submit at least one assignment every week. Failure to do so for any 3 weeks within the semester may result in my being removed from the course with a WF.
  3. I understand that a semester-long online course requires approximately 60-90 hours of time on task in the PLATO learning environment.
  4. I understand that I need to independently plan and work ahead if family or personal commitments will limit course activity at any given time.
  5. If I begin to struggle at any time, I understand that it is my responsibility to contact the Personalized Learning teacher.
  6. I understand that blank submissions are not considered submitted assignments.
  7. I understand that I am expected to communicate with my teacher on a regular basis and read any emails the teacher sends.
  8. I understand that the online learning environment builds in accommodations. For example, the self-paced tutorials allow for extended time and access to electronic materials.
- I am aware that this course will appear on (my/my student's) official transcript as (online).
- I have read and understand the course syllabus and agree to the requirements and grading of the course.
- I have read the online course expectations in the PLATO Contract and understand my responsibilities.

***Failure to abide by the student responsibilities and expectations may, upon investigation, result in consequences up to and including being withdrawn from the online learning environment.***

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_