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Adult Alternative Program Waiver and Pilot

Kansas Board of Education
May 13, 2026

Purpose

Orion Education and Training, Interlocal 628, (formerly South Central Kansas Education Service Center), is an educational service center in the state of Kansas.

On behalf of the school districts Orion serves, we hereby apply for a waiver of specific statutory and regulatory requirements to facilitate the operation of an alternative program. We serve students who have been determined to be unable to benefit from the regular school settings of the district [Source 72-4241]. The alternative setting also serves individuals 18 years of age or older whose class has graduated, and to whom the district has elected not to provide services in a regular high school setting. [Source KSDE Enrollment Guide, page 55] However, for purposes of this waiver request, the term adult refers to only those students aged 20 or older on Sept. 20 of each year.

The school districts who are eligible to participate in this waiver, pending local and state board of education approval, include: Andover USD 385, Auburn-Washburn USD 437, Augusta USD 402, Belle Plaine USD 357, Circle USD 375, Clearwater USD 264, Douglass USD 396, El Dorado USD 490, Goddard USD 265, Oskaloosa USD 341, Oxford USD 358, Rose Hill USD 394, Shawnee Heights USD 450, Silver Lake USD 372, and Wichita USD 259.

Adult Education Options

Current Options		Proposed
In Person	**Virtual**	**Waiver/Pilot**
Attend in-person only	Attend virtually only	Blended approach - flexibility to attend in-person and online

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Rationale for Waiver

- **No Hybrid Approach Available**: Currently, there is not a hybrid approach available for adult learners. They must attend all in-person or virtually. They do not have an option for a blended approach of attending in-person as well as continuing their learning online from home. This waiver would allow for a blended model of learning.

- **External Commitments:** Adult students frequently face significant scheduling barriers due to work and family obligations, making traditional "mandatory" in person attendance models impractical.

- **Flexibility of Schedule:** Adult students need flexibility in regards to time. They need to have the flexibility to determine the days and hours they are able to commit to earning their high school diploma. Due to their external commitments, adult learners often need to be able to participate before/after work and on weekends. The traditional school schedule does not allow for this. The Kansas Enrollment Handbook currently requires that adult students attending an alternative school or program follow the same "Enrolled and Attending" rules as students in the regular school setting, meaning for full-time funding, adult students would be required to attend onsite 30 hours per week. This hinders their ability to progress toward a diploma while maintaining employment and family stability.

Rationale for Waiver

- **Flexibility in Instructional Delivery:** Adult learners need the flexibility to be able to attend onsite as well as continue their learning online in order to maximize their time and learning potential. This model allows adult learners to attend on-site for individualized help from licensed teachers, while ensuring they have access to their curriculum when life events result in schedule conflicts and they need to continue their learning online.

- **Digital Barriers:** Onsite instruction and support directly addresses the needs of students who lack technology skills, reliable home technology infrastructure, and/or have reading comprehension barriers that make learning difficult or impossible. We believe it is important for adult learners to have the option of learning in-person as well as online.

Other Factors for Consideration

Compulsory Attendance Exemptions:
Adult students 18 and older are not subject to the compulsory attendance requirements applicable to minors as truancy laws do not apply.

In-Person Learning Centers:
Students will have access to in-person support 30 hours per week to ensure they can satisfactorily complete graduation requirements. They may choose to attend all in-person or a blended approach of in-person and online.

Other Factors for Consideration

Learning Continuity and Year-Round Enrollment:
To prioritize learning continuity and fulfill the statutory mandate to provide a graduation opportunity, the Orion Learning Center will enroll and serve alternative adult students throughout the entire school year. The district recognizes that many adult learners require services outside the Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE) funding window. Consequently, the district commits to providing these educational services even when the timing of a student's enrollment or their specific attendance requirements fall outside the state's fiscal count windows, resulting in the district not receiving state aid for those individuals.

Exempt from Waiver:
The waiver will not apply to adult learners in the following programs:

- Correctional Institution Programs
- Homeless Shelters
- ESOL Adult Learning Program

Requested Modifications

Pursuant to K.S.A. 72-4241, the board requests a waiver from the standard requirement that attendance for adult learners be limited to in-person attendance in the traditional sense. Instead, the district will implement a flexible, student-driven attendance model for adult students that includes:

Funding Window and Time:
The district will utilize the following model to compute "minutes enrolled" for funding:

1. **Customized Normal Schedules:** In alignment with the Enrollment Handbook, the district will establish "normal alternative school day schedules" for each adult student that reflect their individual availability and a blend of in-person and online learning.
2. **Window:** Attendance will be based on a 12-day average that begins Monday, September 14, at 12:01 am to Friday, Sept. 25, at 11:59 pm for the 2026-2027 school year and a similar 12-day time frame for subsequent years. This allows flexibility for adults to learn at any time of the day and on weekends.
3. **Maximum Time Per Day:** Students will have the flexibility to learn up to 12 hours per day. This reflects the “shift work” lifestyle many students are accustomed to living.

Requested Modifications

Learning Methods and Funding Documentation

1. **On-Site Learning:** Adult learners will attend in-person and receive services from a licensed teacher. The attendance documentation will include a student-generated sign in / sign out documentation showing the time (HH:MM – AM/PM) the student arrived and received on-site learning services and showing the time (HH:MM – AM/PM) the student left.
2. **Online Learning:** Adult learners will be allowed to continue their learning online at a time and location that best meets their schedule. Online learning is allowed in a 3:1 ratio, meaning for every one hour of on-site learning, the student may attend three hours of online learning. The online learning portion will be included in the "minutes enrolled" for funding. The attendance documentation will include:
    - **Connected (On-line) Time:** This must be documented with an **unaltered, system-generated report** from the virtual school's computer system.
    - The report must show specific **sign-in and sign-out times**.
    - The system must track **"idle" time** or automatically log students off when they are not active.
    - **Idle time entries of one hour or more** are disallowed and will not count toward online attendance minutes.

Legal Compliance and Documentation

Adult Status Verification: The district will maintain the required documentation for adult students, including a Transcript Analysis and an Individual Graduation Plan that outlines the specific classes needed for completion.

Graduation Standards: The alternative program is specifically designed to ensure every student has the opportunity to satisfactorily complete the course requirements of the state board of education necessary for high school graduation.

Legal Compliance and Documentation

KSDE Required Documentation During Pilot:
Following current practice, for each student enrolled and attending, the following information must be provided for KSDE audit purposes:

1. District enrollment form, including:
1. full name
2. address
3. date of birth
4. cohort class graduation date
5. must include the question and answer to: Do you have a high school diploma?
2. transcript analysis, used to determine what classes the student needs to graduate.
3. individual graduation plan, outline the plan for the student to graduate, showing classes needed and the estimated enrollment date for those courses.
4. enrollment in high school credit earning courses.

Legal Compliance and Documentation

Additional (new) information required by KSDE as part of the pilot:

For each student enrolled and attending as an Alternative student with a district participating in the pilot for the school year providing the following:

1. credits earned as of June 30; documented in the student's official transcript as of that date.
2. credits earned as of the date of first enrollment for the school year; documented in the student's official transcript as of that date.
3. date (DD/MM/YYYY) student was first (ever) enrolled and attended the alternative program
4. date (DD/MM/YYYY) the student last (ever) attended the alternative program prior to the school year.
5. date (DD/MM/YYYY) the student first attended the alternative program for the school year.
6. date (DD/MM/YYYY) the student last attended the alternative program for the school year.
7. For each district participating in the pilot:
    a. first date (DD/MM/YYYY) of the academic school year.
    b. last date (DD/MM/YYYY) of the academic school year.
    c. a list, by State Student Identification (SSID) and local identifier, of students claimed as enrolled and attending as an Alternative student for the school year.

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Duration and Modifications

Upon approval by the State Board of Education, and receipt of local school board approval by KSDE, the eligible districts may operate under the terms of this waiver until such time as the waiver is rescinded or modified by the State Board or by an act of the legislature [Source 72-4241].

Eligible Districts

Andover USD 385, Auburn-Washburn USD 437, Augusta USD 402, Belle Plaine USD 357, Circle USD 375, Clearwater USD 264, Douglass USD 396, El Dorado USD 490, Goddard USD 265, Oskaloosa USD 341, Oxford USD 358, Rose Hill USD 394, Shawnee Heights USD 450, Silver Lake USD 372, and Wichita USD 259.

Local School District Support

What questions might you have about this waiver and pilot?