EASTCONN
Where Learning Comes to Life

INSTRUCTION
Series 6000
Policy #6002.1.1

Distance Education

The EASTCONN Board of Directors believes that education through virtual/online courses or through university or 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 schools can offer courses to enhance, supplement or enrich the existing curriculum and can also provide an alternative means of instruction. 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 courses will be part of EASTCONN's educational program delivery system to increase accessibility and flexibility in the delivery of instruction. In addition to regular classroom-based instruction, students in EASTCONN may earn credit through distance education provided by virtual/online courses.

In order to earn credits in meeting the requirements for high school graduation through the successful completion of on-line coursework, the EASTCONN Board of Directors, in compliance with C.G.S. 10-221a (17) shall ensure, at a minimum, that (a) the workload required by the on-line course is equivalent to that of a similar course taught in a traditional EASTCONN classroom setting, (b) the content is rigorous and aligned with curriculum guidelines approved by the State Board of Directors , 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 coursework is planned, ongoing and systematic, and (e) the courses are (1) taught by teachers who are certified in the state or another state and have received training on teaching in an on-line environment, or (2) offered by institutions of higher education that are accredited by the Department of Higher Education or regionally accredited; 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 Directors for meeting credit requirements for graduation.

If the drop-out rate of EASTCONN is determined to be 8% or higher in the previous school year, the EASTCONN Board of Directors 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, must be allowed to complete on-line EASTCONN-approved coursework toward meeting high school graduation requirements. Each high school within EASTCONN shall designate, from among existing staff, an online learning coordinator to administer and coordinate the online credit recovery program.

The EASTCONN Board of Directors recognizes students may benefit from on-line courses or post-secondary 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.

EASTCONN will not use on-line courses as the sole medium for instruction in any required subject area for students in grades K-8.

EASTCONN will integrate on-line courses as part of the regular instruction provided by a certified teacher for grades K-12.

Credit from an online or virtual course or a university/college course may be earned only in the following circumstances:

1. The course is not offered at EASTCONN'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.

3. The course will serve as an alternative or a supplement to extended homebound instruction.

5. The Principal, with agreement from the student's teachers and parents/guardians, determines the student requires a differentiated or accelerated learning environment.

6. Students taking such courses must be enrolled in EASTCONN and take the courses during the regular school day at the school site.

7. A student has failed a course and wishes to recover credits in that course area.

8. The student's PPT or Section 504 Team has determined it to be an appropriate means of instruction.

As determined by the EASTCONN Board of Directors, students applying for permission to take a virtual/on-line course will do the following:

- Complete prerequisites and provide teacher/counselor recommendations 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 EASTCONN code of conduct to include rules of behavior and consequences for violations.
- Adhere to attendance requirements of EASTCONN.

The school must receive an official record of the final grade before awarding credit toward graduation. Only approved courses shall be posted on student transcripts.

The tuition fee for a virtual course shall be borne by EASTCONN for students enrolled full-time.

Through its policies and/or supervision plan, the school shall be responsible for providing appropriate supervision and monitoring of students taking virtual courses.

Students will have access to sufficient library media resources such as a "virtual library" available through the World Wide Web, laboratory facilities, technical assistance, and hands-on training and information.

Agency Review Committee
The EASTCONN Executive Director shall establish a committee to review all distance education courses prior to use by EASTCONN.

Evaluation
The Agency 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 Agency will use this evaluation to decide whether to grant credit for the course or to continue or discontinue the use of the distance education course.

Additional language to consider:

- Approval of any course shall be based upon its compliance with Connecticut's academic standards and requirements, including but not limited to the course content and rigor, its length and scope, its method of assessing knowledge acquired by the student, the qualifications of the instructor and other appropriate factors.
- Enrollment in an online course will be allowed only if an appropriately certified teacher is available and willing to supervise the student's participation in the course.
- No more than one credit may be earned toward the required credits in each of the core content areas.

(cf. 4009.1.1 - Technology: Acceptable-Use Policy)

(cf. 5012.1.1 - Graduation Requirements)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

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) and P.A. 10-111, An Act Concerning Education Reform in Connecticut.

Adopted: 10/26/2021
Revised:
Replaces: 6172.6