Credit Accrual for Homeless Students

National Center for Homeless Education

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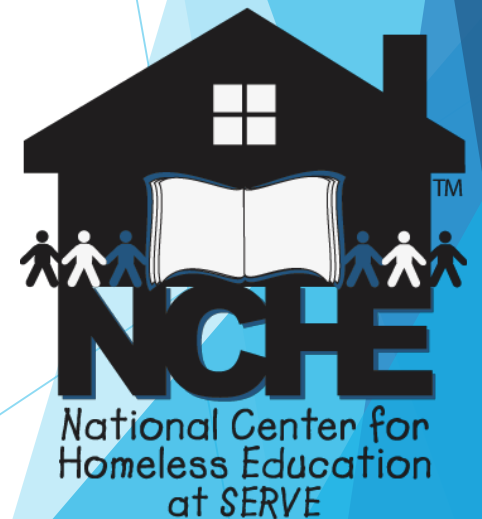
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About NCHE

NCHE operates the U.S. Department of Education's technical assistance center for the federal Education for Homeless Children and Youth (EHCY) Program

- ▶ Website: http://nche.ed.gov

- ▶ Helpline: 800-308-2145 or homeless@serve.org

- ▶ Products: http://nche.ed.gov/products.php

- ▶ Webinars: http://nche.ed.gov/web/group.php

- ▶ Listserv: http://nche.ed.gov/listserv.php

- ▶ Social Media: http://nche.ed.gov/social-media.php

See NCHE's new Credit Accrual tip sheet at https://nche.ed.gov/ibt/credit.php

Challenges for Homeless Students

▶ Physical and mental stress

▶ Missing school for employment or having to move

▶ Difficulty concentrating due to lack of sleep or food

▶ Inability to complete assignments due to lack of

　▶ quiet place to study

　▶ resources to purchase school supplies

▶ Mobility can lead to changing schools mid-year

School Challenges for Homeless Students

- ▶ Changing schools can lead to losing credits and put students at risk of not graduating

- ▶ Variation in methods of calculating credits

- ▶ Different class offerings

- ▶ Different graduation requirements

- ▶ "Seat time" rules

- ▶ Enrolling students without records

  - ▶ See NCHE's brief *Prompt and Proper Placement: Enrolling Students Without Records* at https://nche.ed.gov/downloads/briefs/assessment.pdf

McKinney-Vento Requirements

▶ States must describe how youth will receive credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed at a prior school [§11432(g)(1)(F)(ii)]

▶ LEAs must have clear procedures to ensure that homeless students receive appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed at a prior school (EHCY Non-regulatory Guidance, Question O-2 at https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/160240ehcy guidance072716updated0317.pdf)

▶ Examples:

  ▶ Award credits for courses completed at prior school

  ▶ Consult with prior school about student's coursework

  ▶ Evaluate mastery of courses from a prior school

  ▶ Offer credit recovery courses

General Strategies

- ▶ Keep students in their schools of origin
- ▶ Provide support to enable students to attend school consistently and progress academically
- ▶ Decide how to award students partial credit
- ▶ Complement regular classes with other opportunities to earn credits
- ▶ Review and revise policies that act as barriers

Keep Students in the School of Origin

- Keeping students in the school of origin is the first and best strategy to ensuring students accrue credits

- Taking into account the ability to accrue credits and graduate on time is an important best interest consideration

- Increasing transportation time and effort may be necessary to ensure school stability for students – especially in high school

Provide Support to Ensure Consistent Attendance and Academic Progress

▶ Work with community agencies to ensure basic needs are met so students can focus on school

▶ Help youth find a quiet place to study

  ▶ Consider school and community organizations

▶ Blend online and in-person programs to ensure interaction with the youth

▶ Connect youth with mentors to provide guidance, encouragement, and assistance with challenges

▶ Utilize early warning systems to ensure students stay on track

Provide Support to Ensure Consistent Attendance and Academic Progress

- ▶ Develop individual success or learning plans with student input
- ▶ Ask about student's interests and needs; ensure classes and extra-curricular activities match these
- ▶ Provide staff with information about the challenges of homelessness
- ▶ Explore how school climate and culture can be improved. If students feel they don't belong, they won't participate

Award Partial Credit for Work Completed

- Convene stakeholders to address awarding credits
  - Include curriculum coordinators, alternative education staff, and those who work with military families
  - Develop policies, procedures, and templates to help calculate learning time
  - Discuss providing credit for anytime anywhere learning instead of seat time
  - Give credit based on proficiency, attendance, prorating credits, work outside school, etc.
  - Work with family courts to create or improve diversion programs or alternative education programs

Award Partial Credit for Work Completed

- Check student information systems to review student's coursework, assignments, syllabi, curriculum descriptions, and grades

- Utilize technology, online learning opportunities, independent study programs that target specific learning gaps, and work study programs

- Develop portfolios of assignments completed

- Post LEA curricula online for easy access

Other Strategies to Consider

- Start talking about college and workforce options in elementary school and continually reinforce

- Connect with afterschool networks

- Explore the underlying issue of behavior problems
  - Use MTSS, PBIS, or RTI teams to determine if student's struggle is due to mobility/homelessness or other needs that must be addressed in order for the students to progress academically
  - Use trauma-informed care principles

- Explore other credit recovery options used by LEA

Other Strategies to Consider

- Provide students with high-quality postsecondary and workforce engagement opportunities
  - Allows students to connect, discuss goals, and determine a path to achieve goals
  - Gives students some choice and control
  - Can include college visits
  - Career Technical Education
- Life Readiness
  - Employers place great value on and social emotional skills

Other Strategies to Consider

- Create blended programs – partly online and partly in person in order to have opportunities to interact with the student face to face

- Offer online, remote education in an easy to access community setting

- Partner with other LEAs to create online credit recovery options

CA Partial Credit for Students in Foster Care

7 CLASS PERIODS = 0.5 CREDITS PER SUBJECT	
7-13 class periods = 0.5 credits per subject	42-48 class periods = 3 credits per subject
14-20 class periods = 1 credit per subject	49-55 class periods = 3.5 credits per subject
21-27 class periods = 1.5 credits per subject	56-62 class periods = 4.0 credits per subject
28-34 class periods = 2 credits per subject	63-69 class periods = 4.5 credits per subject
35-41 class periods = 2.5 credits per subject	70+ class periods = 5 credits per subject

Partial Credit Calculation Guidelines

Length of Class Period:
Class periods lasting 89 minutes or less count as 1 class period for purposes of calculating partial credits. Class periods lasting 90 minutes or more count as 2 class periods.

Credits Per Grading Period:
The calculation formula provides for the awarding of both 1 and 5 credits per course for each grading period because most school districts statewide utilize these credit scales. A Calculation/Conversion Table is provided on page 8, which can be used when youth transfer between school districts using differing scales. The receiving school should convert the number of credits earned to match their own system and update the youth's official transcript accordingly.

Alternative Schools:
If a foster youth is enrolled in an alternative school setting (e.g., continuation school, independent study program, or adult school), that school must issue credits according to this partial credit model policy or its approved credit plan adopted pursuant to Education Code § 51225.3(b), if such plan provides for the awarding of partial credits.

Conclusion

- Maximizing credit accrual requires combining multiple strategies

- These efforts also increase overall academic achievement, reduce dropout rates, and support all students in achieving success

Additional Resources

▶ See NCHE's new Credit Accrual tip sheet at https://nche.ed.gov/ibt/credit.php

▶ National Dropout Prevention Center https://dropoutprevention.org/

▶ Americas Promise Alliance http://www.americaspromise.org/

▶ U.S. Department of Education's Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opepd/ppss/reports.html

Table Discussion

1. Best practices

2. Challenges and how you overcame those

3. Remaining questions or issues you need help to address