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Administrative Rule Policy for Earning High School Credit by Equivalency Exam

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Overview:

Administrative Rule in South Dakota (ARSD) 24:43:01:01 (53) governs the accreditation requirements for earning a unit of credit. This rule states that a unit of credit may be granted verifying competency of content through an end of course exam, alternative assessments demonstrating content knowledge, or 146 hours of class time. In the event that a school district would like to deviate from this rule and offer credit for an eligible high school course by the passage of an equivalency exam, the district may apply for a waiver from the administrative rule. The specific rules outlining the structure of this process are found in ARSD 24:43:11:08.

Eligibility:

As defined by the Department of Education, a district may apply for a waiver from an administrative rule when the intent of the waiver is to better meet local learning goals, enhance educational opportunity, promote equity, or increase accountability. (ARSD 24:43:08:02).

Application Process:

Application for a waiver is available from the Department of Education and must demonstrate the district's rationale for offering high school credit to students through a course equivalency exam. This rationale must include a statement as to how the waiver outlined in the application will better meet local learning goals, enhance educational opportunities, promote equity, or increase accountability.

The application must also include the evidence of continuing educational opportunities. This should include a description of what furthering educational opportunities the participating student(s) may have available.

Applications must be received by the Department of Education no later than July 1 of the year of implementation, unless the district requests and explains the reasons for an alternate date.

Eligible Courses:

The Department of Education must approve all course equivalency exams.

Evaluation:

Credit shall be granted by equivalency exam based on the following guidelines:

- 1) If the South Dakota Department of Education (DOE) has a course equivalency exam available, the State exam may be used.
- 2) If a course equivalency exam is not available from the State, the district may create an exam, standards-based when applicable. The exam must be approved by the State before it may be administered.
- 3) The student must pass the exam with at least 85% proficiency.
- 4) The course equivalency exam must be passed on the first attempt for credit to be issued.
- 5) The school district must proctor and score the exam.
- 6) The DOE should receive a roster of participants, including the students' name, grade in school, district attendance center, and percentage on completed exam before the start of the following school year.

Course Record:

Upon passage of the course equivalency exam, the credit shall be included on the student transcript as a "pass" grade only. The pass grade shall not be calculated as a part of a student's cumulative grade point average.

A failed attempt on the course equivalency exam shall not be included on a student's transcript and shall not be calculated as a part of a student's cumulative grade point average.

If a student wishes to have a letter grade for the test out included on his or her transcript as a means of scholarship eligibility or entrance into a post-secondary institution, a formal request may be made to that student's school district to have a "course grade" included. The "course grade" should be a letter grade that is equivalent to the student's test score on the course equivalency exam. The "course grade" shall not be calculated as a part of the student's cumulative grade point average.