

MEMORANDUM

To: South Dakota Board of Education Standards
From: Dr. Joseph Graves, Secretary of Education
Date: June 30, 2023
Re: Information requested regarding proposed Dual Credit Administrative Rule 24:43:11:17

Q1: How many students earn .5 credit vs. 1 credit currently?

A1: The department has validated data for the state-sponsored reduced tuition program. There are arrangements outside of this program which are not reflected in the numbers below.

Student Head Count Participation in the Reduced Tuition Dual Credit Program (Accredited Schools, 11th and 12th graders)

HS Credits Earned	2020-21 SY	2021-22 SY
One per Three Postsecondary	1060	1715
Half per Three Postsecondary	2790	3014
Varies or Unknown	225	264

Q2: What are the parameters of taking dual credit?

A2: [Statute](#) allows students in grades 9 through 12 to take postsecondary courses, subject to admission standards at the college or university and upon approval by the student's district. The student must receive both postsecondary and high school credit. This general statute applies to arrangements that would include district partnerships with private and tribal colleges as well as out-of-state higher education institutions, and includes courses taken from postsecondary faculty as well as high school teachers with the requisite certificate to teach postsecondary coursework.

The state-sponsored reduced tuition program is laid out in [SDCL 13-28-37.1](#). Most, but not all, students enrolling in dual credit fall under this program. As laid out in statute, only students who are in the 11th or 12th grade are eligible for this program. Department policy limits students to five semesters of eligibility. While the Board of Regents caps the credits a student may take, there is no cap for courses at the four technical colleges. The postsecondary institutions agree to a lower per-credit rate (currently \$145); the state then pays 2/3 of that cost and typically parents pay the remaining 1/3, as well as any books required. Some districts, through arrangements such as grants or philanthropic partnerships, cover the 1/3 cost for some or all of their students.

As of 2020, any student who withdraws from or fails a course in the state-sponsored reduced tuition program may not continue in the program without a waiver showing good cause or retaking the course at the student's full expense. Most students who have withdrawn or failed are able to receive a waiver to continue and find success afterwards.

In the 2021-22 school year, 5,763 students* earned 37,115 postsecondary credits.

* Includes alternative education students and other students not included in the table above.

The most popular courses taken are:

- MATH 114 (College Algebra)
- CMST 101 (Fundamentals of Speech)
- ENGL 101 (Composition)
- PSYCH 101 (General Psychology)
- MUS 100 (Music Appreciation)

Q3: How does the process go for determining college-to-high school courses?

A3: This has been left to local control. Moving forward, the department will publish a table annually outlining which courses offered at public state universities and colleges align with what graduation requirements. Any courses not specifically noted can be awarded elective credit. School districts participating in arrangements outside of the state-sponsored reduced tuition program can use the table as a guide for aligning their partner postsecondary institution's courses to graduation requirements and elective credit.

Q4: What comments do administrators who have moved from .5 to 1 high school credit per three postsecondary credits, or the reverse, have?

A4: The department surveyed all principals at accredited high schools in the state. We received 74 responses, out of those seven schools noted that they had changed their award of credit in the past five years; all went from awarding .5 credit to awarding a full high school credit. Three administrators responded to the department's request for additional information.

All three indicated the switch had been positive for students. Specific rationale for the change and impacts included:

- Dual credit courses are more rigorous than high school courses
- Align with other districts' policies around the state so as to not disadvantage their students
- District policy includes limiting the number of courses a student can take as a junior to ensure success before allowing them to increase their course load
- High achieving students are taking as many as they can to make the transition to freshman year in college easier
- High achieving students generally end up with more credits than the required 22 regardless
- A full credit incentivizes students to attempt dual credit who otherwise might not
- Offering the full credit made it easier for students to meet high school graduation requirements

Q5: What is the impact to students of earning half a credit or a full credit?

A5: See below:

Student Impact of one high school credit per three college credits

Advantages	Disadvantages
One credit would match the completion of a course.	Some students may meet the minimum number of credits necessary to graduate early. *There is no maximum number of credits a student can earn

The post-secondary institution is awarding credit based on mastering the competencies of an entire course within one semester. College courses are intended to be more rigorous and faster paced than secondary courses.	* Districts can set up early graduation policies to minimize this risk.
The credit for course completion would match up with high stakes criteria in programs like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced Career Endorsement • Regent Scholar Diploma • SD Opportunity Scholarship • NCAA Academic Requirements 	
Students currently receiving .5 credit would not be disadvantaged during the transition to one credit from a transcript perspective. They may end up with more credits than they planned.	
Districts are using HSDC courses to make up for teacher shortages in areas like chemistry, physics, and world language. Allowing 1 credit for all three-credit college courses means these courses can continue to meet graduation requirements as standalone courses, without requiring students to double up on their course load (see below).	

Student Impact of .5 high school credit per three college credits

Advantages	Disadvantages
Credits earned per semester would match district courses earned per semester on a traditional 7 or 8 period day schedule. (.5 credits per semester).	Students may take more HSDC courses than are necessary to fulfill the Board of Regents requirements for System General Education Requirements (see SDBOR Policy 2:7(D)). (For example, a student may take more arts and humanities courses than necessary for their degree simply to fulfill the high school unit requirements for graduation). This scenario “wastes” credits and money that will not have a direct benefit towards their postsecondary credential.
There may be some high school courses more rigorous than some postsecondary courses. *Districts do have local control to determine GPA weight for advanced coursework.	This philosophy is rooted in “seat time,” not in awarding a student credit for the competencies they have demonstrated.
	Students currently receiving 1 credit will be disadvantaged with a transition to .5 credits, assuming they were counting on HSDC courses to meet graduation requirements. They would end up short the number of credits they had

	anticipated receiving, in particular if this affects seniors graduating in Spring 2024.
	Students attending districts unable to provide a teacher for higher-level or specialized courses (i.e., chemistry, physics, and world languages) would need to take double the number of courses to meet the graduation requirement. For example, a student trying to meet the advanced honors endorsement would need to take two college chemistry courses at 3 credits each, and four Spanish courses at three credits each (for a total of 12 college Spanish credits).