

Credit Flexibility – Working with Gifted and Special Education: Web Conference Summary

Wednesday, March 24, 2010
1 – 2 p.m.

Opening Remarks

Sarah Luchs, associate director of Student Success with the Ohio Department of Education, provided opening remarks. This was the second web conference in a series, co-hosted by the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and the Great Lakes East Comprehensive Center, related to the implementation of the credit flexibility policy. ODE hopes the series will help foster communication between the Department and Ohio schools and districts. Superintendent Delisle's weekly e-newsletter, [EdConnection](#), and the educational service centers (ESCs) will continue to communicate additional updates and guidance as the work continues. A set of [guidance documents](#), currently posted on ODE's website, can support schools and districts as they move forward with their own policy development and implementation. In addition, [case studies](#) of five sites in Ohio have been posted on the ODE's website and include informative examples with additional resources. This web conference focused on Credit Flexibility: Working with Gifted and Special Education and provided participants the opportunity to hear from staff with the Office for Exceptional Children at ODE.

Gifted and Special Education

Tom Lather, associate director, and consultants Beth Hahn and Chrissy Cline with the Office for Exceptional Children at ODE, highlighted key credit flexibility components regarding policies and considerations for Gifted and Special Education.

Accelerated and Educational Options

- All districts are required to have an acceleration policy for gifted students as well as other students.
- Districts are required to have an acceleration committee to evaluate students for potential acceleration. Although the acceleration committee members cannot award credit to students, they can move students forward to place them at a higher level.
- Educational options are specified as services for gifted students in the [Ohio Gifted Operating Standards](#).
- Students have the "test out" option with three different ways: paper/pencil tests, assessments created by the district, and project- or performance- based content mastery demonstrated by the student

Student Credit Flexibility Plan (SCFP)

- Any student is eligible for credit flexibility and it was designed by the legislature to maximize a student's ability and minimize a student's disability.
- SCFPs should be pre-identified and agreed on so everyone participating (students, teacher, parents, etc.) knows what is expected and how things are going to happen.

- Students may be eligible for partial, complete, or even dual credits depending on the course, activities, and the way the plan is laid out.

Questions and Answers

Q: *Will Multi-Disciplinary teams replace the current use of Intervention Assistance Teams? Or will this be an additional team in each school?*

A: ODE sees a need for both the Multi-Disciplinary team as well as the Intervention Assistance Teams as the roles for both groups are different.

Q: *If a student has an aide noted in their IEP and the team decides the aide is not needed in the Credit Flex environment, is the IEP modified to note that change or how is that handled more generally?*

A: It would probably be a part of the Credit Flex Plan, but it could also be noted in the appropriate part of the IEP. If at some point the student is not being successful in the Credit Flex area, the team may need to re-meet and determine again if an aide is needed to support this child for success in this area.

Q: *What about twice exceptional children? What's the best way to handle students who are twice exceptional?*

A: It goes back to looking at the goals for the student to determine which goals meet which needs and to construct the written education plan to reflect how the needs are being met. One plan can note how the goals are being met for the student, including the IEP and Credit Flex needs. It's really important to focus on the student and think about his/her abilities and disabilities, and how can we support the disabilities so that the student is able to be successful.

Q: *Are districts required to pay for credit flex options?*

A: They should cover the equivalent of expenses that would be offered in the classroom.

Q: *Would an IEP supersede a WEP?*

A: Yes - IEPs supersede any other plan.

Q: *Do credit flex course approvals need to be approved by the board or does policy take care of that?*

A: Each course does not need to be approved by the board, the district policy covers that. However, the plan must be approved by those involved in the development of the plan, such as, but not limited to, the teacher, gifted/special education coordinator, parent, and student.