

# **Private School and Home Education Student Transfer of Credits Frequently Asked Questions**

## **Introduction**

The State Board of Education Rule was intended to establish uniform procedures relating to the acceptance of transfer work and credit for students entering Florida's public middle and high schools. The rule increases consistency in the credit transfer process and fulfill the State Board of Education responsibility to prescribe "procedures relating to the acceptance of transfer work and credit for students" as required by s. 1003.25(3), Florida Statutes (F.S.). Rule 6A-1.09941, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), State Uniform Transfer of Students in Middle Grades and High School, establishes these procedures.

For students in grades 6, 7, and 8 the Rule directs that grades earned and offered for acceptance shall be based on official transcripts and shall be accepted at face value subject to validation if required by the receiving school's accreditation. For high school students, the Rule states that credits and grades earned and offered for acceptance shall be based on official transcripts and shall be accepted at face value subject to validation if required by the receiving school's accreditation. The rule does not require that the transferring school be accredited in order for the credits to be accepted at face value.

If validation of the official transcript is deemed necessary for accreditation purposes by the receiving school, or if the student does not possess an official transcript, or is a home education student, then credits or grades shall be validated through performance during the first grading period. A student transferring into a school shall be placed at the appropriate sequential course level. A middle grades student should be passing each required course, and a high school student should have a minimum grade point average of 2.0 after the first enrolled grading period in order to receive credit. If validation based on performance is not satisfactory, the Rule defines certain alternative validation procedures that should be used.

The State Board of Education Rule specifically requires credits and grades to be accepted at face value, establishes limited exceptions where validation can be used, and provides procedures for validation. The rule, therefore, precludes districts and individual schools from placing any additional requirements or procedures on the transfer of middle school grades and high school credits and grades.

## **Questions and Answers**

### **1. Why is the State Board of Education Rule so important to students in Florida?**

Florida provides several legal options for meeting compulsory attendance. Parents may elect a private, parochial, denominational or religious school, home education program or private tutor to meet regular attendance as defined in s. 1003.01(13), F.S. School choice programs, such as the Family Empowerment Scholarship Programs, the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship and virtual schools provide parents of public school students additional choices for meeting regular attendance. If these students have taken advantage of a scholarship and established a home education program or enrolled in an unaccredited private school that is eligible to participate in the state-funded programs, and then choose to return to the public school, they are able to receive credits and grades for their work at the private school in a uniform manner, according to Rule 6A-1.09941, F.A.C.

**2. Does the State Board of Education Rule preempt school and school district policy and the Student Progression Plan for transfer of credit?**

Yes, the State Board of Education Rule establishes the policy for all public high schools, middle schools, and school districts. The State Board of Education Rule supersedes district policy.

**3. When must a public school grant credits and grades at face value?**

According to the State Board of Education Rule, credits and grades shall be granted at face value when submitted on an official transcript, but may be subject to validation if required by the accreditation of the receiving school.

**4. What is an official transcript?**

An official transcript is a document that is sent directly from the administrator of the school where the credit is earned to the receiving school administrator. An official transcript shall be sent by mail or electronically signed by a school administrator, and be on school letterhead, and/or be embossed with the school's seal. An official transcript should clearly identify the school, the student, course number, date the course was taken, and credit and/or grade earned in each course. An unofficial transcript is one that is hand delivered by the student or parent, or is delivered to the designated school administrator in an opened envelope, or is on plain paper.

**5. Does the State Board of Education Rule permit a school to validate credits and grades on an official transcript?**

Yes, but only in situations where validation is required because of the receiving school's accreditation requirements.

**6. Must a school accept credits and grades from public or private schools that are not accredited?**

Yes, credits and grades earned from unaccredited schools shall be accepted at face value if submitted on an official transcript. However, the State Board of Education Rule states that validation of the official transcript may be done if required by the receiving school's accreditation. If required, validation of the official transcript will be done through performance during the first grading period, or by an alternative validation procedure if validation based on performance is not satisfactory.

**7. Must a school accept credits or grades when a student does not have an official transcript or is a home education student?**

Yes, the Rule states that in this situation these courses shall be validated through performance during the first grading period. At the high school level, credits are to be accepted, with grades accepted according to accreditation standards and school policies.

**8. Must credits or grades submitted on an unofficial transcript be validated through performance at the receiving school?**

Yes, the State Board of Education Rule was intended to validate the overall integrity of the transcript. The student shall be placed at the appropriate sequential course level, and overall performance in classes at the receiving school validates the credits (or grades, if middle school) from the previous school or home education program in their entirety.

**9. How does the receiving school determine placement of the student?**

Based on the transcript, the student shall be placed at the appropriate sequential course level.

**10. How does a school determine if the placement of the student is correct?**

If the student's classroom performance during the first grading period reflects that the student has the educational foundation to be successful in that class, then the placement is correct.

**11. Can a school change the placement of a student?**

Yes, the State Board of Education rule require that the student be placed at the "appropriate" sequential level. If the student's performance in the classroom during the first grading period does not meet the requirements for credit, the school, parent, and teacher may reconsider whether the student was placed at the "appropriate" sequential level.

**12. When are the alternative methods of validation appropriate to use?**

At the high school level, Alternative Validation Procedures are to be used when the student does not meet the 2.0 grade point average standard at the end of the first grading period. At the middle school level, Alternative Validation Procedures are used if a passing grade is not attained for each required course in the first grading period.

**13. What happens if a student does not pass all required courses at the middle school level?**

The Alternative Validation Procedures are utilized to validate courses or grades. At the middle school level, the Alternative Validation Procedures specified by State Board of Education Rule include:

1. Portfolio evaluation by the superintendent or designee,
2. Demonstrated performance in courses taken at other public or private accredited schools,
3. Demonstrated proficiencies on nationally normed standardized subject area assessments,
4. Demonstrated proficiencies on a statewide, standardized assessment, or
5. Written review of the criteria utilized for a given subject provided by the former school.

Parents, teachers and principal may agree to use any one of these alternatives that are identified in the district student progression plan. Students must be provided at least ninety (90) days from date of transfer to prepare for assessments if required.

**14. What happens if a student does not meet the scholastic performance standard of a 2.0 grade point average at the high school level?**

The Alternative Validation Procedures are utilized to validate credits or grades.

At the high school level, the Alternative Validation Procedures specified by State Board of Education Rule include:

1. Portfolio evaluation by the superintendent or designee,
2. Written recommendation by a Florida certified teacher selected by the parent and approved by the principal,
3. Satisfactory performance in courses taken through dual enrollment or at other public or private accredited schools,
4. Satisfactory performance on nationally normed standardized subject area assessments,
5. Satisfactory performance on a statewide, standardized assessment, or
6. Written review of the criteria utilized for a given subject provided by the former school.

Students must be provided at least ninety (90) days from date of transfer to prepare for assessments if required.

**15. Does a parent have to agree to the Alternative Validation Procedure used to validate credit or grades?**

Yes, the State Board of Education Rule states that the validation procedures must be determined by the teacher, principal and parent.

**16. How long does a school have to validate the transcript if deemed necessary?**

A school has until the end of the first grading period to validate an official transcript, and then all credits and grades are to be accepted at face value. For students who do not have an official transcript or are from a home education program, the credits and/or grades will be validated and granted at the end of the first grading period based on scholastic performance.

**17. Can a public school require that a student take the statewide, standardized assessment as the only option for granting credit?**

No, students must be allowed all options listed in question 13 for middle grades or 14 for high school.

**18. How is high school credit granted for courses taken in 8<sup>th</sup> grade at a private school?**

A high school can grant credit based on performance in sequential courses. For example, if a student comes from a private kindergarten – 8th grade school and has completed Algebra 1, then placement of the student in Algebra II and a 2.0 grade point average in Algebra II at the end of the grading period allows the school to grant credit for Algebra I.

**19. Does a public school have to grant credits to a student who attended a private school which allows parents or teachers who are not state-certified to educate the students?**

Yes, Florida Statutes do not regulate the curricula, teacher qualifications or academic programs of private schools. If the private school is listed with the Department of Education as a private school

and has a school number, then the public school must treat the credits and/or grades from this school in accordance with the State Board of Education.

## **20. Are students required to take End of Course examinations in order to receive transfer credit?**

If a student transfers into a Florida high school from out of country, out of state, a private school, or a home school, and that student's transcript shows credit received in Algebra 1, or an equivalent course, the decision as to whether the student must take Florida's statewide, standardized end-of-course (EOC) assessment shall be made by the school principal. A transfer student will not take Florida's Algebra 1 EOC Assessment:

- if the student passed a statewide, standardized EOC assessment in that course, if administered by the transferring school, or achieved a passing score on the high school statewide assessment in mathematics required by the state from which the student transferred for purposes of satisfying the requirements of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. ss. 6301, et seq., or if the student achieves an equivalent score on another assessment as identified pursuant to Section 1008.22(11), F.S.
- A transfer student will take Florida's EOC assessment in Algebra 1 under all other circumstances, and must pass the EOC in order to earn credit in the course.

### **Links for Additional Information**

- The State Uniform Transfer of Credits Rule can be found at <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleNo.asp?id=6A-1.09941>
- The Florida Department of Education, Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, website can be found at <https://www.floridaschoolchoice.org>

### **Contact Information:**

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