

R277. Education, Administration.

R277-726. Statewide Online Education Program.

R277-726-1. Authority and Purpose.

(1) This rule is authorized by:

(a) Utah Constitution Article X, Section 3, which vests general control and supervision of public education in the Board;

(b) Section 53A-15-1210, which requires the Board to make rules providing for the administration of statewide assessments to students enrolled in online courses;

(c) Section 53A-15-1213, which requires the Board to make rules that establish a course credit acknowledgment form and procedures for completing and submitting the form to the Board; and

(d) Section 53A-1-401, which allows the Board to make rules to execute the Board's duties and responsibilities under the Utah Constitution and state law.

(2) The purpose of this rule is to:

(a) define necessary terms;

(b) provide and describe a program registration agreement; and

(c) provide other requirements for an LEA, the Superintendent, a parent and a student, and a provider for program implementation and accountability.

R277-726-2. Definitions.

(1) "Actively participates" means the student actively participates as defined by the provider.

(2) "Course completion" means that a student has completed a course with a passing grade and the provider has transmitted the grade and credit to the primary LEA of enrollment.

(3)(a) "Course Credit Acknowledgment" or "CCA" means an agreement and registration record using the Superintendent provided Statewide Online Education Program form.

(b) Except as provided in Subsection 53A-15-1208(3)(h), the CCA shall be signed by the designee of the primary school of enrollment, and the qualified provider.

(4) (a) "Eligible student" means a student enrolled in grades 6-12 in a course that:

- (i) is offered by a public school; and
- (ii) provides the student the opportunity to earn high school graduation credit.

(b) "Eligible student" does not include a student enrolled in an adult education program.

(5) "Enrollment confirmation" means the student initially registered and actively participated, as defined under Subsection(1).

(6)(a) "Executed CCA" means a CCA that has been signed by all parties and received by Superintendent.

(b) Following enrollment confirmation and participation, Superintendent directs funds to the provider, consistent with Sections 53A-15-1206, 53A-15-1206.5, and 53A-15-1207.

(7) "LEA" or "local education agency" for purposes of this rule includes the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.

(8) "Online course" means a course of instruction offered through the Statewide Online Education Program.

(9) "Online course payment" means the amount withheld from a student's primary LEA and disbursed to the designated provider following satisfaction of the requirements of the law, and as directed in Section 53A-15-1207.

(10) "Online course provider" or "provider" means:

(a) a school district school;

(b) a charter school;

(c) an LEA program created for the purpose of serving Utah students in grades 9-12 online; or

(d) a program of an institution of higher education described in Subsection 53A-15-1205(3).

(11) "Primary LEA of enrollment" means the LEA in which an eligible student is enrolled for courses other than online courses offered through the Statewide Online Education Program.

(12) "Primary school of enrollment" means:

(a) a student's school of record; and

(b) the school that maintains the student's cumulative file, enrollment information, and transcript for purposes of high school graduation.

(13) "Resident school" means the district school within whose attendance boundaries the student's custodial parent or legal guardian resides.

(14) "Statewide assessment" means a test or assessment required under Rule R277-404.

(15) "Statewide Online Education Program" or "program" means courses offered to students under Title 53A, Chapter 15, Part 12, Statewide Online Education Program Act.

(16) "USBE course code" means a code for a designated subject matter course assigned by the Superintendent.

(17) "Withdrawal from online course" means that a student withdraws or ceases participation in an online course as follows:

(a) within 20 calendar days of the start date of the course, if the student enrolls on or before the start date;

(b) within 20 calendar days of enrolling in a course, if the student enrolls after the start date; or

(c) within 20 calendar days after the start date of the second .5 credit of a 1.0 credit course; or

(d) as the result of a student suspension from an online course following adequate documented due process by the provider.

R277-726-3. Course Credit Acknowledgment (CCA) Process.

(1) A student, a student's parent, or a provider may initiate a CCA.

(2)(a) A counselor designated by a student's primary school of enrollment shall review the student's CCA to ensure consistency with:

(i) graduation requirements;

(ii) the student's SEOP;

(iii) the student's IEP;

(iv) the student's Section 504 plan; or

(v) the student's international baccalaureate program.

(b) The primary school of enrollment shall return the CCA to the Superintendent within 72 business hours.

(3)(a) A provider-initiated CCA may be sent directly to the Superintendent if the

course is consistent with the student's SEOP.

(b) The primary school of enrollment is not required to meet with the student or parent.

(c) The Superintendent shall notify a primary school of enrollment of a student's enrollment in the program.

(4) If a student enrolling in the program has an IEP or a Section 504 plan, the primary LEA or school of enrollment shall forward the IEP or description of 504 accommodations to the provider within 72 business hours of receiving notice from the Superintendent that the provider has accepted the enrollment request.

(5) The Superintendent shall develop and administer procedures for facilitation of a CCA that informs all appropriate parties.

R277-726-4. Eligible Student and Parent Rights and Responsibilities.

(1)(a) An eligible student may register for program credits consistent with Section 53A-15-1204.

(b) Notwithstanding Subsection (1)(a), a student's primary LEA of enrollment or the Board may allow an eligible student to enroll in additional online courses consistent with Section 53A-15-1204 with documentation from the LEA.

(2) A student enrolled in a program course may earn no more credits in a year than the number of credits a student may earn by taking a full course load during the regular school day in the student's primary school of enrollment.

(3) An eligible student may register for more than the maximum number of credits described in Subsection 53A-15-1204(2) if:

(a) the student's SEOP indicates that the student intends to complete high school graduation requirements and exit high school before the rest of the student's high school cohort; and

(b) the student's schedule demonstrates progress toward early graduation.

(4)(a) An eligible student is expected to complete courses in which the student enrolls in a timely manner consistent with Section 53A-15-1206.

(b) If a student changes the student's enrollment for any reason, it is the student's or student's parent's responsibility to notify the provider immediately.

(5) A student should enroll in online courses, or declare an intention to enroll, during the high school course registration period designated by the primary LEA of enrollment for regular course registration.

(6) A student may alter a course schedule by dropping a traditional course and adding an online course in accordance with the primary school of enrollment's same established deadline for dropping and adding traditional courses.

(7)(a) Notwithstanding Subsection (6), an underenrolled student may enroll in an online course at any time during a calendar year.

(b) If an underenrolled student enrolls in an online course as described in Subsection (7)(a), the primary school of enrollment may immediately claim the student for the adjusted portion of enrollment.

R277-726-5. LEA Requirements and Responsibilities.

(1) A primary school of enrollment shall facilitate student enrollment with any and all eligible providers selected by an eligible student consistent with course credit limits.

(2) A primary school of enrollment or a provider LEA shall use the CCA form, records, and processes provided by the Superintendent for the program.

(3) A primary school or LEA of enrollment shall provide information about available online courses and programs:

- (a) in registration materials;
- (b) on the LEA's website; and
- (c) on the school's website.

(4) A primary school of enrollment shall include a student's online courses in the student's enrollment records and, upon course completion, include online course grades and credits on the student's transcripts.

R277-726-6. Superintendent Requirements and Responsibilities.

(1) The Superintendent shall develop and provide a website for the program that provides information required under Section 53A-15-1212 and other information as determined by the Board.

(2) The Superintendent shall direct a provider to administer statewide assessments

consistent with Rule R277-404 for identified courses using LEA-adopted and state-approved assessments.

(3)(a) The Board may determine space availability standards and appropriate course load standards for online courses consistent with Subsections 53A-15-1006(2) and 53A-15-1208(3)(d).

(b) Course load standards may differ based on subject matter and differing accreditation standards.

(4) The Board shall withhold funds from a primary LEA of enrollment and make payments to a provider consistent with Sections 53A-15-1206, 53A-15-1206.5, and 53A-15-1207.

(5) The Board may refuse to provide funds under a CCA if the Board finds that information has been submitted fraudulently or in violation of the law or Board rule by any of the parties to a CCA.

(6) The Superintendent shall receive and investigate complaints, and impose sanctions, if appropriate, regarding course integrity, financial mismanagement, enrollment fraud or inaccuracy, or violations of the law or this rule specific to the requirements and provisions of the program.

(7) If a Board investigation finds that a provider has violated the IDEA or Section 504 provisions for a student taking online courses, the provider shall compensate the student's primary LEA of enrollment for all costs related to compliance.

(8)(a) The Superintendent may audit, at the Board's sole discretion, an LEA's or program participant's compliance with any requirement of state or federal law or Board rule under the program.

(b) All participants shall provide timely access to all records, student information, financial data or other information requested by the Board, the Board's auditors, or the Superintendent upon request.

(9) The Board may withhold funds from a program participant for the participant's failure to comply with a reasonable request for records or information.

(10) Program records are available to the public subject to the Government Records Access and Management Act, (GRAMA).

(11) The Superintendent shall withhold online course payment from a primary LEA

of enrollment and payments to an eligible provider at the nearest monthly transfer of funds, subject to verification of information, in an amount consistent with, and at the time a provider qualifies to receive payment, under Subsection 53A-15-1206(4).

(12) The Superintendent shall pay a provider consistent with Minimum School Program funding transfer schedules.

(13)(a) The Superintendent may make decisions on questions or issues unresolved by Title 53A, Chapter 15, Part 12, Statewide Online Program Act or this rule on a case-by-case basis.

(b) The Superintendent shall report decisions described in Subsection (13)(a) to the Board consistent with the purposes of the law and this rule.

R277-726-7. Provider Requirements and Responsibilities.

(1)(a) A provider shall administer statewide assessments as directed by the Superintendent, including proctoring statewide assessments, consistent with Section 53A-15-1210 and Rule R277-404.

(b) A provider shall pay administrative and proctoring costs for all statewide assessments.

(2) A provider shall provide a parent or a student with email and telephone contacts for the provider during regular business hours in order to facilitate parent information.

(3) A provider and any third party working with a provider shall, for all eligible students, satisfy all Board requirements for:

- (a) consistency with course standards;
- (b) criminal background checks for provider employees;
- (c) documentation of student enrollment and participation; and
- (d) compliance with:
 - (i) the IDEA;
 - (ii) Section 504; and
 - (iii) requirements for ELL students.

(4) A provider shall receive payments for a student properly enrolled in the program from the Superintendent consistent with:

- (a) Board procedures;

(b) Board timelines; and

(c) Sections 53A-15-1206, 53A-15-1206.5, 53A-15-1207, and 53A-15-1208.

(5)(a) A provider may charge a fee consistent with other secondary schools.

(b) If a provider intends to charge a fee, the provider:

(i) shall notify the primary school of enrollment with whom the provider has the CCA of the purpose for fees and amounts of fees;

(ii) provide timely notice to a parent of required fees and fee waiver opportunities;

(iii) post fees on the provider website; and

(iv) shall be responsible for fee waivers for an eligible student, including all materials for a student designated fee waiver eligible by a student's primary school of enrollment.

(6) A provider shall maintain a student's records and comply with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Title 53A, Chapter 13, Part 3, Utah Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, and Rule R277-487, including protecting the confidentiality of a student's records and providing a parent and an eligible student access to records.

(7) Except as provided in Subsection R277-726-9, a provider shall submit a student's credit and grade to the Superintendent, primary school of enrollment, and the student's parent no later than:

(a) 30 days after a student satisfactorily completes an online semester or quarter course; or

(b) June 30 of the school year.

(8) A provider may not withhold a student's credits, grades, or transcripts from the student, parent, or the student's school of enrollment for any reason.

(9)(a) If a provider seeks to suspend a student from an online course for disciplinary reasons, the provider is responsible for all student due process procedures, including the IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

(b) A provider shall notify the Superintendent of a student's withdrawal, if the student is suspended for more than 10 days.

(10)(a) A provider shall provide to the Superintendent a list of course options using USBE-provided course codes.

(b) All program courses shall be coded as semester or quarter courses.

(c) A provider shall update the provider's course offerings in January and August

annually.

(11) A provider shall serve a student on a first-come-first-served basis who desires to take courses and who is designated eligible by a primary school of enrollment if desired courses have space available.

(12) A provider shall provide all records maintained as part of a public online school or program, including:

(a) financial and enrollment records; and

(b) information for accountability and audit purposes upon request by the Superintendent and the provider's external auditors.

(13) A provider shall maintain documentation of student work, including dates of submission, for program audit purposes.

(14) A provider is responsible for complete and timely submissions of record changes to executed CCAs and submission of other reports and records as required by the Superintendent.

(15) A provider shall inform a student and the student's parent of expectations for active participation in course work.

(16) An LEA may participate in the program as a provider by offering a school or program to a Utah student in grades 9-12 who is not a resident student of the LEA consistent with Section 53A-15-1205(2).

(17) A program school or program shall:

(a) be accredited by the accrediting entity adopted by the Board consistent with Rule R277-410;

(b) have a designated administrator who meets the requirements of Section 53A-6-110;

(c) ensure that a student who qualifies for a fee waiver shall receive all services offered by and through the public schools consistent with Section 53A-12-103 and Rule R277-407;

(d) maintain student records consistent with:

(i) the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. Sec 1232g and 34 CFR Part 99; and

(ii) Rule R277-487; and

(e) shall offer course work:

(i) aligned with Utah Core standards;

(ii) in accordance with program requirements; and

(iii) in accordance with the provisions of Rules R277-700 and R277-404.

(18) An LEA that offers an online program or school as a provider under the program:

(a) shall employ only licensed Utah educators as teachers;

(b) may not employ an individual whose educator license has been suspended or revoked;

(c) shall require all employees to meet requirements of Sections 53A-15-1503 and 53A-15-1504 prior to the provider offering services to a student;

(d) may only employ teachers who meet the requirements of Rule R277-510, Educator Licensing - Highly Qualified Assignment;

(e) shall agree to administer and have the capacity to carry out statewide assessments, including proctoring statewide assessments, consistent with Section 53A-15-1210(2) and Rule R277-404;

(f) in accordance with Section R277-726-8, shall provide services to a student consistent with requirements of the IDEA, Section 504, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for English Language Learners (ELL);

(g) shall maintain copies of all CCAs for audit purposes; and

(h) shall agree that funds shall be withheld by the Superintendent consistent with Sections 53A-15-1206 and 53A-15-1206.5.

(19) A provider shall cooperate with the Superintendent in providing timely documentation of student participation, enrollment, and other additional data consistent with Board directives and procedures and as requested.

(20) A provider shall post all required information online on the provider's individual website including required assessment and accountability information.

R277-726-8. Services to Students with Disabilities Participating in the Program.

(1)(a) If a student requests services related to a Section 504 accommodation under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a provider shall:

(i) except as provided in Subsection (1)(b), prepare a Section 504 plan for the student; and

(ii) provide the services or accommodations to the student in accordance with the student's Section 504 plan.

(b) An LEA of enrollment shall provide a Section 504 plan of a student described in Subsection (1)(a) to a provider within 72 business hours if:

(i) the student is enrolled in a primary LEA of enrollment; and

(ii) the primary LEA of enrollment has a current Section 504 plan for the student.

(2) For a student enrolled in a primary LEA of enrollment, if a student participating in the program qualifies to receive services under the IDEA:

(a) the student's primary LEA of enrollment shall:

(i) prepare an IEP for the student in accordance with the timelines required by the IDEA;

(ii) provide the IEP described in Subsection (2)(a)(i) to the provider within 72 business hours of completion of the student's IEP; and

(iii) continue to claim the student in the primary LEA of enrollment's membership; and

(b) the provider shall provide special education services to the student in accordance with the student's IEP described in Subsection (2)(a)(i).

(3) If a home or private school student participating in the program qualifies to receive special education services under the IDEA, the home or private school student:

(a) may waive the student's right to receive the special education services; or

(b) subject to the requirements of Subsection (4), enroll in the home or private school student's resident school for the purpose of receiving special education services.

(4) If a home or private school student requests to receive special education services as described in Subsection (3)(b):

(a) the home or private school student's resident school shall:

(i) prepare an IEP for the student in accordance with the timelines required by the IDEA;

(ii) provide the IEP described in Subsection (4)(a)(i) to the provider within 72 business hours of completion of the student's IEP; and

- (iii) claim the student in the resident school's membership; and
- (b) the provider shall provide special education services to the student in accordance with the student's IEP described in Subsection (4)(a)(i).

R277-726-9. Home and Private School Appropriation.

(1) The Superintendent shall allocate the annual appropriation for home and private school tuition, along with any carryover or unobligated funds, as follows:

- (a) 50% of the total appropriation for home school students; and
- (b) 50% of the total appropriation for private school students.

(2) The Superintendent shall receive and accept enrollment requests on a first come, first served basis until all available funds are obligated.

(3) If home school or private school student funds remain by March 1, the Superintendent may release the funds for any pending enrollment requests.

R277-726-10. Other Information.

(1) A primary school of enrollment shall set reasonable timelines and standards.

(2) A provider shall adhere to timelines and standards described in Subsection (1) for student grades and enrollment in online courses for purposes of:

- (a) school awards and honors;
- (b) Utah High School Activities Association participation; and
- (c) high school graduation.

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