

## **Instruction**

### **Virtual/Online Courses/College/University Courses**

The Board of Education believes that education through virtual/on-line courses or through university or college courses is an effective means of instruction for students. A virtual school is hereby defined as an educational organization that offers courses at various grade levels through Internet or Web-based methods. These schools can offer courses to enhance, supplement or enrich the existing curriculum and can also provide an alternative means of instruction. Interactive learning does not require the student to be physically present in the same location as the instructor or other students.

Virtual/on-line courses will be part of this District's educational program delivery system to increase accessibility and flexibility in the delivery of instruction. In addition to regular classroom-based instruction, students in the District may earn credit through programs provided by virtual/on-line courses.

All virtual/on-line educational programs and courses will be consistent with District instructional goals and aligned with Connecticut's academic standards, curriculum frameworks and assessments. The administration is directed to periodically review instructional materials of virtual on-line courses to ensure they meet program standards.

The Board of Education recognizes students may benefit from on-line courses or post-secondary courses to assist students in obtaining credits necessary to earn a New Milford High School diploma, to maintain academic standing, or to provide enrichment for those who might require special courses.

The District will not use on-line courses as the sole medium for instruction in any required subject area for students in grades K-8.

High school students may earn a maximum of three (3) units of academic credit to be applied toward graduation requirements by completing on-line or virtual courses or university/college courses through agencies approved by the Board unless the principal waives that provision in writing stating the reasons why, citing whatever circumstances that has caused this waiver.

Credits from an on-line or virtual course or a university/college course may be earned toward graduation only in the following circumstances:

1. The workload required by the on-line course is equivalent to that of a similar course taught in a traditional classroom setting.
2. The content is rigorous and aligned with curriculum guidelines approved by the State Board of Education, where appropriate.

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3. The course engages students and has interactive components, which may include, but are not limited to, required interactions between students and their teachers, participation in on-line demonstrations, discussion boards or virtual labs.
4. The program of instruction for such on-line coursework is planned, ongoing and systematic.
5. The courses are (a) taught by teachers who are certified in the state or another state and have received training on teaching in an on-line environment, or (b) offered by institutions of higher education that are accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or State Board of Education or regionally accredited;
6. The course is not offered at the District's high school.
7. The high school does offer the course, but the student is unable to take it due to an unavoidable schedule conflict.
8. The course will serve as an alternative or a supplement to extended homebound instruction.
9. The District has expelled the student from the regular school setting, and the student has been offered an alternative educational opportunity.
10. The Principal, with agreement from the student's teachers and parents/guardians, determines the student requires a differentiated or accelerated learning environment.
11. A student has failed a course and wishes to recover credits in that course area.
12. The student's PPT or Section 504 Team has determined it to be an appropriate means of instruction.

As determined by Board/school policy, students applying for permission to take a virtual course will do the following:

- Complete prerequisites and provide teacher/counselor recommendations to confirm the student possesses the maturity level needed to function effectively in an on-line/college learning environment.
- Obtain the written approval of the Principal or his/her designee before a student enrolls in a virtual course or the university/college course.

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- Adhere to the District code of conduct to include rules of behavior and consequences for violations.
- Adhere to attendance requirements of the District.
- Understand that any and all fees imposed on the learner are the sole responsibility of the learner and not the New Milford Board of Education or its designee.

The school must receive an official record of the final grade before awarding credit toward graduation. Only approved courses shall be posted on student transcripts.

Students will have access to sufficient library media resources such as a “virtual library” available through the World Wide Web, laboratory facilities, technical assistance, and hands-on training and information.

- Approval of any course shall be based upon its compliance with Connecticut’s academic standards and requirements.

On-line course delivery must be from institutions accredited by the new England Association of Schools and Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges or Western Association of Schools and Colleges or, if the institution is foreign, recognized by the Connecticut State Department of Education as having appropriate academic standards.

Legal Ref: Connecticut General Statutes Section  
10-221 (Board of Education to prescribe rules, policies and procedures)  
10-221a High school graduation requirements. Student support and remedial services.

Policy adopted: December 9, 2008  
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Policy reviewed: May 21, 2019

NEW MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
New Milford, Connecticut