



**Responsible Office(s):** Office of Academics

## **BOARD POLICY 6505**

### **PATHWAYS TO EARLY COLLEGE CREDIT**

#### **PURPOSE**

The Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of providing opportunities to students that allow them to explore their interests and reach new heights of academic excellence and personal accomplishment. It is important to engage students with a program and curriculum that is academically engaging, rigorous, relevant, and self-directed. To that end, all high school students in the Washoe County School District shall have opportunities to access Pathway programs including Signature Academies, Career and Technical Education, Advanced Placement classes, International Baccalaureate Preparatory Program, and Dual Credit classes.

The Board recognizes that these pathways provide rigorous curricula that allow students the opportunity to earn college credit, as well as develop more rigorous study habits and take on more challenging course work that parallels what students might experience in college level courses. It is the intent of the Washoe County School District to provide courses that challenge students and allow them to build critical thinking skills while working on their ability to collaborate in groups.

#### **POLICY**

1. The District ensures a strong and sustainable pathway course structure that supports the District Strategic Plan and the School Performance Framework. Pathway courses prepare students for post secondary success by challenging students with college level coursework and 21st Century expectations. Pathway courses include, but are not limited to: Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, higher education cooperative programs, dual credit programs, career and technical education, and the District's Signature Academies.
  - a. The Superintendent is authorized to negotiate and enter into cooperative agreements with such institutions of higher education when such agreements are consistent with this policy.
  - b. In accordance with state law, dual credit courses must be approved by the Board of Trustees before being forwarded to the Nevada Board of Education for consideration and final approval.

2. A wide range of Pathway courses in grades 9-12, which are approved by the affiliated agency, are offered by the District.
3. The District has implemented a system of data-driven accountability for all schools. In accordance with District assessment practice, high schools will continue to identify the needs of students using data from ongoing and embedded assessment to ensure timely and equitable support and access to effective programs and pathways for academic success.
4. Program Characteristics
  - a. The Courses and Programs referenced in this policy shall include, but not be limited to, the following characteristics:
    - i. Academic achievement as its core goals, enhanced by thematic programming, teaching philosophies, and real world experiences.
    - ii. Educational equity to ensure all students have access to, participate, and make progress in high-quality learning experiences in order to reach academic success regardless of race, socio economic status, gender, disability, national origin, religion, or other characteristics.
    - iii. An atmosphere that cultivates strong family, community, business, and post-secondary partnerships through systems and processes that maximize student outcomes.
    - iv. Increased student access through the District's awareness activities, communication and transfer procedures.
5. The District will provide ongoing professional development opportunities, giving teachers and leaders the skills and knowledge to educate, guide, and support students and parents in choosing and completing Pathway Courses, gaining 21st Century competencies, and achieving successful postsecondary placement upon graduation.

## **DEFINITIONS**

1. **Advanced Placement Courses:** The Advanced Placement (AP) program, created by the College Board, offers college-level curriculum and examinations to high school students. Advanced Placement Courses cover the breadth of information, skills, and assignments found in corresponding college courses, and colleges in the United States often grant placement and credit to students who obtain above the required score on the examinations.

2. **College and Career Ready:** A high school graduate who is ready to pursue preparation for a highly-skilled career and is admissible to and prepared to succeed in first-year, credit-bearing classes without remediation at a 2- or 4-year college, technical or trade school, or apprenticeship program. A “career” differs from a “job” in that a career offers the opportunity to advance and develop professionally.
3. **21st Century Competencies:** The skills and abilities deemed essential for a person to lead a successful life in the context of the demands of the 21st Century, such as the applied skills of critical thinking, creativity and innovation, communication, and collaboration (North Central Regional Educational Laboratory, 2009; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2011).
4. **International Baccalaureate Programme (IB):** an academically challenging and balanced program of education for students in 11th and 12th grades designed to prepare students for the rigors of college through a focus in six academic areas, and three core activities, as well as promotion of the whole person through independent, critical, and creative thought. The IB program offers college-level curriculum and examinations to high school students. International and domestic colleges often grant placement and credit to students who obtain above the required score on the examinations.
5. **Dual Credit:** credit toward graduation from high school for courses taken at a community college or university (NRS 389.160).
6. **Career and Technical Education:** courses of study that provide rigorous applied curriculum in technical areas to prepare students for college and/or highly skilled careers, global competitiveness, and productive citizenry.
7. **Signature Academies:** themed courses of study that represent a school’s identity, culture, and intent; reflect local and national industry demand; integrate academic concepts with technical skills and acquisition; offers opportunities for students to gain and practice 21st Century competencies; and prepare students for college and career success.
8. **Positive Post Secondary Placement:** a high school graduate who, six months after graduation, is enrolled in a post secondary institution, has entered the military, or is gainfully employed. (Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act, 2006).

## **DESIRED OUTCOMES**

1. Increase the number of students who are challenging themselves through highly rigorous coursework.

2. Increase the number of students who transition to positive postsecondary placement without the need for remediation.
3. Increase the diversity of students enrolled in Pathway courses to reflect the demographics of the District.

### **IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES & ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

1. This policy reflects the goals of the District's Strategic Plan and is aligned to District initiatives, resources, guidelines, and documents.
2. The policy complies with the following WCSD governing documents:
  - a. Board Policy 6400, Assessment
  - b. Administrative Regulation 6500, Advanced Placement / International Baccalaureate Classes
  - c. Administrative Procedure – Advanced Placement
  - d. Administrative Regulation 6171.2, Higher Education Cooperation Programs
  - e. Administrative Procedure – Dual Credit
2. This policy complies with Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and Nevada Administrative Code (NAC), to include:
  - a. Chapter 277, Cooperative Agreements: State, Counties, Cities, Districts and Other Public Agencies, and specifically:
    - i. NRS 277.045, Cooperative agreements between political subdivision for performance of governmental functions; budget for expenses
  - b. Chapter 386, Local Administrative Organization, and specifically:
    - i. NAC 386.612, "Magnet school" defined
  - c. Chapter 389, Examinations, Courses, Standards and Graduation
    - i. NRS 389.160, Credit toward graduation from high school for courses taken at community college or university

### **REVIEW AND REPORTING**

1. This document shall be reviewed as part of the bi-annual review and reporting process, following each regular session of the Nevada Legislature. The Board of Trustees shall receive notification of any required changes to the policy as well as an audit of the accompanying governing documents.

**REVISION HISTORY**

Date	Revision	Modification
11/18/2014	1.0	Adopted: Combined deleted Board Policies 6142, Occupational Education, 6500, AP/IB Classes, 6171.2, Higher Ed Cooperative Programs