

Assessment Tips for Credit Flexibility Web Conference Summary

Friday, May 7, 2010
10–11 p.m. EST

Opening Remarks

Sarah Luchs, associate director of Student Success with the Ohio Department of Education, provided opening remarks. This was the sixth 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, 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 to 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 Assessment Tips for Credit Flexibility and provided participants the opportunity to hear from staff within the Ohio Department of Education as well as from a field expert.

Assessment Tips for Credit Flexibility

Stan Heffner, Associate Superintendent of ODE's Office of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment and Mark Hartman, Battelle for Kids, provided information on understanding the assessment guidance for credit flexibility and provided recommendations for possible district and school approaches.

Things to consider when getting started:

- Decide the best mechanism to use to meet a student needs. Determine if it's appropriate to assess for credit or use acceleration for placement.
- Look to make sure that the assessment (test) or assessment strategies reflect the totality of course expectations.
- Make sure that students know what is expected to successfully earn credit and determine a grade.
- Determine how will you engage and set expectations with students and parents as well as what needs to be communicated to students and parents to set appropriate expectations.

Important Information to Remember

- Keep the focus on students' needs and how to position students to be successful at next level.
- Assessments should not be too easy, but not overly burdensome.
- Flexibility is intended to allow for customization while maintaining quality.
- The emphasis should be on demonstrated knowledge and skills.
- Assessment is not prescriptive; there is no one right way.
- Multiple methods of assessment may be appropriate to determine competency or mastery.

Questions and Answers

Q: *Do schools need to have assessments ready and in place for all classes offered in case a student chooses a credit flex option?*

A: No. Schools should have the criteria in place and a process in place to design an assessment strategy and be ready to go when student requests start coming in. That way schools are not overburdening themselves.

Q: *What is the possibility of waivers for Credit Flexibility – do you have any additional information on that?*

A: It is the full intent of the legislature and the State Board of Education that the Credit Flexibility Policy be fully implemented starting the 2010-2011 school year. [**Note:** Subsequent to the completion of this webinar, ODE released information and applications for a waiver of full implementation. For more information about the waivers, visit the ODE website.]

Q: *Purchasing ACT exams can be very costly for smaller districts – do you have any suggestions?*

A: There is an effort on ACT's part to sell and market end-of-course exams to ESCs. For example, an ESC might buy a packet of Algebra I assessments to serve 20 schools in its region.

Q: *How do we assign a grade to the end-of-the-course exams by ACT?*

A: An example: On the ACT end-of-course exam, if a student gets 50% of the questions correct, they are college ready. The traditional grading system does not work. When you give high stakes, high rigor tests that have great stretch and that can test all levels of college readiness, you are not just going to be able to say this student got an 85% on it so that is a B. You are going to find that your assessments and your grading scale will not be student friendly; therefore, no one will do credit flex. When you are looking at AP tests or the ACT end-of-course tests, or even the CLEP test, you may need to be careful to focus on where the college readiness line is.

Q: *What scenarios can schools and districts consider in terms of their own strategies and approaches to Credit Flexibility?*

A: Some approaches that schools and districts could consider include:

- Schools and districts need to look at their curriculum and decide what pieces can be offered for Credit Flexibility
- Determine what the proof of learning will be, look at the courses that teachers and administrators know really well – and then determine how can it be broken up to show learning and mastery
- What is the reflective piece – as an educator, what is the reflective piece on how to do this better or differently in the next offering or school year? And then for the student – what is the reflective piece for the student on how he or she can expand knowledge around the content area and not just around the various pieces of the tests, assessments and the papers.
- Make sure to look at who is on the review committee. Hopefully, there is a highly qualified teacher on the team, a principal, a counselor, possibly a community

member. This committee will look back at the whole process and make changes as necessary.