

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

## **Introduction**

The State Board of Education Rules were 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 rules increase 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. Rule 6A-1.09941, F.A.C., applies to high school transfers, and Rule 6A-1.09942, F.A.C., applies to middle grades transfers.

The State Uniform Transfer of Students in the Middle Grades Rule applies to out-of-state middle grades transfer students, and states 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. The State Uniform Transfer of High School Credits Rule applies to all high school transfer students, and 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 rules do 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 have passing grades, 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.

The State Board of Education Rules specifically require credits and grades to be accepted at face value, establish limited exceptions where validation can be used, and provide procedures for validation. The rules, therefore, preclude 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 are the State Board of Education Rules 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), Florida Statutes. School choice programs, such as the McKay Scholarship Program, 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 enrolled in an unaccredited private school that is eligible to participate in the state-funded programs, and 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 Rules 6A-1.09941 and 6A-1.09942, F.A.C.

### **2. Do the State Board of Education Rules preempt school and school district policy and the Pupil Progression Plan for transfer of credit?**

Yes, the State Board of Education Rules establish the policy for all public high schools, middle schools, and school districts. The State Board of Education Rules supersede district policy.

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

According to the State Board of Education Rules, 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. Do the State Board of Education Rules 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 Rules state that validation of the official transcript may be done if required by the receiving school's accreditation. If required, validation of the official transcript (credits or grades) will be done through performance during the first grading period.

**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 Rules state that in this situation these courses shall be validated through performance during the first grading period. At the middle school level, grades are to be accepted. 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 Rules were 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 rules 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 in the first grading period.

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

The Alternative Validation Procedures are utilized to validate credits or grades. The Alternative Validation Procedures specified by State Board of Education Rules 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 (not available for middle grades students);
3. Demonstrated performance in courses taken through dual enrollment or at other public or private accredited schools;
4. Demonstrated proficiencies on nationally-normed standardized subject area assessments;
5. Demonstrated proficiencies on the FCAT; or
6. Written review of the criteria utilized for a given subject provided by the former school.

Students must be provided at least 90 calendar days from date of transfer to prepare for either nationally-normed standardized subject area assessments or the FCAT. Each class or course area may be validated independently. Students would be required to validate only those areas not receiving an adequate grade in the first grading period.

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

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

**15. 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.

**16. Can a public school require that a student take the FCAT as the only option for granting credit?**

No, students must be allowed all options listed in question 13.

**17. 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.

**18. 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 Rules.

**19. 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; Geometry, or an equivalent course; or Biology 1, or an equivalent course, the decision as to whether the student must take Florida's statewide, standardized end-of-course (EOC) assessment in Algebra 1, Geometry, or Biology 1, respectively, shall be made by the school principal as follows:

- 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.
  - Geometry EOC Assessment if the student passed a statewide, standardized EOC assessment in that course, if administered by the transferring school, or if the student achieves an equivalent score on another assessment as identified pursuant to Section 1008.22(11), F.S.
  - Biology 1 EOC Assessment if the student passed a statewide, standardized EOC assessment in that course, if administered by the transferring school, 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 assessments in Algebra 1, Geometry, and Biology 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 High School Credits Rule can be found at <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleNo.asp?id=6A-1.09941>
- The State Uniform Transfer of Middle Grade Students Rule can be found at <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/ruleNo.asp?id=6A-1.09942>
- The Florida Department of Education, Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice, Web site can be found at <http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org>

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