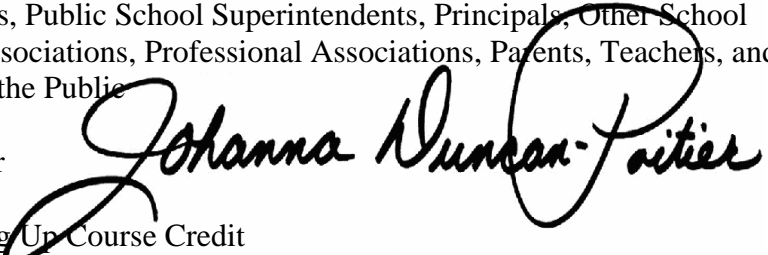




SENIOR DEPUTY COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION – P-16
Office of Elementary, Middle, Secondary and Continuing Education
Office of Higher Education

June 2009

To: District Superintendents, Public School Superintendents, Principals, Other School Officials, Education Associations, Professional Associations, Parents, Teachers, and Interested Members of the Public

From: Johanna Duncan Poitier 

Subject: Field Survey on Making Up Course Credit

Summary: Issue for Public Comment

The Board of Regents is discussing a formal policy for adoption on making up course credit. This draft reflects the input of several educators statewide.

The attached survey is another opportunity to provide feedback that will inform the final determination of the Board of Regents. This survey is available at <http://www.forms2.nysed.gov/emsc/ciai/MakeUp.cfm>. Please distribute this link and information to all interested individuals. The Department will summarize the responses and comments received from the field and forward them to the Regents for discussion and subsequent action for the next school year.

Background

Commissioner's regulations have for many years contained detailed provisions for awarding units of credit to students. Twenty-two units of credit in particular subject areas are required to earn a high school diploma in New York State. Over the years, schools have developed different strategies to accommodate special circumstances and to take advantage of unique learning opportunities. "Making up" course credit (sometimes referred to as credit recovery) is one such example. "Making up" course credit is only intended to help students achieve academic outcomes after they have failed a course or have failed to complete a course. This is not permitted as an alternative to taking a course.

As these pathways are more widely used, it is important to provide clear, up-to-date guidance on what is permissible concerning the awarding of credit. It is also critical that there is sufficient rigor to ensure that all students will meet the competencies required for success in college and the workplace and that credits are transferable. The need is statewide. The following proposal was drafted for Regents consideration and recently discussed. Following that discussion of the Board

there have been a number of meetings to solicit feedback. This survey is another opportunity for that to happen.

The proposal specifies the circumstances and conditions under which students may earn credits through “make-up” opportunities if they fail or do not complete a course. The draft proposal requires that make-up opportunities must be approved by a school-based panel and ensure that the student will master the appropriate learning standards under the guidance of a certified teacher. The proposal does not apply to independent study; the Regents will consider provisions for independent study separately.

Current Regulations Governing the Awarding of Units of Credit

Part 100 of the Regulations contains specific provisions for awarding units of credit to students. Students can currently earn units of credit toward a high school diploma in the following ways:

- Students receive at least 180 minutes of instruction per week throughout the school year (i.e. 108 hours of instruction for a full year course), or the equivalent, and demonstrate their mastery of the learning outcomes in the course ([8 NYCRR § 100.1 \[a\], \[b\]](#)).
- Students may earn a maximum of 6 ½ units of credit by passing a state-developed or state-approved examination with a score of 85 percent or higher and passing an oral examination or completing a special project ([8 NYCRR §§100.1\[b\]\[2\] and 100.5\[d\]\[1\]](#)).

Most students earn credit through the first option after receiving instruction from certified teachers that is designed to ensure the achievement of the State’s learning standards.

The Regulations include additional options for earning units of credit in specific subjects or by specific groups of students:

- Transfer students may be awarded units of credit for work done outside the registered New York State high school in which he/she is enrolling. Principals and other relevant faculty must review a student’s records and award transfer credit if certain criteria are met ([8 NYCRR § 100.5 \[d\] \[5\]](#)).
- Students may obtain the unit of credit in visual arts and/or music, dance or theatre by participating in certain specified performance groups or advanced activities ([8 NYCRR §100.5\[d\]\[2\]](#)).
- Public school grade eight students may be awarded credit for successful completion of high school courses and passing related examinations if certain conditions are satisfied. Grade eight acceleration for diploma credit is offered to students who demonstrate readiness as determined by the superintendent or his or her designee ([8 NYCRR § 100.4 \[d\]](#)).

In addition, summer school can provide opportunities for students to earn credit (8 NYCRR Part 110).

Draft Proposal

Possible Clarifications and/or Amendments to the Regulations to “Make-Up” Incomplete or Failed Course Credit

Sometimes students may come close to passing a course and may have deficiencies only in certain clearly defined areas of knowledge and skill. In those cases, it may not be necessary for the student to retake the entire course. Instead, the student might be permitted to make up those deficiencies, master the appropriate standards, and receive credit. Of course, this should only be allowed under carefully controlled conditions to ensure that the student receives the opportunity to learn and meets the required standards.

We propose that the Regulations be amended to specifically describe what make-up opportunities are permitted for the purpose of earning course credit and under what circumstances they will be allowed for the next school year.

We propose that the Regulations be amended to require for the next school year that:

- **School district officials can provide various programs for students who were previously enrolled in a course but failed to demonstrate mastery of the intended course outcomes.**
- **A school-based panel consisting of the principal, three teachers (not to include the student’s teacher in the course for which the student must make up credit), and one other administrator, must approve all programs for make-up credit. This panel concept already exists in regulation for appeals of Regents Exam grades.**
- **In order to provide the correct program to make up failed or incomplete course credit, the committee must consider each student’s needs and course completion deficiencies.**
- **The program must be aligned with the Regents learning standards.**
- **In order to receive credit, the student must receive equivalent, intensive instruction in the deficiency areas of the course by a teacher certified in the subject area.**
- **The student must also demonstrate mastery of the initial deficiency areas (for example, specific skills in math).**
- **If an end-of-course Regents examination is required for graduation, the student must also pass the Regents examination to fulfill the graduation requirements, and, to the extent determined by the school district, receive course credit.**

The provisions above do not require specific seat time requirements for the make-up opportunity since the opportunity must be tailored to the individual student’s need.