



March 24, 2020

COVID-19 and Delivery of Postsecondary Coursework through Concurrent Enrollment and the Postsecondary Enrollment Options Program

Introduction

This guidance applies to public and nonpublic student enrollments through a school district into postsecondary coursework in concurrent enrollment and/or the Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) program, as well as through a nonpublic school contracting directly with a community college for delivery of concurrent enrollment coursework.

Question and Answer

Q. If a school district closes, but the postsecondary institution continues delivering coursework, is a high school student expected to continue to participate in the postsecondary course if enrolled through concurrent enrollment or the PSEO program?

A. Yes. Even though the student is receiving high school credit, the course is ultimately a postsecondary course and the postsecondary institution has decision-making authority regarding operation of the course. The student should continue to participate in the course, unless specific exemptions are established by the postsecondary institution.

Q. How is a high school student, who previously participated in the postsecondary course delivered at a school district location, expected to continue to access the course if the school district location is closed?

A. The student should access the course according to alternative arrangements established by the postsecondary institution. The postsecondary institution should consult with the school district in establishing alternative arrangements for high school students enrolled in a postsecondary course to ensure options are viable and equitable for all high school students.

Q. Can a high school teacher employed by the school district but teaching a postsecondary course continue to teach the postsecondary course if the school district is closed?

A. This should be determined locally. Even though the teacher is employed by the high school, the teacher is also on contract with the postsecondary institution to teach the course. Therefore, the school district and community college, in consultation with the teacher, should determine whether the teacher continues to instruct the course.

Q. What supports are available to a student enrolled in a postsecondary course through concurrent enrollment or Postsecondary Enrollment Options if the school district is closed?

A. It is specified in statute that a student enrolled in postsecondary coursework through concurrent enrollment and PSEO must have access to the same academic and support services available to tuition-paying postsecondary students. This includes access to tutoring, library services, computer labs, and any other service made available to students by the postsecondary institution. If a school district is closed, the postsecondary institution should take steps to ensure students are made aware of available supports and instructional delivery formats (on-campus, online, etc.).

Q. Can a high school student decide to not continue participating in a postsecondary course?

A. A high school student may drop a postsecondary course according to the established withdrawal policies of both the school district and postsecondary institution. The school district should work with the student to ensure the student is on track to complete all school district graduation requirements and maintains an appropriate course load.

Q. What accommodations, if any, must be provided by the postsecondary institution if a student with an IEP continues participating in a postsecondary course while the district is closed?

A. Institutions of higher education use different sets of decision processes when determining whether an accommodation is appropriate for an individual. If a student with an IEP voluntarily continues to participate in a postsecondary course, the college accommodations team should review documentation including the IEP to ensure that the necessary accommodations, supports and services can continue to be provided. If they cannot, the accommodations and IEP teams should collaborate to determine alternate accommodations, supports, and services that can be provided so that the student can continue to participate in the postsecondary course.

Q. How will a withdrawal from a postsecondary course impact future financial aid eligibility?

A. Course withdrawals, incompletes, failing grades, et cetera can impact future college financial aid eligibility. A student should consult the financial aid office of the postsecondary institution regarding the impact of course withdrawals on future financial aid eligibility.

Q. Can a school district or postsecondary institution modify, temporarily or otherwise, course withdrawal policies for students who do not wish to continue to participate in the postsecondary course?

A. This should be determined locally, with consideration given to whether all students can successfully complete the postsecondary course through the alternative arrangements established by the postsecondary institution. If an institution decides to modify policies, it should do so for all students and offerings equally—the modifications should not be specific to students enrolled through concurrent enrollment or PSEO.

Q. How should a school district record and report a student that drops a postsecondary course for purposes of supplementary weighting?

A. The school district should follow regular reporting processes and procedures established by the Department, unless alternative protocols are established by the Department. If the school district will be billed for the course enrollment, then the course must remain on the student's schedule in order for supplementary weighting to be generated for second semester or third trimester courses.

Q. Does a school district need to pay a postsecondary institution for the coursework if a student drops the course?

A. The school district and postsecondary institutions should continue to follow regular billing and payment practices for concurrent enrollment and PSEO coursework.

Q. If the postsecondary institution extends the semester in order to make up lost instructional time, can a postsecondary course taught at a school district location extend beyond the end of the school district's academic year and continue to be delivered at the school district location?

A. Yes, it is possible for the course to be delivered at a school district location. The school district may need to seek a waiver to continue the school year if the semester will extend beyond July 1. The district should contact Eric Heitz (eric.heizt@iowa.gov; 515-281-4726) at the Iowa Department of Education with questions regarding this topic.