

# **Credit Flexibility Handbook**



**2021-22 School Year**



# Credit Flexibility Handbook

## Ohio's Credit Flexibility Plan:

Senate Bill 311 (the Ohio Core Legislation) raised the graduation requirements for high school students, with the goal of increasing the number of students who are ready to meet the demands of our global and technological age. It included among its several provisions a requirement that by March 31, 2009, the State Board of Education adopted a plan that enabled “students to earn units of high school credit based on a demonstration of subject area competency, instead of or in combination with completing hours of classroom instruction.”

Ohio's plan for credit flexibility is designed to broaden the scope of curricular options available to students, increase the depth of study possible for a particular subject, and allow tailoring of learning time and/or conditions.

Credit flexibility is intended to motivate and increase student learning by allowing:

- Access to more learning resources, especially real-world experiences
- Customization around individual student needs
- Use of multiple measures of learning, especially those where students demonstrate what they know and can do, apply the learning, or document performance.

## How to Access Credit Flexibility:

1. Successfully test out of a required or elective course.
2. Successfully demonstrate mastery through methods such as portfolios, internships, work study, independent study plans, or any combination of these methods.

## General Guidelines/Rules:

- Students must be enrolled in grades 9 – 12 to be eligible to earn credits using credit flexibility plans.
- The number of credits allowed through the flexible credit program is not limited. The only stipulation the district mandates is that the student will not be able to create a credit flexibility plan which would allow that student to take the same course for which credit has already been given.
- Students may receive credit for multiple content areas with the completion of one credit flexibility plan.
- The designated teacher will assign a grade of A, B, C, D or F, as well as a numerical average, for courses on an approved plan. Credits will be awarded as earned on a student's transcript.
- Courses taken through the credit flexibility policy will be included in the calculation of a student's G.P.A. (Grade Point Average). Students who fail to complete or who drop a credit flexibility course after the second week of scheduled classes will be given a WF (Withdraw Failing) on their transcript.
- All credits earned through the Testing Out options will receive a weight no higher than the “Advanced” level unless an “Honors” level exam is available.
- Students will be assigned grades in accordance with their individual plan timelines to satisfy OHSAA requirements, (if applicable).
- Because eligibility for fall sports is calculated based on a student's fourth quarter grades from the previous school year, students and parents are reminded that credits earned

through credit flexibility plans, and reported in the summer months, don't count for eligibility toward fall sport participation.

### **Testing Out of Courses:**

1. Students may test out of courses if they meet the following criteria:
  - The student maintained a B or better average for the previous 2 years in the content area he/she is seeking credit.
  - As part of the approval process, the student provided an explanation describing their prior experience/knowledge of the learning objectives in the course they seek credit (i.e. a list of activities that show this experience).
  - The student applied to take the final exam prior to the end of the school year. (See Appendix C for Application)
2. To receive credit, the student must score 80% or higher on the district adopted assessment for the course in which the student is requesting credit.
  - Note: The Testing Out option is only available for courses that have a district adopted assessment.
3. Students who have not maintained a B or better average for the 2 previous years may seek special permission to test out by meeting with the building principal.
4. The final exam may only be taken once per course.
5. If a student earns a score of 80% or better, he/she will be given that grade as a final course grade, or he/she may elect to enroll in the course and work toward a higher grade. Once a student chooses to enroll in the course, he/she forfeits the opportunity to gain credit through the "testing out" process.
6. All credits earned through the "testing out" process will receive a weight no higher than the "Advanced" level unless an "Honors" level exam is available.
7. Any fees incurred by NWLSD to score tests that are not given to all NWLSD students will be charged to the parents of the student.
8. Students who successfully "Test Out" and accept credit for the requested class(es) are permitted to schedule as many as seven courses/bells during the regular school day. Seniors may choose to reduce the number of courses/bells scheduled during the school day equal to the number of courses that credit was granted through the Testing Out process.

### **Credit Flexibility through Demonstrated Mastery:**

Any student in grades 9 – 12 may be eligible to receive credit through the demonstrated mastery option by developing a plan and completing the application. (Appendix A)

1. The plan for original credit may be submitted during the scheduling process but must be submitted no later than **September 15<sup>th</sup>** to the designated building administrator. Provisions will be made for students that enroll in the district after September 15<sup>th</sup>.
2. The plan must include specific methods the student will use to achieve mastery (i.e. work-study, internship, independent study plans, etc.).
3. The plan must include a calendar timeline with checkpoints for completion.
4. Students earning credits for any existing Northwest Local School District courses on a credit flexibility plan must include completion of any semester exams for these courses as part of the demonstration of mastery.
5. The plan must describe how mastery will be determined, and must specify the number and type of credit (required or elective) the student is requesting.
6. The plan must be reviewed by the Credit Flexibility building committee consisting of one building administrator, one counselor, and two classroom teachers (at least one from the department(s) with which the credit is being requested).
  - The committee will accept or deny the plan.
  - If a plan is denied, a detailed description of the plan's shortcomings will be listed and returned to the student.
  - The student will be given 5 days to re-submit/appeal the decision.
  - All appeals will be heard by a designated district administrator.
7. The parent/guardian of the student will be responsible for any fees incurred outside of what NWLSD students are charged who take courses during the typical school day. All fees associated with credit flexibility courses that replace courses offered in our schools will be refunded or deleted from students' fee sheets.
8. Students who enroll in the district after the school year starts, and who have an approved credit flexibility plan through the student's prior district, must submit the plan to the designated NWLSD building administrator for acceptance when scheduling with the counselor.
9. Students who do not submit requests before the designated date of **September 15<sup>th</sup>** will not be eligible to participate in the Credit Flexibility program during that school year.
11. Students must successfully complete all course prerequisites to gain approval of a Demonstrated Mastery plan.

12. Students scheduled with seven courses/bells during the regular school day, in addition to the courses approved through a Demonstrated Mastery plan, will be responsible for completing all work for the credit flexibility courses outside the regular school day.

13. Students taking credit flexibility courses through approved Demonstrated Mastery plans assigned to bells 1 and 7 may seek and gain approval for late arrival or early dismissal privileges.

14. Students taking credit flexibility courses through approved Demonstrated Mastery plans assigned to classes during bells 2 through 6 will be assigned to a study hall and may not leave the school during these times.

### **Credit Flexibility through Blended Options:**

In order to gain acceptance into the Blended Learning Student Option, students must meet the following requirements:

- Meet all requirements to be eligible for enrollment in the district
- Be enrolled in grades 6 – 12
- Complete an approved Learning Contract (Appendix E)

### **Personalized Student-Centered Learning**

- Students would be enrolled in online courses where the online content of the course has been reviewed by a curriculum administrator or building administrator.
- Students will advance through the content at their own pace based on their individual learning plan. At designated intervals for core classes, students will participate in common assessments or nationally-normed assessments that are correlated to Ohio's State Tests to ensure competency with state standards.
  - Middle school students:
    - Must take NWEA MAP three times per year to measure growth
    - Must take Ohio State Tests
  - High school
    - Must take MAP and Course Midterms and Finals
    - Must take Ohio State Tests (End of Course Exams)
- During the course of a week, complete 2.5 hours of direct face-to-face instruction and a minimum of 25 hours of online work and/or adequate progress defined in the learning contract.
  - If students do not meet set benchmarks for each common assessment or time outlined in the learning contract, additional hours of face to face instruction will be mandated to remediate and reteach content.
  - If students do not meet content progression benchmarks outlined in the learning contract, students will be required to attend additional hours of face to face instruction.
  - If students fall behind benchmarks more than twice in a year and are in jeopardy of not earning credits online, participation in the Blended Learning Option may be revoked, and the student may be assigned to return to their home school, to an alternative placement, or to traditional classes.

### Student Access to Technology

- Students accessing the Blended Learning option will be provided a district Chromebook.
- The provided technology will be equipped with web filtering software.
- Students will be responsible for the care of the technology as outlined in the Acceptable Use Policy.



**Appendix A**  
**Application for Credit Flexibility**  
**Northwest Local School District**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Birth Date:** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ID#:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

List the Northwest Local School District course(s) for which the Credit Flexibility plan will be used: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle the number of credits associated with the credit flexibility proposal:

.25

.50

1.0

Circle the type of course(s):    Required Credit        Elective Credit

What is your purpose for taking a credit flexibility class and how does it relate to your future goals?

What prerequisites have you taken to prepare you to take this course?

Methods for demonstrating mastery for credit (you must select at least three):

\_\_\_ Project(s)

\_\_\_ Test/Quizzes

\_\_\_ Performance Indicators

\_\_\_ Labs (must be selected if a lab based course)

\_\_\_ Research Paper/Project

\_\_\_ Portfolio

\_\_\_ Culminating Project

\_\_\_ Internship through \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Other (be specific) \_\_\_\_\_



**Application for Credit Flexibility  
Northwest Local School District**

Attach a detailed explanation explaining the planned methods for achieving credit.

Attach a timeline for achieving credit including evaluation checkpoints and completion date. Include at least two dates for in-school assessments to be administered (be specific).

Resources requested of Northwest Local School District:

Each course has a series of learning objectives that are addressed throughout the course. Please attach information to this application explaining how your proposal meets each of the learning outcomes for the course. Learning objectives for approved courses from Northwest Local School District may be obtained by accessing the district website ([www.nwlsd.org](http://www.nwlsd.org)).

Please tell us if you plan on participating in high school athletics during this school year. Since eligibility requires students to earn passing grades in 75% of their current classes, this information will help athletic administrators and coaches better track your performance.

**TO RECEIVE CREDIT:**

**A completed “Credit Flexibility Verification” form must be submitted to the administration when this option is completed.**

**Application for Credit Flexibility  
Northwest Local School District**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Current Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ID#:** \_\_\_\_\_

**To the STUDENT:**

Please read the following statements and then initial next to the statements indicating that you have read and understand the policies related to Credit Flexibility.

I understand that:

- \_\_\_\_\_ If my credit flexibility proposal is accepted, I will earn a numerical grade for the course that equates to a letter grade (A, B, C, D, F).
- \_\_\_\_\_ The grade that I earn will appear on my transcripts, regardless of the final grade.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Credit will be granted at the end of the Northwest Local School District's grading periods for all credit flexibility courses.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I may not drop a credit flexibility course after the designated drop date.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Academic honesty rules apply just as they do in a traditional class setting.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I must meet attendance requirements set forth by my plan.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am responsible for ensuring that I have met graduation requirements by established deadlines to participate in senior graduation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have discussed with my guidance counselor how the outcome of this credit flexibility class will impact my schedule and graduation requirements.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If my credit flexibility class is scheduled bells 1 or 7, I must gain approval for late arrival or early dismissal.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If my schedule does not include seven courses for the school day and I have been scheduled into my credit flexibility class during bells 2 through 6, I will be assigned a study hall and I may not leave school during these times.

***Your signature indicates that you have discussed the above statements with your parents, understand the commitment you are making, and agree to the policies set forth by Northwest Local School District.***

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

***Your signature relieves Northwest Local School District of any liability for your child during times in which your child is not required to be at school due to this credit flexibility proposal, should it be accepted.***

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**CREDIT FLEXIBILITY**  
**FOR OFFICE USE ONLY**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Birth Date:** \_\_/ \_\_/ \_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ID#:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date Application Submitted:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Received by:** \_\_\_\_\_

(Administrator)

**Submission Approval:**

**Approved**

**Denied**

**Reason(s) for Denial of Submission:**

**Resubmission Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Administrator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**C:     Counselor**  
      **District Administrator**



**Appendix B**  
**Credit Flexibility Grade Verification Form – Demonstration of Mastery**  
**Northwest Local School District**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Birth Date:** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Home Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ID#:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Current Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Credit Flexibility Course:** \_\_\_\_\_

**VALIDATION:**

*I verify that I have met all the requirements and deadlines for completion of my credit flexibility option. I have successfully completed the established methods of completion, which meets the approved assessment plan.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Teacher Date

**APPROVAL:**

I approve the Credit Flexibility Option for entry into the above named student's permanent records as follows:

**Course Title:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Weight of Course:** Advanced or Honors

**Grade:**        A        B        C        D        F

**Numerical Percentage:** \_\_\_\_\_

**# of Credits:** .25     .50     1.0

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Administrator** **Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Counselor** **Date**



**Appendix C**  
**Application for Testing Out – Credit Flexibility**  
**Northwest Local School District**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Student ID#** \_\_\_\_\_ **School** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone #** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Criteria for Application**

- The student maintained a B or better average in the content area for the previous 2 years.
- The student must achieve 80% or higher on the test to show mastery and receive credit.
- The final exam may only be taken once per course.
- The student passing the test will be given the grade earned on the test or the student may elect to enroll in the course and work toward a higher grade. Once a student chooses to enroll in the course, he/she forfeits the opportunity to gain credit through the testing out process.
- All credits earned through this process will be weighted advanced credit unless an honors level exam is available.
- Any fees incurred by NWLSD to score tests that are not given to all NWLSD students may be charged to the parents of the student.
- As part of the approval process, students must provide an explanation of their prior experience/knowledge of the learning objectives in the course they seek credit (i.e. a list of activities that show this experience).

**Final Grades from previous 2 years: (attach a copy of the evidence to this form)**

Year 1: Grade \_\_\_ Evidence \_\_\_ Report Card \_\_\_ Transcript \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_

Year 2: Grade \_\_\_ Evidence \_\_\_ Report Card \_\_\_ Transcript \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_

**Test-Out Class** \_\_\_\_\_

**Explanation of Content Experience** \_\_\_\_\_

**All applications must be received by the designated high school administrator by May 1<sup>st</sup> to be considered to “test out” of a course.**

**Signature:**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Appendix D**  
**Credit Flexibility Grade Verification Form – Testing Out**  
**Northwest Local School District**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Birth Date:** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Home Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ID#:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Current Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Credit Flexibility Course:** \_\_\_\_\_

**VALIDATION:**

I verify that I have met all the requirements and deadlines for completion of my credit flexibility option. I have successfully completed the established methods of completion, which meets the approved assessment plan.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Teacher Date

**APPROVAL:**

I approve the Credit Flexibility Option for entry into the above named student's permanent records as follows:

**Course Title:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Weight of Course:** Advanced or General

**Grade:**        A        B        C        D        F

**Numerical Percentage:** \_\_\_\_\_ **# of Credits:** ¼ ½ 1

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Administrator** **Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Counselor** **Date**



## Appendix E Blended Learning Contract Northwest Local School District

The learning contract outlines the responsibilities and requirements for students accepting the Blended Learning Option. Students electing this option will need to meet progress benchmarks maintaining or exceeding grade level progressions as determined by building administration.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Home School: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_

The following benchmarks are set to maintain current student progress and maintain good standing in their grade level progression. Additional weekly and quarterly goals will be set with the instructor.

Course Information	Curricular Benchmarks	Deadline
English I	Semester 1 assignments and Midterm	December 30, 2018

The student agrees to meet the following time requirements:

- Face to Face Instruction (Check-In): 2.5 Hours or \_\_\_\_\_
  - Check-In Location/Day/Time: \_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_
- Independent Work: 25 Hours or \_\_\_\_\_
- Point of contact for purposes of tracking progress: \_\_\_\_\_
- First Expected Log In Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- First Expected Check-in Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Students who do not meet weekly goals, time requirements, and/or determined benchmarks may have their face-to-face time increased. If students miss benchmarks more than twice, their ability to exercise the blended learning option may be revoked and the student may be placed back in their home school, in an alternative placement, or would be enrolled in traditional courses.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Official Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date