

# PUBLIC EDUCATION ONLINE

STATEWIDE ONLINE EDUCATION PROGRAM

*“Enabling Students to earn high school graduation credit through the completion of publicly funded online courses.”*

April 27, 2016

## STATEWIDE ONLINE EDUCATION PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### 1. What is the Statewide Online Education Program?

- a. The Statewide Online Education Program (Program) allows students to take up to 6.0 credits per academic year online from a Provider that is outside of their “primary” school district or charter school, in order to fulfill graduation requirements at their Primary School of Enrollment.
- b. Courses offered by a school district or charter school to its own students are not covered by this Program.
- c. Credits taken online through this program *replace* credits the student would take at their own school; students should expect to drop a course to “make room” for an online one, if they do not already have room available in their schedule. Only credit-bearing courses are considered.
- d. It is unlikely that school districts and charter schools will allow a student to register for more courses than what would be considered a full day; this will be a matter of district or charter school policy and schools may impose a fee to cover unfunded costs, if this has been incorporated into their published fee schedule..
- e. Allowable credits are determined by an ordinary course load for the whole school year, versus just a semester. For instance, a student may take 9 courses now and 7 courses next semester if 8 courses per semester is a “normal” load.

### 2. Are all students eligible to participate in this program?

- a. All 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade students enrolled in a school district or charter school in Utah, including students with disabilities and English language learners, are eligible for enrollment under Program statutes (§53A- 15-1202(2)).
- b. Home-schooled or private school students with a custodial parent who is resident in the state of Utah are eligible.
- c. Carson Smith Scholarship recipients are eligible for this program.

### 3. How do I enroll?

- a. Visit the [Utah State Office of Education web site](#), and click on (1) the Link titled "[Online Education Program](#)," and then (2) the "[Students and Parents](#)" tab, on the left-hand side of the screen.
- b. Click on [SOEP Utah Public Education Online Enrollment by Course](#) link

### 4. What distinguishes online providers in this program?

- a. The cost of SOEP courses is covered by per pupil funding distributed to K-12 public schools. It allows your school to offer you access to online courses offered by other schools that have agreed to allow students from across the state in their online courses, alongside their own students.
- b. Courses are taken to earn high school credit that is automatically accepted by your Primary School of Enrollment, for purposes of graduation at that Primary School of Enrollment.
- c. Online Course Providers are school districts, charter schools or a district or charter school programs created for the purpose of serving Utah students grades 9-12 online (*R277-726-1(K)*).
- d. Providers are accredited for 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade education through the AdvancEd, which is the accrediting commission recognize by the Utah State Board of Education for acceptance toward graduation requirements at Utah Public School. Credit is *automatically* accepted by a school district or charter school, and will appear on student transcripts when a student passes a course.
- e. A student cannot earn a failing grade – instead they do not receive credit for passing the course. However, students have until graduation to compete credit (although this is not advised, because few students have completed courses successfully far past the expected completion date).
- f. Teachers assisting students are "highly qualified" per state and federal law applicable to K-12 public schools.
- g. Providers may only offer course content aligned with Utah Core standards.

### 5. Is this Dual Enrollment?

- a. No, Dual enrollment applies only to a situation in which a student is enrolled "dually" in a Home School, for part of the day, and in a public school for the other part of the day.

**6. Is this Split Enrollment?**

- a. No. Split Enrollment is a situation where a student is regularly enrolled student at two schools. The student is eligible for graduation and other services at both schools. A student is not regularly enrolled in the online course provider school, when they participate in online courses through the Statewide Online Education Program.
- b. The student is a regularly enrolled student only at their Primary School of Enrollment. They are eligible for Graduation, Counseling, Sports, Co-curricular Activities such as band, only at the Primary School of Enrollment. The Primary School of Enrollment also remains in charge of the student's Special Education planning (IEP), although an online provider must provide services as directed by that IEP.
- c. The student is "in membership" (for funding and other purposes) only at the primary school of enrollment, which state law defines as the school in which the student is enrolled for courses other than online courses offered through the Statewide Online Education Program.

**7. Does my child's IEP need to be amended when we request enrollment in online course?**

- a. Yes. In 100% of all cases, an IEP should be updated to reflect the child's needs in a specifically online environment. A student may require physical aids, supplementary vocabulary, or other supports.

**8. Can my Primary School of Enrollment tell me that I am not allowed to enroll in these courses?**

- a. No, so long as a student has credits available in their schedule, and they choose a course that is consistent with their SEOP, then the student has the right to enroll. However, if a student needs to drop a course in their schedule at their Primary School of Enrollment in order to make room for an online course, then they must do so by the ordinary drop date that is published by their school for traditional courses.

**9. My school says that I have to enroll in courses at this school (my Primary School of Enrollment) for at least half of my classes or they will not permit me to be enrolled. Is this ok?**

- a. No. There is no requirement for you to take any courses whatsoever at your Primary School of Enrollment, although we assume that you will want to. We assume that you attend this school for its own unique characteristics, and the community of friends and activities that you find there, in addition to academic concerns.
- b. A student could take all 24 courses required for graduation online, and still qualify to

receive a high school diploma from their Primary School of Enrollment, which would remain in charge of certifying that the student had met state-mandated graduation requirements, and additional graduation requirements (if any) required by that school. The student is considered to be fully enrolled in their Primary School of Enrollment for all periods in which they are enrolled in online courses, and the Primary School of Enrollment remains in charge of directing your education, and offering you any additional services outside of online courses that you need to succeed (such as counseling services and graduation, and access to physical facilities), or that you wish to take advantage of (such as sports, band, or clubs).

**10. My school has told me that I have to take courses from the online provider that the school offers, and that I cannot take courses through the Statewide Online Education Program. Can a school do this?**

No. Assuming that you have space available in your schedule, you cannot be restricted to utilizing the courtesy option that the school makes available to you. State Law allows you to access courses through the Statewide Online Education Program regardless of the fact that your school offers you additional options.

**11. I want to take online courses to make up credit for a course I failed, or earned a poor grade in previously. Is the Statewide Online Education Program available for this purpose?**

While a Primary School of Enrollment may allow a student to take courses for purposes of remediation, ordinarily the program would not be recommended for this purpose, because this program requires the student to drop an equivalent credit value from their schedule at their Primary School of Enrollment.

When a student retakes a course at the expense of another course that is not needed for graduation, in general this may not be helpful. A school may allow a student to take such a course without dropping equivalent credit, but this is unlikely because it represents a cost to the school which is not funded through state per-pupil distributions.

**12. What if I want to take excess courses, beyond 8 credits allowed per year by my school?**

You can only do so if you (a) have an SEOP for Early Graduation, and (b) that SEOP uses the excess courses to advance your graduation date, so that you are using the extra courses to make progress toward early graduation.

**13. My student is currently living in a residential treatment center, and we would like to access courses through the Statewide Online Education Program. Is this possible?**

No. State law applicable to these centers requires that the center bears the cost of the child's education.

**14. I want to enroll in summer courses. Can I?**

Yes, although only some online providers work through the summer. However, these credit hours will count towards the next school year, and as a result they will count against the credit hours that you will be allowed to take in the remainder of this school year.

**15. I want to enroll in summer courses between my 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade years, and I will be switching schools between my 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade years.**

A student will need to first enroll in the school that he or she will attend in the upcoming year, and should select the appropriate Counselor at the at the new school as their designated Counselor.

**16. If I switch schools, do I need to notify the Utah State Office of Education to move my student account over to the newschool?**

Yes. Contact information is available [here](http://www.schools.utah.gov/edonline/Contact-Us.aspx), at [www.schools.utah.gov/edonline/Contact-Us.aspx](http://www.schools.utah.gov/edonline/Contact-Us.aspx).

**17. When should I enroll?**

You are asked to enroll in online courses at the same time that you enroll in courses at your home school. There is always 10 business days between the date that you file and enrollment request, and the date on which you and the online provider receive email notice that you can proceed with courses. Schools in this program are ordinary schools, and they start courses at the beginning of semesters and quarters (not trimesters). If you request and enrollment too late, the provider will not accept the enrollment.

**18. I want to enroll in an A.P. course. When should I register? Who will administer an A.P. test?**

A.P. courses and a few other courses begin only in the fall, and so you should register early enough to be enrolled and ready to go by mid-August. A few A.P. courses are not full-year courses, but these are exceptions.

You may register for an A.P. test through the [College Board](http://CollegeBoard.com) web-site. Neither a Provider LEA nor a Primary LEA is *required* to facilitate A.P. testing.

**19. I want to enroll in Drivers Education? Where do I do my driving instruction?**

The written portion of the Driver Education course is administered online. The road portion will need to be arranged at a [Division of Motor Vehicles](http://DivisionofMotorVehicles.com), or your local high school.

**20. How are fee waivers handled?**

A student whose family qualifies for a fee waiver may not have to pay fees or purchase materials that would ordinarily be free to the student at the student's primary school district of enrollment. If your Primary School of Enrollment determines that you are fee waiver

eligible, then you will be fee waiver eligible with respect to fees charged by an online provider. Providers may charge fees consistent with other secondary schools. If the Provider intends to charge fees, however, the Provider must notify the primary school of enrollment with whom the Provider has the CCA of the purpose for fees, amounts of fees, and provide timely notice to parents of required fees and fee waiver opportunities. It must also post fees on Provider website.

**21. Can my school district or charter school choose *not* participate in the Statewide Online Education Program?**

- a. No. State law requires that the Statewide Online Education Program is an *option for ALL 9-12<sup>th</sup> grade students*, even in school districts and charter schools with existing online programs.
- b. School counselors and other staff may not discourage enrollment with or give preference to one online provider over another (§53A-15-1204(5)), including online options offered by a school or district to its own students.

**22. Who is the “primary LEA of enrollment,” and who is the “primary school of enrollment?”**

- a. The *primary LEA of enrollment* means a student’s *school district or charter school* in charge of locally administering education (LEA) (§53A-15-1202(9), R277-726-1(L)). Utah law defines a "Primary LEA of enrollment" as the LEA in which an eligible student is enrolled for courses other than online courses offered through the Statewide Online Education Program.
- b. The *primary school of enrollment* means a student’s *school or charter school of record*, where the student takes the *majority* of his/her classes. This school maintains the student’s cumulative file, enrollment information and transcript (R277-726-1(M)).

**23. How can I evaluate a Provider?**

- a. Providers must administer state-designated assessments, and post results on their websites (R277-473; R277-726-7(A)).
- b. The Utah State Board of Education posts an [Annual Report on the Performance of Online Providers](#) which may be used to evaluate the quality of a Provider (§53A-15-1211).
- c. Call and talk to Providers. Their staff can tell you about unique features of their programs using contact information on links listed on the [Utah State Office of Education/SOEP website](#).

**24. Can a student “make up” credits or take “extra” credits through this program?**

- a. Maybe.

- b. *If your school district or charter school allows this, you may register for courses that you take in addition a full course load at your primary school. Your school district or charter school may charge a fee for these courses.*
- c. If a school district or charter school does not allow a student to make up credits through this program, a student may still access options that the school or district provides to its own students, including Electronic High School, which are free.

**25. My child wants to take an online course offered through his boundary school, which is a member of an online consortium with other school districts to offer their students online courses. Does this require us to file a CCA?**

- a. No.

**26. Can a student take additional credits now, to allow a student to graduate early later on?**

- a. Yes.
- b. An SEOP must provide for early graduation.

**27. My daughter is active in sports, and needs to maintain a certain GPA to participate. Will her online courses count toward her athletic eligibility? Can the coach check her grades and attendance?**

- a. These topics should be discussed with a School Counselor. A school of record will standards for student grades and enrollment in online courses for purposes of: (1) school awards and honors, and (2) Utah High School Activities Association participation, and (3) graduation requirements.
- b. Your daughter must notify her Coach that she is taking online courses, and she should notify the online Provider that the Coach will be checking her grades and progress periodically throughout the semester.
- c. NOTE: An online course may or may not count towards NCAA eligibility. Each Provider must submit courses to NCAA separately for eligibility "approval." Approval depends on the method of instruction and supervision, and other factors.

**28. Will my child be allowed to remain on the school campus for periods in which he is registered for an online course?**

- a. Maybe.
- b. Neither the primary school nor the provider school is *required* to offer physical space and/or supervision during periods of online enrollment. You are taking the courses to fulfill graduation requirements at the Primary School of Enrollment, and this school retains funding to meet the child's needs outside of the online courses, so certainly this may be requested.

**29. If my daughter has Release Time for one period, does this allow her to enroll in an online course for this period?**

- a. Yes.
- b. There is no need to drop any release time to accommodate online enrollment.

**30. Can a student take half of a full-year course online, and the other half in a traditional classroom?**

- a. Yes.

**31. What if a student registers in the spring, and changes their mind once they begin coursework, in the fall. Can a student withdraw?**

- a. Yes.
- b. A student may withdraw up to 20 days after course begins, or after a semester break.
- c. Students and parents are responsible for notifying Providers immediately of any change in plans affecting enrollment.

**32. My child is enrolled at our local high school in traditional courses for three courses, and home- schooled otherwise. I would like to enroll my student in online courses. How can this be done?**

When a student is released for home schooling but also chooses to participate in public school to a limited extent, this is called “dual enrollment.” When the dually-enrolled student registers online, using our SEATS enrollment system, they must list their school as the public school that they currently attend. Online enrollment increases the public education portion of the student’s day, and decreases the home school portion because the home school portion is considered to be only that portion of a regular school day wherein the student is not attending public school, and has therefore requested a release from compulsory education requirements. The student may not enroll as a home school student, in other words, because the enrollment is thought of as widening the extent of their public school enrollment.

**33. Who is accountable for students eligible for services under the IDEA and Utah State Board of Education Special Education Rules (USBE SER)?**

- a. The Utah State Board of Education (USBE) has determined that only one LEA retains accountability for a student’s receipt of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Based on that determination, for purposes of this Statewide Online Education Program, accountability for FAPE and compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and USBE Special Education Rules (USBE SER), including monitoring and dispute resolution, lies with the primary LEA of enrollment. Primary LEAs of enrollment will need to develop policies and procedures for implementing the Program. Those policies and



procedures should include provisions for students with disabilities (R277-726-3, 5). For students with an IEP, participation in the Statewide Online Education Program will require a revision of the student's IEP; this would be initiated by the counselor at the primary school of enrollment or based on the LEA's specific policies and procedures for implementing this program. The IEP team should invite a member of the online provider staff to serve on the IEP Team.

- b. School districts are encouraged to develop policies that will ensure proper review of IEP and 504 Accommodation Plans prior to decisions to enroll students in online courses, and to provide notice to providers of necessary accommodations subsequent to provider acceptance of a Course Credit Acknowledgement but prior to a student beginning participation in a course.
- c. Online course providers (Providers) are expected to comply with IDEA and Sections 504 and 508 requirements (R277-726-7(C)). Providers in the Statewide Online Education Program must provide the special education services and accommodations that the student requires, as per the IEP or 504 plan (*Id*). If a Board investigation finds that a Provider has violated IDEA or Section 504 provisions for students taking online courses, the Provider shall compensate the student's Primary LEA of enrollment for all costs related to compliance (R277-726-6(G,H,I,J)).
- d. For enrollment in this program by any student, a Course Credit Acknowledgement (CCA) form has been developed by the USOE and is available on the USOE website. This includes clarification about whether a student has an IEP or 504 plan.
- e. The primary school of enrollment will designate a counselor to review the CCA form to ensure consistency with graduation requirements, the student's SEOP, and the student's IEP or Section 504 plan, if applicable (R277-726-3(B)). If approved, the counselor gives preliminary approval to the CCA and submits the CCA (R77-726-3, 5).
- c. Each LEA should develop policies and procedures for the administration of this program. As the gatekeeper of the CCA process, the counselor should establish whether the student has an IEP or Section 504 plan and include relevant school staff, such as the IEP team or student's teacher(s), in the preliminary approval process. If a student with an IEP wants to enroll in the program, it is recommended that the student's IEP team meet to consider and plan for the requested changes in order to ensure that the student will continue to receive the special education and related services required for a free appropriate public education (FAPE). *A primary school of enrollment must transmit IEP or 504 Accommodation plans to the online provider within 72 business hours of receiving notice that the provider has accepted an online enrollment.*

**34. The student's IEP team and CCA counselor may consider the following questions helpful in determining the student's need for services and/or accommodations in the online subject matter or in accessing the online course content.**

- a. How might the student's current IEP need to be modified or amended to ensure FAPE in light of attendance in the Program? *Consider the following:*
  - i. What is the expected impact on academics and social emotional development of the student? Consider both intended and unintended consequences.
  - ii. Has the student had specific instruction in using a variety of programs on the computer?
  - iii. Has the team considered the technological skills required for this class?
  - iv. Has the team considered what specialized instruction the student may require for this class?
  - v. Has the team considered the need for supplementary aids and services for this class?

**35. What about student confidentiality?**

- a. Providers are responsible for confidentiality provisions in State and Federal law. All Providers in the Program are familiar with confidentiality requirements applicable to public education.

**36. What do I do if my child wants to drop a course?**

- a. Contact the provider. If the student is still within the 20 days allowed for Withdrawal, there is no problem dropping the course. If it is later, USOE will contact your school counselor and the provider to determine what action should be taken.
- b. You may also contact the USOE Statewide Online Education Program specialist at (801) 538-7660 or [cory.kanth@schools.utah.gov](mailto:cory.kanth@schools.utah.gov).

**37. What do I do if my child wants to drop a course?**

- a. Contact the provider and your Counselor.
- b. If the student is still within the 20 days allowed for Withdrawal, there is no problem dropping the course. If it is later, USBE will contact your school counselor and the provider to determine what action should be taken.

**38. You may also contact the USBE Statewide Online Education Program Specialist at (801) 538-7660 or [cory.kanth@schools.utah.gov](mailto:cory.kanth@schools.utah.gov).**