



Postsecondary Institution Response to Changes in Secondary Education Due to Coronavirus (COVID-19) (4/15/2020) updated 5/6/2020

Many changes have occurred or may yet occur in Idaho high schools that affect admissions, placement, and scholarship decisions for incoming college students for the 2020-2021 academic year, and possibly the 2021-2022 academic year. All of the public postsecondary institutions in Idaho desire to do everything possible to hold incoming students harmless from the effects of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

This document provides a brief update on how Idaho's public postsecondary institutions are responding to many of these changes, specifically related to dual credit courses, regular high school courses, college entrance exams, Advanced Placement testing, other graduation requirements, the Idaho Standards Achievement Test, and general disruptions to learning that high school students are likely experiencing.

This update relates only to Idaho's public postsecondary institutions. The State Board of Education does not have detailed information about how private postsecondary institutions in Idaho are responding to these changes in Idaho high schools.

Dual Credit Courses

High schools have moved all of their courses to a distance education format, including dual credit courses. As a result of this change, school districts and charter schools are considering changing their grading methodologies for this final semester or trimester, including looking at pass/fail grading. Pursuant to Board policy Section III.Y. Advanced Opportunities, the grading standard for dual credit courses taught at a high school must meet the same grading standard as the on-campus counterpart. The transition in the high schools to a pass/fail grading standard in dual credit courses needs to be done in conjunction with the postsecondary institution offering the college credit for the courses. The grading for dual credit courses is under the purview of the postsecondary institutions. All Idaho postsecondary institutions are currently working with the high schools to determine changes in grading policies for dual credit courses that are in the best interest of students.

Board policy III.V. Articulation and Transfer governs the transfer of credits based on a student earning the credit regardless of the grading methodology. The institutions have agreed to accept transfer credit for pass (P) grades in dual credit courses from the other postsecondary institutions in Idaho, as they would have if letter grades had been assigned. Students who receive a P grade in a dual credit course **will not be** required to take any additional placement tests related to the course at any public postsecondary institution in Idaho. Students who

receive a P grade in a dual credit course **will be** allowed to take the next course in the curricular sequence, as applicable.

All postsecondary institutions have agreed to grant college credit that is earned by a student in a dual credit course that has been moved to virtual delivery. Most postsecondary institutions have already extended or are working to extend the drop and withdrawal dates for their Spring Semester courses, which include dual credit courses. High schools that have articulation agreements with a postsecondary institution for granting technical competency credits should review their agreements to make sure changing the grading standard will not impact students' ability to be awarded credit when they matriculate. If credit is based on a letter grade, the high school should work with the postsecondary institution to update the agreement as necessary.

Regular High School Courses

Some high schools are moving to pass/fail grading for all high school courses, which may affect students' Grade Point Averages (GPA). Pass/fail grading in regular high school courses is not anticipated to have significant impacts on admission, placement, or scholarship decisions at the postsecondary institutions. For example, Lewis-Clark State College plans to use 7th semester transcripts in making scholarship awards for Fall 2020 incoming freshmen. However, the postsecondary institutions may need to address potential impacts of course-specific pass/fail grades on admissions to some professional programs, like nursing and educator preparation programs.

The State Board and State Department of Education are working together to determine what impact pass/fail grading in high school courses may have on Direct Admissions, Apply Idaho, and the Opportunity Scholarship. More information on this issue is forthcoming.

College Entrance Exams

In March 2020, the State Board waived the college entrance exam high school graduation requirement for students on track to graduate in 2020. The board directed staff to address the requirements in the 2020/2021 rulemaking process for students on track to graduate in 2021. In addition, the SAT School Day was canceled and coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions are limiting many students' ability to take the exam this spring even if they desire to do so. The State Department of Education is currently working on two options for this year's Juniors: 1) A potential SAT School Day in the fall; and 2) A fee waiver that will allow students to take the test at a later date on their own, if they wish to do so, at no cost to students. The College Board is also working toward providing monthly testing opportunities throughout the summer, if social distancing restrictions allow.

The community colleges have open admission policies and do not require a college entrance exam. The postsecondary institutions that do require a college entrance exam score for admissions and scholarships decisions are currently considering how to respond to these

realities in ways that hold students harmless. Pursuant to Board policy III.Q. Admissions Standards, students who are not admitted under the Board's Direct Admissions program are required to take a college entrance exam or other standardized diagnostic test for standard admissions and students seeking provisional admittance must take at least two testing indicators for assessing competency and placement at the four-year institutions. The postsecondary institutions may request a waiver of this requirement from the Board once the full impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on student testing is known. All postsecondary institutions are currently considering if they will need to develop alternative criteria for scholarship decisions for the 2021-2022 academic year, but these decisions are still to be determined.

The State Board and State Department of Education are working together to determine what impact the lack of college entrance exams scores may have on Direct Admissions and Apply Idaho. More information on this issue is forthcoming.

Students opting to attend private or out-of-state postsecondary institutions will need to check for any modifications to admissions requirements at the institutions they are interested in attending.

Advanced Placement Testing

The College Board has indicated that they will be changing the administration of all Advanced Placement (AP) tests at the end of this school year. Tests will be administered to students at home and will last 45 minutes. Students who take a test will still receive a score that ranges from 1-5. Pursuant to Board policy III.Y. Advanced Opportunities, all postsecondary institutions will continue to award college credit for AP test scores of 3 or higher that are earned by students via these modified testing procedures.

~~The College Board has also announced that late fees and cancellation fees for all AP tests will be waived for the current year.~~ College Board will not charge anything for an exam that isn't taken, including the base exam fee as well as any additional fees such as the late order fee and canceled/unused exam fee. Specific resources for high schools and AP coordinators can be found on the College Board website.

Other Graduation Requirements and the Idaho Standards Achievement Test (ISAT)

In March 2020, the State Board waived the Senior Project graduation requirement and spring 2020 administration of the ISAT. No postsecondary institution in Idaho currently uses the Senior Project results or ISAT scores for admission, scholarship, or placement decisions, so this Board action should have no impact on higher education decision-making.

Disruptions to Student Learning

The postsecondary institutions all recognize that disruptions caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) may negatively impact student learning and academic growth during the final three months of this school year. The institutions are working to develop plans to help incoming

students that may need additional support. Guidance from K-12 schools on the impacts these disruptions are having on their students would be very helpful for planning purposes at the colleges and universities.

The Outreach Team at the Office of the State Board of Education is hosting a series of calls on Thursday, April 16, 2020 to help facilitate this discussion.