



POLICY BRIEF - AB 490 IMPLEMENTATION

PARTIAL CREDITS:

The calculation and acceptance of partial credits is critical to ensure that foster youth are not academically penalized because they are often transferred from school district to school district. It is not uncommon for these school transfers to take place within the course of the school year without regard for semester or quarter completion dates. Under AB 490, school districts must accept partial credits for entering foster youth (and thus a sending district must be able to calculate partial credits for foster youth who are transferring out).

- **School Credits:** Each public school district and county office of education *shall accept for credit full or partial* coursework satisfactorily completed by a pupil while attending a public school, juvenile court school, or nonpublic, nonsectarian school or agency. EDUC. CODE § 48645.5.
- **Sending School:** Upon receiving a transfer request from a county placing agency, a school district is required to *"compile the complete educational record of the pupil including a determination of seat time, full or partial credits earned, current classes and grades, immunization and other records,"* and, if applicable, a copy of a pupil's 504 Plan and/or IEP. EDUC. CODE § 49069.5(e).
- **Foster Care Liaison:** The AB 490 educational liaison must assist foster youth when transferring from one school to another which includes *"ensuring proper transfer of credits, records, and grades"*. EDUC. CODE § 48853.5(b)(2).
- **Person Responsible for Records Transfer:** The person responsible for the transfer of educational records for foster youth must be *"aware of the specific educational recordkeeping needs of homeless, foster, and other transient children who transfer between schools."* EDUC. CODE § 49069.5(f).

Unfortunately, while some school districts have developed partial credit policies and protocols to ensure this calculation or acceptance of partial credits, most have not yet done so. Eighty-one percent of FYS Countywide Programs reported challenges with partial credit calculation in the "Foster Youth Services Report."¹ This problem may be created or exacerbated by the fact that no uniform, statewide method has been established for calculating partial credits and there is a lack of guidance or suggested

¹ "Report to the Governor and the Legislature" Foster Youth Services Program (Education Code sections 42920-42925) Counseling, Student Support, and Service Learning Office, California Department of Education (February 15, 2006), <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/pl/fy/documents/fyleareport2005.pdf>

standards. Also, within some counties there are also school districts with varying credit systems, such as 1 credit per class versus 5 credits per class. This can cause further complications.

Considerations:

State-level guidance and intervention on issuance of partial credits could greatly benefit foster youth in California. For example:

- 1) **Model Guidelines:** The Superintendent and/or the State Board could offer guidance on how to calculate and accept partial credits to school districts.
- 2) **Regulations:** The State Board of Education has broad authority to promulgate and adopt rules and regulations, not inconsistent with state law, concerning the governance of the schools of the state. (See, EDUC. CODE § 33031.) Through the regulatory process, the State Board could direct school districts to comply with the law by adopting policies and procedures for the calculation and acceptance of partial credits and establish minimum standards for such calculations and the procedures that guide them. The State Board can also be directed by the Legislature to promulgate regulations to effectuate a specific Education Code provision to that effect (e.g. EDUC. CODE § 221.1, regulations concerning discrimination; EDUC. CODE § 60005, regulations concerning curriculum framework).
- 3) **Local Policies & Procedures:** It is not unusual for the Legislature to direct school districts to adopt policies, rules and regulations for the purpose of implementing an Education Code requirement. (See e.g., EDUC. CODE § 48070, promotion/retention policies and Educ. Code § 48918, expulsion rules and regulations.) School districts could be required by legislation to adopt policies, procedures and protocols governing the calculation and acceptance of partial credits and seat time.
- 4) **Inclusion in CPM:** If AB 490 is included in the CDE's Categorical Program Monitoring (CPM) process, the acceptance and calculation of partial credits should be included as one of the monitoring items to be reviewed.
- 5) **Survey for Model Policies:** The California Department of Education could survey school districts to identify model policies, procedures and protocols concerning the calculation and processing of partial credits, seat time, etc. and could post these models on its website.
- 6) **CSBA:** CSBA could strengthen their recommendations for Board Policies that guide school districts on how to calculate, transfer and accept partial credits for students in foster care. These policies could also be incorporated into a "Policy Brief" and made widely available on their website.