



**BLENDED CREDIT RECOVERY IN
MASSACHUSETTS AND THE TRI-STATE
VIRTUAL LEARNING PROGRAM RUBRIC:
A LOOK INTO THE PROGRAMS AT
PITTSFIELD, FALMOUTH, AND NORTH
ADAMS PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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Introduction

What is credit recovery?

There is no standard definition for credit recovery. A good working definition is “a structured means for students to earn missed credit(s) in order to graduate” (Education Partnerships, Inc., 2012). Credit recovery can also be described as a course, shorter than the entirety of the standard course of study, whose duration is determined by the demonstration of competence in required skills and knowledge opposed to traditional seat time (Center for Public Education, 2012). Credit recovery programs, which are recognized as “byproducts” of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001, are interventions created to help states improve graduation rates by offering abbreviated courses through which students can gain credit for a failed course. Credit recovery programs can be funded through *Title I, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*, *Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT)*, and *the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA)*, and are offered throughout the year, most commonly during school hours, over the summer, or after school (Center for Public Education, 2012). Credit recovery programs are delivered via different mediums to accommodate students and their schedules (Center for Public Education, 2012):

- **Fully Online:** These programs allow students to recover lost credits through a completely online learning system. Software for online credit recovery can come from a range of sources such as charter schools, non-profit/for-profit organizations, and school/district-/state-run virtual learning systems. Course lengths vary and work can be completed at home or in school. There is little or no in-person interaction with instructors and all communication occurs online.
- **Blended:** Blended programs offer students a mixed learning environment. Some coursework is done online in addition to a face-to-face instructional component. Courses are usually pre-programmed and follow a timeline, although they can be flexible. Instructors (certified or not) provide some course oversight. The ratio of online to offline instruction varies.
- **In Person:** As in traditional summer school or after school programs, students meet in person with instructors during a scheduled time. There is no online component.

Credit Recovery in Massachusetts

During the 2010-2011 school year, thousands of students across Massachusetts dropped out of high school at a significant social cost to the state (D'Entremont & Zockoff, 2012). An average high school dropout in Massachusetts will exact an estimated net fiscal burden to the state of nearly \$122,000 over the course of his or her lifetime. In comparison, an average high school graduate will contribute an estimated \$344,700 more in taxes than he or she receives in federal and state aid (D'Entremont & Zockoff, 2012). Massachusetts has introduced programs aimed at lowering the dropout rate through innovative interventions.

In 2009, the state sought to reduce its dropout rate by half from 3.4% to 1.7% by 2013-2014 (D'Entremont & Zockoff, 2012). To reach this goal, the state encouraged dropout prevention programs through grants, including one of the most successful online credit recovery programs. The Massachusetts grant project, or MassGrad, focuses on the state's 133 high schools that exceeded the annual dropout rate of 2.9% in 2008-2009. Through the MassGrad project, “Massachusetts will receive up to \$15 million [through the federal High School Graduation Initiative] through September 2015 to support state and local initiatives for high school dropout prevention, intervention, and recovery” (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013).

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) requested that the Northeast Comprehensive Center (NCC) examine high schools in Massachusetts to outline practices that may be useful for districts interested in establishing an online credit recovery program or enhancing an existing program. This brief looks at high schools that have been operating blended-credit recovery programs for several years, with and without grant money, through the lens of the four domains of the *Tri-State Virtual Learning Program Rubric*. The brief aims to provide MA DESE with case studies that detail the necessary conditions to ensure a rigorous and successful student experience (Technical Assistance Request, 2014).

Methodology

NCC was asked by MA DESE to review credit recovery programs through the framework of the *Tri-State Virtual Learning Program Rubric (VLP)* (2014), which state education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) use to evaluate virtual programs (Crean Davis, et al., 2014). Interview and follow-up questions were framed in accordance with the four domains of the rubric described below by Crean Davis, et al. (2014):

- **Policy:** This domain “intends to evaluate the policies and policy context in which the Virtual Learning Program is implemented.”
- **Program Design:** This domain “reflects the Virtual Learning Program’s mission and goals and addresses accessibility and understanding of these to relevant stakeholders, including students, parents, and community members.”
- **Curriculum and Instruction:** This domain “reflects the design and rigor of the Virtual Learning Program curriculum as well as the fidelity of its implementation.”
- **Capacity:** This domain “reflects both individual capacities and systemic capacities that support those individuals as they ensure optimal program implementation.”

The formulation of the VLP Rubric was facilitated by the NCC in coordination with SEAs in New York, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island with the dual purpose of:

1. Providing LEA administrators with a powerful tool for evaluating virtual programs to ensure high quality and rigor within a school's curriculum. Using the Guiding Definitions, VLP Standards, VLP Review Guide, and VLP Rubric principles, administrators can support high-quality virtual instruction and make well-informed decisions to increase accountability and ensure consistency in virtual program evaluation; and
2. Offering a criteria-based evaluation tool to evaluate SEAs’ current virtual programs, as well as vendor-developed virtual programs under consideration as part of a curriculum.

While all of the programs described in this brief are strong in several domains, they vary in how they meet the standards. Programs illuminate some practices in line with VLP Rubric standards, such as supplementing courses with offline requirements to better meet standards, maintaining vendor flexibility, and incorporating credit recovery into the regular school day and budget. In order to highlight these practices, interview data have been organized by the four domains of the rubric rather than by districts. Practices that are common to several programs are highlighted, as are those unique to one or two districts.

The NCC review of the selected schools is based on an analysis of research literature and case reviews. NCC contacted each school to share updates on their work to verify the accuracy of research literature and case reviews. Through conversations with program leaders, we were able to closely align the *Tri-State Virtual Learning Program Rubric* and selected schools’ practices.

The schools reviewed here are not *perfect examples*; rather, they showcase varying approaches to online credit recovery. All schools surveyed for this brief conduct blended programs with most coursework completed online but facilitated in-person in a computer lab. In selecting schools, a list comprising 7 urban, 5 suburban, and 4 rural districts was assembled. Of the 16 schools contacted, three responded and agreed to interviews. MA DESE approved the writing of this report based on the following three schools (see the appendix for more information on these districts):

- Pittsfield Public Schools (Urban)
- Falmouth High School (Suburban)
- Drury High School (Rural)

Case Reviews Aligned with the Tri-State Virtual Learning Program Rubric

Policy Domain

All three programs have demonstrated a commitment to aligning and evaluating credit recovery policies to the context in which they are implemented. The following standards can be found in the practices of one or more of the surveyed schools:

- 1.1: Virtual Learning Policies reflect overall SEA goals;
- 1.2: A team or stakeholder group monitors Virtual Learning Policies;
- 1.3: Virtual Learning Policies ensure students are able to fully participate in the program(s) as designed;
- 1.7: Virtual Learning Policies specify teacher competency (certification);
- 1.8: Virtual Learning Policies specify administrator competency (certification);
- 1.9: Virtual Learning Policies facilitate competency-based instruction; and
- 1.10: Virtual Learning Policies ensure the implementation of professional development in related areas for teachers and administrators.

Pittsfield Public Schools (PPS) (T. Gage, J. Vosburgh, V. Poirier, B. Frost, D. Webber, personal communication, December 17, 2014).

The PPS online credit recovery program is one component of a more comprehensive dropout prevention toolbox. Upon recommendation from a guidance counselor, a student who scored between 40% and 59% in a full credit course may be placed in credit recovery if that is considered the best option. Students who scored below 40% are required to retake the entire course in the following academic year. PPS offers credit recovery tuition-free as an after-school or summer school lab course. Typically, students who fail a quarter in the Fall semester are placed in the after-school credit recovery program in the Spring semester. Students who fail in the Spring semester are placed in the Summer semester program. By providing two opportunities to obtain credits, PPS allows students to finish their course(s) on time and stay on track to graduate. Each credit recovery option has specific requirements and attendance policies:

- **After-School Credit Recovery Program:** Students are required to attend the after-school program for three hours per week for six weeks, in order to recover one academic quarter. An additional six-week block is necessary to recover one semester. Students are allowed only one absence during each six-week block and are removed following a second absence except in extenuating circumstances such as hospitalization.
- **Summer School Credit Recovery Program:** This session is five weeks long for two hours per day, Monday through Friday. Students are allowed three absences before removal, except under mitigating circumstances, which are individually reviewed.

PPS online credit recovery courses and modules are designed to support differentiated instruction, which includes re-teaching and remediation. While grading varies from course to course, it is based on attendance, activity completion, course assessments, and note taking. Note taking, an offline requirement designed to help students with study skills, is graded on a pass/fail basis. PPS sends parents/guardians a progress report two weeks into the program and a report card at the conclusion of the course.

Credit recovery offerings are administered by Massachusetts-certified teachers who receive the same professional development (PD) opportunities as PPS teachers. The district offers ten half-day professional development opportunities. Although scheduled PD days are general and built into the entire faculty's schedules, they focus on 21st century teaching skills and technology in the classroom. PPS has contracted with Compass Learning, which supports credit recovery teachers through technical assistance and professional development modules. Vendor support is also available to students during course orientation and via introductory and instructional modules throughout the course.

So as to involve parents/guardians in their students' credit recovery efforts, PPS provides a district-wide information system that offers parents/guardians access to their child's grades and attendance record and features an email system to communicate with teachers and staff. PPS teachers are also encouraged to communicate with parents/guardians through phone calls and making themselves available to speak when students are picked up from school. Parents are also encouraged to call the school directly during the school day with questions or concerns.

Falmouth High School (FHS) (S. Tellier, J. Driscoll, personal communication, December 22, 2014).

At FHS, credit recovery eligible students must score between 45% and 59% and are placed in credit recovery by their guidance counselor and the department head for the subject in which they wish to recover credit. Students who score below 45% are required to retake the entire course in the following academic year. Two types of credit recovery are available to students at FHS:

- **Summer School Credit Recovery Program:** This session, available to all credit recovery eligible students, lasts six weeks and consists of two two-hour sessions twice per day. Students may enroll in one or both sessions, depending on how many courses they need to recover. Tuition for summer school is \$250 per course.
- **In-School Credit Recovery Program:** This session is only available to 11th and 12th grade students who have earned their competency determination through the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). Students are scheduled into the program in lieu of an elective or "academic support period." Due to a rotating schedule, credit recovery labs meet five out of every six school days. The labs meet during regular school hours and are regarded as a standard course; attendance policies defer to regular school policy. In-school recovery is tuition free under licenses purchased for the summer, which are good for one full year through the current vendor.

Providing two options to obtain credits expands FHS students' opportunities to graduate on time. The restriction of in-school recovery to students who have received a competency determination, coupled with the absence of tuition fees, enables students with a high likelihood of graduating access to credit recovery.

FHS online credit recovery courses were chosen for their personalized and competency-based components, which allow students to finish summer school early or pick up an elective or independent learning enrollment after completing course requirements. Grading is different for each course; however, at the completion of each course students must demonstrate proficiency in accordance with the *FHS Skills Rubrics*, which have been revised to ground expectations in the standards, support rigorous and meaningful learning, and meet individual departmental expectations (Personal Communication, S. Tellier, March 20, 2015).

Massachusetts-certified teachers facilitate credit recovery offerings at FHS. Classroom teachers are hired as tutors. In addition to the classroom facilitators, the vendor provides a Massachusetts-certified teacher to offer subject-specific support and to serve as the primary teacher. FHS online credit recovery teachers receive

support from the platform's vendor through modules designed to teach proficiency with the platform. Students are also required to complete introductory and familiarization modules for each course with the support of the teacher of record.

FHS involves parents/guardians in two ways. First, it has a district-wide information system that makes grade and attendance records available and a messaging system that facilitates communication. Parents of students attending summer school are involved from the very beginning and their authorization is needed to enroll a student in the program. During the summer the information system is not available; therefore parents receive abbreviated weekly reports instead. A summer session brochure posted on the school's website highlights information about the program and a complete course list of session enrollments available to students.

Drury High School (T. Callahan, personal communication, January 15, 2015).

Drury High School's credit recovery program or "Learning Lab" is open to all students who have failed a course, regardless of their score. Students are enrolled in the Learning Lab by their guidance counselor or the assistant principal in coordination with the Building Early Support Team, which consists of administrators and staff, and focuses on students' academic needs (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013). DHS considers online credit recovery a part of regular school programming and offers one program:

- **The Learning Lab:** Students are scheduled into credit recovery as if it were a regular class. There is no tuition for DHS credit recovery, because it is the same as a regular course in the budget. Each Learning Lab semester is designed for students to recover full credit within 40 hours of school time; however, it is scheduled by semester to allow students extra time should they need it.

Personalized and competency-based Learning Lab components allow students to work at their own pace. Grading policy in DHS differs from PPS and FHS in that a significant portion of a student's grade derives from an offline project; the rest of a student's grade is determined by assessments and assignments on the platform.

Two Massachusetts-certified teachers facilitate the Learning Lab at DHS; they account for the majority of costs associated with the program. Learning Lab facilitators and students are supported through vendor-supplied training modules and technical support. Credit recovery facilitators participate alongside other classroom teachers utilizing the same professional development opportunities, which include subjects such as standards-based learning, writing effective learning objectives, approaches to literacy, and effective assessment techniques. Credit recovery teachers may also seek outside professional development.

Because DHS considers the credit recovery program as a part of a student's regular schedule, and not a special program, parents are involved as they would be in a "normal" class; their participation is not limited simply to notification of their student's course failure and credit recovery plan

Program Design Domain

Under two standards of the Program Design domain, these three sites have created mission statements, program goals and objectives that are specific to their credit recovery program and are clearly defined, attainable, and communicated to all stakeholders:

- 2.2: The program goals and objectives are clearly defined and are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely; and
- 2.3: Consistent efforts are made to communicate the program mission, goals, and objectives to all stakeholders.

Pittsfield Public Schools

PPS has a Virtual Courses Policy (Appendix B) that highlights program design goals, including the following:

- Expanded learning opportunities
- Access to instruction for students who face hardship
- Opportunity for credit recovery
- Differentiated instruction

These goals demonstrate PPS's commitment to providing alternative education and meeting student needs. PPS created the following materials to inform stakeholders of their credit recovery mission, goals, expectations, and offerings (Appendices C – G):

- **Alternative Education Overview:** In addition to credit recovery, PPS publishes an overview of its alternative education interventions, which include the Adolescent Support Program, Education Options for Success, and Positive Options. The overview describes each intervention and states that credit recovery sessions provide students with an opportunity to recover course credits and graduate on time by quickly completing course requirements.
- **Summer School Press Release:** PPS releases vital information concerning summer school in this one-page document, which includes registration location and dates, student services (meals and transportation), tuition, attendance, and contact information.
- **Summer School Brochure:** A two-sided brochure describes meal and transportation information on one side, with course offerings and the attendance policy on the other.
- **Credit Recovery Expectations:** This one-page document, handed out to students at the beginning of the session, contains blanks for dates, room numbers, and contact information under these specific headings of expectations, courses, tests, grading, and contact information. This document was created to ensure students understand the design and expectations of the afternoon credit recovery program.
- **Credit Recovery Letter to Parents:** This letter notifies parents/guardians that their student has failed in one or more subject(s) and is in jeopardy of "not graduating on time or receiving promotion." The letter encourages parents/guardians to contact their student's guidance counselor with questions.

In addition to producing materials to inform stakeholders, PPS requires students to go through a formal process, which includes making program goals and objectives clear to parents/guardians in order to enroll in the program. PPS also makes an effort to engage credit recovery students with the broader community by hosting guest speakers.

Falmouth High School

In the FHS enrollment process, a student must meet with a guidance counselor, obtain course authorization by a department head, and receive parent/guardian permission to enroll in credit recovery. The FHS Summer School Brochure (Appendix H, page 49) contains rules and regulations, registration information, course offerings, fees, location, times, and contact information for the program. This brochure provides an overview of the program requirements and the program goals and its objectives. In the FHS credit recovery program, students are expected to demonstrate their best effort in class work and complete all assignments. The minimum score of 70% to pass the program conveys the standard credit recovery students are expected to meet.

Drury High School

In its inception as a distance-learning program, the DHS credit program goals and objectives were introduced to students and parents through a kick-off event. At the event, program information was presented and students met their assigned mentors. DHS's credit recovery program has since transitioned from a distance-learning program to an in-school program, although the program goals and objectives remain unchanged. Currently, the program occurs during school hours under teacher supervision. Program goals and objectives are shared as they are in regular courses. Students are expected to stay on a 4-year track to graduate, bolster core academic skills and knowledge, and demonstrate success in their other courses. DHS is looking at options to expand and formalize its program goals for stakeholders.

Curriculum and Instruction Domain

Under seven standards of the Curriculum and Instruction domain, these three sites demonstrated course alignment to state and district standards, continuous course assessment to provoke critical thinking and analysis, and integration of personalized and competency-based learning to support student learning:

- 3.1: The Virtual Learning Program curriculum is aligned to state/district standards and performance goals;
- 3.2: The implementation of the Virtual Learning Program curriculum is monitored for quality and fidelity;
- 3.3: The Virtual Learning program curriculum is organized (i.e., it is clear and coherent and aligned vertically between grades and horizontally across subjects on the same grade level) and rigorous (i.e., it embeds critical thinking, problem-solving, analysis, integration, creativity, collaboration, and provides guidance for differentiation according to student abilities);
- 3.4: The Virtual Learning Program curriculum and assessments are competency-based;
- 3.5: Virtual Learning Program instruction reflects pedagogical preparation toward college and career readiness;
- 3.7: The Virtual Learning Program reflects instructional methods that support personalized learning.

Pittsfield Public Schools

PPS has created a committee to review its credit recovery program to guarantee it is aligned with state and district standards and promotes college and career readiness. Furthermore, the committee selects curricula that challenge students to be critical thinkers critically and analytical. PPS chose Compass Learning Odyssey because it is proactive in adjusting courses based on changes in standards, feedback, and other considerations. Additionally, the vendor addresses each district's requests put forward by the review committee by customizing modules to meet their needs in a timely manner.

The PPS curriculum is standards-based which allows staff to break down each course by quarter and determine which standards were taught in each quarter. PPS then forwards its standards lists to Compass Learning, which customized the courses to align with the district's standards.

In addition to the 21st-century skills imparted from working with an online platform, PPS has sought to include college and career readiness skills into their program, such as the note-taking requirement, which asks students to record notes and observations as they go through modules. Notes are graded on a pass/fail basis to ensure students fulfill the requirement.

Competency-based modules, together with personalized learning elements, are also a part of the curriculum and instruction at PPS, allowing students to test out of modules by passing a pre-test. Although some pre-tests, such as Psychology, are universal in their content for all students, others, such as Algebra, are broken down by competency.

Falmouth High School

FHS uses FuelEd (formerly AVENTA), which aligns credit recovery courses with state and district standards by customizing the modules. Students who enroll in FuelEd core course offerings are able to complete needed credits in an asynchronous, self-paced, self-guided, and computer-based format. Students may recover courses in English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. FuelEd also provides a Massachusetts-certified teacher, identified as an expert, to teach the course, who provides students with additional curriculum support.

While courses are self-paced within the semester, there are firm deadlines for course completion that correspond with reporting deadlines. Students who complete courses early may be allowed to enroll in additional courses based on need, license availability, and completion of the approval process for the new course.

FHS assembled a committee to review the courses to ensure alignments with the standards are appropriately rigorous. Department heads used scope and sequence guides to evaluate the courses and ensured that courses contained personalized and competency-based elements, such as pretests that identify students' competencies. Additionally, the classroom teacher can use pre-test results to adjust courses to student needs by working with the vendor-provided teacher of record.

Drury High School

Initially the Drury High School Learning Lab, was hosted on a Moodle platform using teacher-prepared courses. However, students and facilitators experienced issues that hindered consistent course delivery. The main problem was link atrophy (when a link to a website either no longer exists or has moved). Without a budget for maintenance, materials were not replaced and courses deteriorated over time. DHS sought out a third-party vendor; PLATO Courseware, familiar from a separate dropout prevention program.

The credit recovery teachers at DHS encourage self-paced work; however, they employ a number of strategies to keep students on track, such as goal setting, regular and clear communication of student expectations week-by-week, and individualized assistance. During the Learning Lab, teachers rotate around the room, checking on students and providing assistance as needed. To help credit recovery teachers tailor their efforts, DHS uses a district-level student data system in coordination with the Building Early Support team.

PLATO Courseware can be accessed from the school or at home. PLATO offers a comprehensive list of curriculum subjects for both course credit recovery or for hybrid classroom instruction. DHS courses also include competency-based modules, which include pre-tests that allow students to skip modules if they can demonstrate mastery, and post-tests that students must pass with a minimum score of 70% to move on. The creation of courses was supported by PLATO, which provides multiple pathways.

PLATO allows DHS to deliver course content consistently and with personalized and competency-based elements; however, administrators were not satisfied with the rigor of the courses or its alignment with standards. To check for standards alignment, DHS uses district curriculum maps aligned with state frameworks for promoting college and career readiness. In comparing PLATO courses against these maps, DHS decided that the PLATO courses needed to be bolstered.

DHS requires students to complete assignments and assessments that mirror regular courses to increase course rigor. For instance, students recovering Algebra I credit are required to pass the same final as the full credit course, and English courses provide book report projects and analytical essay writing assignments. The assignments are designed to encourage critical reasoning, analysis, and creativity, which DHS finds lacking in PLATO. Additional assignments are graded with rubrics used in the original credit course. DHS is largely satisfied with the structure of credit recovery, but due to the shortcomings in rigor, they will explore other vendor options to improve the courseware aspect.

Capacity Domain

The surveyed schools demonstrated collective efforts to sustain their programs by ensuring that students and course facilitators were supported. Moreover, these three sites defined roles and responsibilities to maintain the program in alignment with the following standards:

- 4.1: The Virtual Learning Program has all the educational materials needed to be successful in a virtual learning environment;
- 4.2: The Virtual Learning Program has training regarding program methodologies and the proper use of the learning management system;
- 4.3: Staff and students have reliable access to resources and support for learning;
- 4.4: The governance system provides stewardship and oversight of the Virtual Learning Program;
- 4.5: The governance system for the Virtual Learning Program has established an effective process for decision-making and communication;
- 4.10: The Virtual Learning Program has monitoring and evaluation plans in place to ensure that all essential stakeholders have the knowledge and skills to participate in and implement the program with fidelity;
- 4.11: The governing system for the Virtual Learning Program includes essential stakeholders.

Pittsfield Public Schools

At PPS, the Student Services Facilitator supervises the district's credit recovery programs. Teachers with expertise in the offered subject areas facilitate the courses and are required to report to the Student Services Facilitator. PPS offers summer school credit recovery, which includes online and face-to-face instruction to support and accommodate students. The online program is facilitated in the school's computer lab, which provides sufficient workstations and high-speed Internet access for enrolled students. The Compass Learning platform is also accessible from most devices, which allows students to complete coursework outside of school. To evaluate its credit recovery program, PPS has established a committee that includes department heads.

The committee has been responsible for assessing the program and making adjustments that meet the needs of students and align the program with district goals/objectives, and state and district standards. The committee assesses the program comparing the courses to existing curriculum guides to ensure that not only are course materials appropriate but that students can attain success in the program. The committee was influential in the decision to discontinue its partnership after feedback from parents/guardians and students. In its evaluation, the committee found limited device support and an incompatibility between devices and the platform. Through this assessment, PPS selected a new vendor to support its needs and provide platform and course-specific training for students and teachers through training modules.

Falmouth High School

FHS credit recovery is under the supervision of the Principal and managed by the Director of Guidance. Courses take place in the school's computer lab where students can reliably access the learning platform. The platform can also be accessed from most devices with an Internet connection, allowing students to complete work at home or the local library. Falmouth also makes school iPads and computers available to students who need them to work from home.

The committee, which includes the Director of Curriculum and Instruction for Secondary Education and department heads, assesses all courses to ensure rigor and alignment with state and district standards.

Department heads also consult with other districts, assess vendor offerings, and examine each program course offering alongside existing curriculum guides. The committee has been instrumental in ensuring that the program is successful through critical examination of their vendors and their offerings and has spurred the district to choose a different vendor after recognizing that existing offerings did not meet district nor student needs. FHS charges a \$250 tuition fee for its summer recovery courses; however, due to active year-round course licenses, the program is offered to FHS students tuition-free.

Drury High School

The Director of Technology, now an Assistant Principal, supervises the program and course instructors. The course materials are wholly online, except for the final projects and exams and are either accessible remotely or from other computer labs within the school. DHS noted that the PLATO platform only functions fully on Internet Explorer, which can create accessibility issues. Classes are held in a DHS computer lab equipped with Windows computers so that students can fully access courses using Internet Explorer. The program is held during school hours and was moved from a basement computer lab to one on the second floor in a quiet area in the school to foster a more positive atmosphere and create a stable learning environment

After negative experiences with its inability to support and maintain courses on an in-house platform, DHS selected PLATO Courseware for the online platform and courses. DHS reviewed how courses compared with existing curriculum guides and their level of rigor to continue assessing their program and vendor. Through the assessment, DHS now includes offline projects aimed at increasing students' critical thinking and analysis while ensuring student competency.

To ensure teacher competency, the Assistant Principal works closely with the facilitators to set expectations based on the school's productivity and responsibility rubric. Credit recovery facilitators also partake in school-wide professional development.

Recommended Implementation Strategies

Online credit recovery programs enable students who are in jeopardy of failing to recover course credits quickly and receive promotion to the next grade and graduate on time. As with any intervention implementation, it is advised that districts or schools try not to design nor implement an online credit recovery program perfectly, but rather begin the process with patience and a willingness to learn, endure challenges, and make changes along the way. The schools examined in this brief seek continuous improvement in their programs. The following implementation strategies, organized by domain from the VLP rubric, may serve as a guide for new or existing online credit recovery programs.

Policy Domain

- **Align program policies with SEA goals by:**
 - Targeting interventions. The sites examined in this brief all have policies to screen students for online credit recovery by requiring approval from guidance counselors and department heads and seeking parental/guardian permission. Falmouth High School Principal, Joe Driscoll (2014,) stated, “We do not want to register a student for an online course which [requires] increasingly more [independence]. We do not want to set them up for a situation where that will backfire and not be helpful.” Policies such as requiring students who score below 40% to retake the entire course may help ensure success.
 - Connecting school to college and career. Recovering credits, which will allow students to graduate, is part of dropout prevention. PPS provides a good example of going beyond the acquisition of knowledge with its note-taking requirement that seeks to teach students necessary skills for success (DeZure et al., n.d.).
 - Active recovery. All schools made efforts to reach out to students who had failed a class and were in need of recovery. Generally, this begins with the student’s guidance counselor; however, the circle can expand to include teachers, department heads, and parents/guardians. With active recovery, students can advance to another recovery course, if necessary, upon early completion of another course.
 - Providing alternatives to traditional high schools. Smaller class sizes, coaches, competency-based instruction, and accelerated credit recovery were alternatives provided by all three schools. Adjusting class size is an easy and effective way to increase achievement (Ehrenberg et al., 2009). FHS effectively reduced class size by providing a classroom facilitator as well as a virtual teacher, while the DHS learning lab periods average eight to ten students each.
- **Monitor the program:** All sites made courseware switches since the inception of their online credit recovery programs based on student, teacher, and parent/guardian feedback. Creating a robust feedback process can assist in monitoring online credit recovery programs and making necessary changes.
- **Ensure accessibility:** All sites hold their credit recovery courses in computer labs either after school hours, during school, or during the summer. This guarantees students have the means to access and complete their courses while still reaping the benefits of accessing online courses anywhere at anytime. If necessary, FHS, as part of their online credit recovery program loans devices to students.
- **Ensure teachers are competent and certified:** All online credit recovery programs examined used certified teachers, which ensured that the course was facilitated with fidelity and that students were supported in their learning. Virtual teachers from vendors were also certified by the state. Teacher competency should be maintained by providing appropriate professional development.

Program Design Domain

- **Create a mission statement:** Mission or vision statements provide guidance to supervisors and staff within the online credit recovery programs; the mission statements also reflected the importance of virtual learning and the desired program impacts.
- **Inform stakeholders of program goals, objectives, and design:** The use of handouts, brochures, and other informational materials were effective in building awareness of the online credit recovery programs and ensuring that students understood what was expected of them. Such materials could be transformative in engaging parents/guardians and students in the program and emphasizing expectations.

Curriculum and Instruction Domain

- **Ensure courses are aligned to state and district standards:** Alignment of courses to state and district standards was ensured through committee assessment reviews. Department heads used a curriculum guide to evaluate the credit recovery programs and were able to propose adjustments to the courses, such as communicating necessary changes for alignment or discontinuing services from a vendor who did not meet the site's alignment needs.
- **Ensure courses are rigorous:** A common criticism of online learning is that the rigor is not the same as traditional face-to-face classes (Bidwell, 2013). DHS made adjustments to its courses to increase critical thinking and analysis and included "outside" project-based assignments, which were graded by the credit recovery facilitator and evaluated with the curriculum rubric. Additionally the schools took advantage of vendor offers to customize courses to accommodate requests for more rigor.
- **Ensure courses are competency-based and contain personalized learning elements:** Including competency-based elements in credit recovery courses allows students to forego material they already understand, and gives them more time to focus on challenging material. Furthermore, employing multiple pathways to learning through effective use of technology may help students break through and master concepts that had previously eluded them.

Capacity Domain

- **Provide students with the materials needed to be successful:** Originally, the DHS online credit recovery program used courses created by DHS teachers utilizing Internet-based resources. This approach suffered from link atrophy and prevented students from accessing materials. As did the other schools, DHS sought to guarantee access to high-quality educational materials through a thorough review of a third-party vendor's courses for completeness, rigor, and competency-based and personalized learning elements. Attention to these elements should help to ensure that students are supported and will succeed in the program.
- **Learning labs:** Holding credit recovery courses in computer labs appears to increase engagement with at-risk students, ensures accessibility, and aids in accountability. Additionally, providing online credit recovery during school hours may ease budgetary concerns, because these courses can be considered normal classes, as is the case at DHS.
- **Establish governance to implement, monitor, and evaluate:** While the examined schools varied slightly in their governance structures, they all included supervision by a principal, a coordinator(s) for different variations of the program (in school, after school, summer school), and classroom facilitators. Guidance counselors and department heads functioned as facilitators in terms of outreach, enrolling students, and monitoring the program. Additionally, department heads were used to evaluate programs for standards alignment and sufficient rigor along with the use of appropriate tools.

Appendix A

Pittsfield Public Schools

According to the National Center for Education Statistics Dropout Report from 2006, in 2004 the Pittsfield, MA school district had a dropout rate around 8.0%. In order to address this problem, school leaders decided to make changes to the district's two high schools: Taconic and Pittsfield. The schools partnered with the Pittsfield Sheriff's Office and the Berkshire Community College to develop a multiple pathways-to-graduation and credit recovery program (Rennie Center for Education & Research Policy, 2009). Through this partnership, Pittsfield's dropout rate decreased to 5.9% in the 2013-2014 school years (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2014).

Falmouth High School

With Falmouth High School's dropout rate for the 2013-2014 school year at 1.6% , Principal Joseph Driscoll credits much success in reducing the dropout rate to early intervention and online credit programs (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2014; McCormick, 2015). Falmouth High School offers two systems for obtaining credit: AVENTA, which offers students the opportunity to recover credits in failed classes to earn credit to graduate, and the Virtual High School, which offers students original credit courses.

The school offers credit recovery to students in 10th, 11th, and 12th grades through the AVENTA online learning system. The school began using this system in 2011 after previously using the PLATO online system. Students who enroll in these core course offerings can complete their needed credits in an asynchronous, self-paced, self-guided, and computer-based format. Students may complete courses in English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

Falmouth's "Virtual High School" program was established in 2009 and offers students an alternative way of earning credit for graduation. The program started as a federal education grant initiative in the late 1990's but spun into a Maynard-based non-profit organization, The VHS initiative (The Virtual High School, 2010). The Virtual High School program is offered to 12th grade students seeking to take courses not offered in the current in-school program of studies. Courses come with an instructor who is available by email and phone to the students to assist with any work, and student questions are responded to within a couple of hours. The classes are facilitated by staff members who have completed an 8-week training process (The Virtual High School, 2010). Classes require a minimum of 3 to 5 hours per week and students can access the online system from anyplace with an Internet connection. Students can substitute a free period in their schedule with their online coursework at school

Drury High School

In an effort to address high dropout rates, Drury High School created the "Drury High School Learning Lab," which offers students flexible options for credit recovery and credit advancement with in-person instruction to help with both online and in-class coursework. The lab is staffed with one teacher and one paraprofessional who both help students when needed. Students can use the online learning lab from the school's dedicated classroom or from anyplace with a computer and Internet connection.

The Learning Lab is located in a separate classroom in the high school. Students work at their own pace on courses chosen in collaboration with counselors (Rennie Center for Education & Research Policy 2014). The

program operates year-round and online coursework does not follow the academic year. Hours in the Learning Lab are flexible and based on student needs. The Learning Lab can serve up to 60 students at a time, with online coursework accessible from one or more locations.

The high school's instructional and behavioral support teams evaluate students' academic record and behavioral data to determine appropriate courses of action. There is no formal paperwork or referral process specific to the Learning Lab. Upon successful completion of online coursework, students transition to regular classroom instruction (Rennie Center for Education & Research Policy 2014).

Any student who attends the Learning Lab may access both district and school academic and nonacademic supports, including academic and behavioral counseling, graduation coaching, IEP counseling, internship coordination, academic advising, and legal assistance (Rennie Center for Education & Research Policy 2014). During the 2013-2014 school year, Drury High School's dropout rate fell to 1.7% from 5.3% the previous year (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2014).

PITISFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Pittsfield, Massachusetts

VIRTUAL COURSES

POLICY

The School Committee, recognizing the importance, advantages, and concerns of virtual courses, encourages the Superintendent and district administration to develop regulations and procedures for the inclusion of virtual/online learning courses in the district's instructional provision.

Virtual courses and modules may be used to:

- Expand learning opportunities to include courses that the district does not offer in a proximate setting, including advanced courses;
- Ensure access to courses currently offered by the district but that may cause significant scheduling conflicts to individual students;
- Provide access to instruction for students who face economic hardships such as needing to work during the day to support their family;
- Allow for credit recovery, especially on-time credit recovery;
- Supplement homebound and tutoring instruction, including students with medical conditions that interfere with attendance or who feel bullied or are out of school due to other safety concerns;
- Provide instruction to students who have been excluded from the regular school setting;
- Support differentiated instruction, including re-teaching and remediation; Instruct students out of school due to pregnancy or parenting;
- Support students with developmental, social-emotional, pedagogical, or unique individual learning needs;
- Serve students who have dropped out of school or whose original high school class has since graduated; and/or
- Other instructional purposes as necessitated by individual circumstances.

Regulations:

A. Form of Virtual Courses

1. Virtual courses and modules may take the form of independent study, fully online courses, and hybrid courses requiring face-to-face instruction as well as online learning.
2. These courses and modules may be delivered synchronously, asynchronously, or a combination of both and may be accessed during and/or outside of the normal school day.
3. Students enrolled in virtual courses and modules may be required to attend class meetings and seminars as deemed necessary for a specific course.

B. Supervising Virtual Courses

1. To supervise students participating in virtual courses, teachers may be assigned as proctors similar to those responsibilities of supervising a study hall. The proctor teacher will not be required to prepare lessons, offer direct instruction, nor assess student learning; however, teachers are encouraged to give assistance and answer questions.
2. Teachers assigned to proctor virtual courses will ensure that students remain on-task and use technology in accordance with the district's Acceptable Use Policy and other policies. Proctoring virtual courses will be considered as a duty/supervisory period and not an instructional preparation.

C. Teaching Virtual Courses

1. Teachers teaching virtual courses shall be compensated at the same contractual rate as for any other course. Class size will not exceed the largest academic class in the district for that particular school year.
3. Depending on the nature of the course, teachers may have their instructional assignment period embedded in their contractual workday or during alternative hours.
4. During the time assigned to instruct the virtual course, the teacher will be expected to participate in instructional activities including being available to meet with students face-to-face; moderating discussion boards; answering e-mails relating to that online course; creating, posting, and modifying course content; collaborating with Special Education and other teachers; and researching curriculum materials.

D. Approving Virtual Courses

1. Virtual courses must align with appropriate and approved learning standards.
2. The process of approving virtual courses must follow the same process as other courses included in the district's instructional provision.

E. Compliance

1. Virtual courses, including all interactions and content, must comply with all federal and state statutes and regulations as well as district policy.
2. The district as well as the course provider will maintain confidentiality of student record information. This includes information shared between the school district representatives and virtual school or online teacher: information shared between the school district or online teacher with students and parents; and information shared between school district representatives, the virtual school or online teacher, and others. The school district will provide safeguards for students participating in online instructional activities.
3. Those involved with the virtual course, including students, parents, and district representatives, are subject to all relevant district policies to include Bullying and Anti-Harassment and the Acceptable Use Policies. Students who violate any part of these policies or engage in any other activity that school authorities consider inappropriate, either as part of the virtual course or outside of it, are subject to disciplinary action consistent with School Committee policy and the Student Handbook, including being removed from the virtual course.

Appendix C

Pittsfield Public Schools Alternative Programs/ 2014-15

-Adolescent Support Program (ASP)

The Adolescent Support Program is a public school based program that provides a safe setting for children with serious mental illness or severe emotional disturbance. Students in the program learn to work toward healthy relationships, positive goal development and setting appropriate boundaries. ASP supports the values of positive behavior and mutual respect, while recognizing the individuality of each student's learning style, personality, and behavior. The program advocates for the inclusion of students in general education situations by working effectively with agencies and families to promote student rights, responsibilities, rehabilitation and recovery.

Three certified special education teachers, a caseworker, paraprofessionals and a school adjustment counselor staff ASP. Students are placed in age/grade appropriate groups for academic classes and receive individual and group counseling as part of the school day. School personnel, family members, and agencies meet on a regular basis to monitor the progress of each student and to communicate any concerns that may arise.

The Adolescent Support Program services special education students in grades 6 through 12 who are residents of Pittsfield and who have been found eligible to receive services from the Department of Mental Health. ASP consists of a self-contained classroom component located in Pittsfield High School. A six-week summer program is available to all ASP students. The summer program consists of an academic tutorial and social skills activities.

The staff consists of 3 special education teachers, 1 caseworker, 1 SAC and 3 paraprofessionals. Most students entering the program were costing the School Department on average more than \$60,000 each for an out of district placement.

The goal for each student in the program is to stabilize and gradually become more included in high school and then graduate.

ASP is funded by the Department of Mental Health and local funds.

-Educational Options for Success (EOS)

Goal: To provide a continuum of comprehensive services, opportunities, and pathways for non-traditional students, so that they graduate from high school and are prepared for postsecondary education and career.

The EOS Tier I & II programs at Herberg and Reid are similar in structure and staffing. The programs at each school are based in one classroom that is used as a resource room and drop in center for students. These classrooms are each staffed by 1 EOS teacher and 1 paraprofessional. The majority of their students are scheduled to attend the EOS classroom for 1 period per day for academic and social/emotional support but the

1

Pittsfield Public Schools Alternative Programs/ 2014-15

classroom is also used as a place where students can go when they are having a rough day and need time out.

The EOS tier 3 classroom at Herberg services students from Herberg and Reid who require a self-contained setting for all or some of their classes. 1 teacher, 1 caseworker and 2 paraprofessionals staff this program. The goal of the program is to provide each student with the least restrictive setting while meeting his or her academic and behavioral needs. There is an ongoing movement of student between tiers as the needs of the students change. Building Assistance Meetings (BAMs) are held monthly to facilitate the movement of students between Tiers. When a student is referred to the Tier III program, the caseworker observes the child in the classroom setting and helps the team to develop a behavior plan for the student. Most students who enter the Tier III program have already received Tier I&II services. Tier III also services students who move into Pittsfield with an IEP that calls for a substantially separate setting.

The EOS programs at Taconic and Pittsfield High are similar in the structure and staffing. Each school has 2 teachers, 2 paraprofessionals, a caseworker and part time School Adjustment Counselor. Tier 1 students are fully scheduled into mainstream classes and use the EOS room for academic and social emotional support from 1 to 5 periods per week. Tier 2 students spend from 2 to 5 periods per day in the EOS classroom. Some of these students use Odyssey online learning, which is an online program that offers core academic courses while others

participate in small group classes. The Taconic EOS staff has instituted a “push-in” model this year. One of the EOS teachers co-teaches an English class and the other co-teaches a math class. All of the paraprofessionals spend 5 periods per day in regular education classes assisting EOS students. The caseworker holds meetings with families and agencies on a regular basis to discuss progress and to make schedule changes if needed. The EOS staff regularly checks their students’ grades and attendance to ensure that the students are making progress.

EOS is funded through and local funds.

-Online Afternoon Credit Recovery Sessions

Afternoon online credit recovery sessions are held at each high school in the Spring. There are two sessions held; one in January and one in March. Sessions last for six weeks and are held after school from 2:30 to 5:30. Online learning sessions give students a needed alternative and second chance to learn online and be challenged by rigorous, standards-driven content.

Learning is self-paced and put in real-world context that reinforces learning in areas of greatest weaknesses. The credit recovery sessions allow students to complete course requirements more rapidly, recover credits, regain self-confidence, and graduate on time.

1 Credit Recovery Instructor and 1 Special Education teacher staff the sessions.

2

Pittsfield Public Schools Alternative Programs/ 2014-15

Funding for the credit recovery sessions for past three years and for 2014-15 is funded by the Mass Grad grant.

-Positive Options Program (POP) at Berkshire Community College

Goal: To support students in meeting the graduation requirements needed to receive a high school diploma and encourage lifelong learning by providing a college-site based alternative program.

The Positive Options Program is an early college model designed to provide alternative options for students who are, or may be, at risk of dropping out of high school. Juniors and Seniors who have struggled to succeed in high School are given

an opportunity to pursue their high school diploma on the campus of Berkshire Community College. Students are enrolled at a Pittsfield Public High School but attend school at Berkshire Community College and are given instruction in a small group setting with access to Berkshire Community College's facilities including computer labs, library, student lounge, cafeteria and fitness center.

The Positive Options Program provides a blended learning environment in which online learning and face-to-face instruction are combined to maximize student learning. Students move on an individually customized, fluid schedule among learning modalities. The teacher and a paraprofessional provide face-to-face support on a flexible and adaptive as-needed basis through activities such as small-group instruction, group projects, and individual tutoring. The teacher supplements the online learning on a daily basis. Students are expected to attend college forums and to enroll in a college level course while enrolled at POP.

1 teacher and 1 paraprofessional employed by PPS staff the program. All amenities on the college campus including classroom space, use of Paterson Field House for physical education and a college course per student are funded through BCC.

Positive Options is funded through Berkshire Community College and local funds.

-Reconnect Center

Goal: To provide services, which enable students who have been identified as potential high school drop outs, to remain in school and earn a high school diploma.

Reconnect (formerly Drop Out Prevention Program)

The Reconnect Program was designed for students that may have lost interest in school, and are short a significant number of academic credits. They may signal they are going to drop out of school. Often these students are not involved in extracurricular activities and do not have any meaningful relationships with teachers or counselors.

Pittsfield Public Schools Alternative Programs/ 2014-15

Staff at the Reconnect developed an alternative program for these adolescents. Students attend school at the center in the morning session and in an afternoon session. The two sessions are from 8:45-11:45 a.m. and 12:45 to 3:45 p.m. When

not attending the center students are expected to be at work or taking additional classes and/or vocational courses at their home school. The delivery of instruction includes an online learning system called Odyssey, face-to-face instruction and work readiness training through field trips, guest speakers and employment tours.

College and Career Readiness activities are provided through the use of the Massachusetts Career Information System (MassCIS). Workshops on Creating a Resume, Career Decision Making, and Effective Interviewing Techniques are offered. Students are able to set up a personal profile in MassCIS and have the opportunity to explore occupations and gain knowledge about their career goals.

In addition to a dedicated classroom teacher, a caseworker provides individual attention to each student. Emphasis is placed on consistent school attendance, punctuality, and reasonable effort in academic classes. The caseworkers and teacher work as a team to help these young people stay on track. Home visits, phone calls, and parent meetings are used to address barriers that may prevent a student from being successful.

The Reconnect Center is funded by Berkshire Community Action Council and local funds.

-Student Resource Center (SRC) Educational Options For Success (EOS) program

The EOS program at the Student Resource Center is designed to help students who require the small, safe, structured environment, where they receive personalized instruction in academic subjects and life skills. Many of these students divide their day between the SRC and their home school, while others spend the full day at the SRC. The ultimate goal for all students is to have them be fully re-integrated into their home school and to graduate from high school.

Suspension Program

The Suspension Program provides supervision and tutoring to all secondary students in the Pittsfield school district who are suspended from school. Students report to the SRC, where they attend classes to complete academic work assigned by the teachers in their home schools. Each student is given the opportunity to remain current in his or her schoolwork and be considered in attendance for the school day. Tutors assist the students with their assignments, which are sent back to the home school teachers upon completion.

Pittsfield Public Schools Alternative Programs/ 2014-15

For some students who have committed a serious infraction, warranting a suspension of 10 days through an indefinite period, the goal is to continue their education, earning credits toward graduation while helping them to understand the serious nature of their behavior. In addition, each of these students is encouraged to work toward re-entry into the school system, and to develop lifelong career skills.

These programs are staffed by Berkshire County Sheriff's Department employees, PPS teachers and a School Adjustment Counselor.

SRC is funded by the Berkshire County Sheriff's Department and local funds.

-Teen Parent Program

The Helen Berube Teen Parent Program (HBTPP) is a non-profit, academic and social service agency. It provides crucial services to teen mothers and their children in Berkshire County, Massachusetts.

The program offers comprehensive support to meet the educational, health, and social service needs of pregnant and parenting teens and their babies. This setting enhances the bonding of mothers with their babies. The program supports the development of strong parenting skills through classroom education, and supervised hands-on experience. Provide an opportunity for each pregnant and parenting teen to complete school and become a self-supporting, contributing member of the community.

TPP receives funding through state grants and the Berkshire County United Way. Pittsfield Public Schools provides eight academic tutors for its students enrolled in the district.

-Summer School

Each summer, Pittsfield Public Schools offers students grades 6-12, an opportunity to remediate a course (up to two) that they received a grade of 40-59%. Students wishing to register for summer school must obtain written authorization from the school where the final grade(s) will be sent. The authorization must indicate the appropriate course selection and verify that a minimum grade of 40 was earned

during the past school year. The goal of summer school is to improve the student's level, ability, and understanding of the course material. It is designed primarily for students who have taken a course, failed it, and need to work toward proficiency.

Summer school is funded through Mass Grad and local funds. Out of district students are charged a fee to attend.

Appendix D

Pittsfield Public Schools

2015 Summer School Program

Grades 6-12

This program will be located at Taconic High School, 96 Valentine Road, Pittsfield. Courses will run Monday-Friday from July 6th to August 7th, with morning and afternoon classes available. Morning classes will run from 8:00 – 10:25 am; afternoon classes will run from 10:30 am – 12:55 pm.

Students wishing to register for summer school must obtain written authorization from the school where the final grades will be sent, indicating the course selection and verifying that a minimum grade of 40 was earned during the past school year. This written authorization must be presented at the summer program registration.

Registration

Registration for summer school will take place at Mercer Administration Building, 269 First Street on:

- **Monday, June 29th, 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm**
- **Tuesday, June 30th, 3:00 – 7:00 pm**
- **Wednesday, July 1, 3:00 – 7:00 pm**

Class space is limited. Late registrations count toward absences and there is a \$25.00 late fee per course.

Parents and students are strongly encouraged to register during the times listed above to avoid a late charge and any absences.

Student Services

A shuttle bus will be available to take students from Pittsfield High School to Taconic and back each day.

Pittsfield High to Taconic High School

7:40 a.m. & 10:10 a.m.

Taconic High School to Pittsfield High

10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.

In addition, breakfast and lunch will be available in the Taconic Cafeteria. Breakfast is from 7:30 – 8:15 am and lunch is from 12:00 – 1:30 pm.

Tuition per course

Tuition is free for Pittsfield Public School students (with the exception of Driver's Ed) and \$200 per course for out-of-district students.

Drivers Education will also be offered – \$90.00 for 12 class sessions, July 6-July 21, 8:00 – 10:30 am

Course offerings are dependent upon enrollment and availability of instructors.

Attendance

100% attendance is expected. Any student who misses more than 2 days' class time or who is tardy more than twice will not receive a grade or credit for the course, and the student may be asked to leave the summer program. Any time out of class for late registration, illness, bereavement, court, medical appointments, vacations, personal business, tardiness or misbehavior will be counted towards the 2-day limit. The student will assume responsibility to make up the appropriate classwork.

Please contact your guidance office for questions relating to failed course(s), promotion, graduation etc.

For questions related to summers school offerings, please contact Ms. Tammy Gage at (413) 499-9567.

Appendix E

Summer School Transportation



**Pittsfield High to Taconic High School
7:40 a.m. & 10:10 a.m.**

**Taconic High School to Pittsfield High
10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.**

**Breakfast Served from 7:30-8:15 a.m.
Lunch Served from 12:00-1:30 p.m.**



Meals Served at the THS Cafeteria

Summer School Transportation



**Pittsfield High to Taconic High School
7:40 a.m. & 10:10 a.m.**

Taconic High School to Pittsfield High

10:30 a.m. & 1:30 p.m.

Breakfast Served from 7:30-8:15 a.m.

Lunch Served from 12:00-1:30 p.m.



Meals Served at the THS Cafeteria

COURSE OFFERINGS

Remediation Courses:

A remediation course is created to improve the student's level, ability, and understanding of the course material. It is designed primarily for students who have taken a course, failed it, and need to work toward proficiency.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Language Arts	Grades 6-8
General Mathematics	Grades 6-8
Social Studies	Grades 6-8
Integrated Science	Grades 6-8

HIGH SCHOOL

ENGLISH:

English 9
English 10
English 11
English 12

MATHEMATICS:

Algebra I & II
Geometry

SOCIAL STUDIES:

US History I & II
World History I & II

SCIENCE:

Biology
Chemistry
Physics

PHYSICAL EDUCATION 9-12

COURSE OFFERINGS (continued)

*Course offerings are dependent upon enrollment and availability of instructors.

ATTENDANCE:

A student will be expected to have 100% attendance. Any student who misses more than 3 days of class time or is tardy to class more than twice will not receive a grade or credit for the course, and the student may be asked to leave the summer program. Any time out of class for late registration, illness, bereavement, court, medical appointments, vacations, personal business, tardiness, and misbehavior will be counted towards the three-day limit. The student will assume responsibility to make-up the appropriate class work.

Additional Offerings:

Drivers Education

Cost \$90.00 for 12 class sessions

July 6-July 21st- 8:00 a.m. -10:30 a.m.

Appendix F

Afternoon Credit Recovery

Welcome to Afternoon Credit Recovery. This session meets for 6 weeks ending on _____. All work in your course including the END of SEMESTER TEST needs to be completed by _____.

Expectations: You are required to be present in Room ____ on ____ from 2:30 – 5:00 to complete this work. There will be one 10-minute break. You may go to the bathroom or get a drink of water at any time. Headphones must be used if you are listening to a unit on the computer. You must be respectful of your classmates; they also need to complete their work. Cell phones and iPods are not permitted.

Courses: You must complete all units in your course. Each unit starts with a pre-test and ends with a post-test. Additionally, history and English courses have projects or writing assignments that must be completed. There are learning modules in each unit. You have 5 chances to pass the Mastery Test for each module.

Tests: All tests must be taken in the ACR classroom on _____ afternoons. The posttests will be locked until you complete all modules in the unit. You only get one chance to take a Post Test.

Grading:

Attendance/Time on Task	10%
Project (English/History Only)	10%
Module Completion	30% **40% for courses with no project
Unit TESTS	30%
End of Semester TEST	20%

Contact info: If you are going to miss a class, please let me know. The best way to contact me is by email at _____ or you can stop by and see me in Room _____.

Appendix G

DATE

Dear Parent/Guardian:

You are receiving this letter because your son/daughter is failing one of more subjects and is currently in jeopardy of not graduating or not being promoted. Pittsfield Public Schools is offering an afternoon credit recovery session for students that will begin _____. There is no cost for the course and the program will meet for six consecutive _____ ending on _____.

SENIORS: It is important you discuss with your son/daughter their graduation status. We recognize this is a very busy time for students. However, we want to make students aware they may not be eligible to graduate and therefore will not walk in the June ceremony unless they fulfill all requirements for graduation.

Attending the credit recovery session **does not guarantee** your son/daughter will graduate or be promoted. They must complete all coursework and meet all program requirements and failure to do so will result in a failed course grade. If your son or daughter decides not participate in the credit recovery session, they will still have an opportunity to attend summer school in order to work on earning credits to graduate.

Any questions regarding graduation or credit recovery courses should be directed to your son/daughter's guidance counselor. If you have additional questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (413) ###-####.

Sincerely,

Principal

Appendix H

Rules and Regulations

1. The Falmouth Summer Session is designed for students who wish to learn. Appropriate behavior and dress, as outlined in the Falmouth High School Student Handbook, will be enforced. There is **NO SMOKING ON SCHOOL PROPERTY**.
2. Students must have earned a minimum grade of 45 in the original class for which they are seeking credit recovery. Guidance Counselors and/or School Administrators will need to sign to denote final approval on the student registration form.
3. Attendance: It is essential that students attend ALL class sessions. A maximum of 2 absences is allowed per course. Any student exceeding this limit may be dismissed from the course. **NO CREDIT or REIMBURSEMENTS** for dismissed students allowed.
4. Tardiness: Students need to be present at the start time for their class. Tardy students **MUST** see the Summer School Secretary for a pass to class. A student who is more than 10 minutes tardy for a class will be considered absent unless that student has a signed excuse from the Director. Three tardies (arrivals to class within the first ten minutes) to any class will result in one absence.
5. Class time lost through authorized absences may be made up with the Director's approval.
6. Students will be expected to put forth their best effort in class work and in completing all assignments.
7. Students and parents will receive weekly, mid-term, and final progress reports. To receive credit, students must earn a minimum C- (70%) final grade.
8. The Summer School Director will be responsible for the day to day operations of the Summer Session. The FHS Principal will be the final decision maker regarding all Summer School policies and student dismissals.
9. Absolutely no food or drink is permitted in the building.

Falmouth High School

Summer Session



July 9 – August 9, 2012

874 Gifford Street Falmouth, MA 02540 (508) 540-2200



updated 6/6/12

Mail In:

REGISTRATION

June 8 to June 29, 2012

Please mail registration to

FHS Summer Session
c/o FHS Guidance Department Falmouth High School
874 Gifford St.
Falmouth, MA 02540

July 5 & 6, 2012

8:00 am to 10:00 am Falmouth High School Guidance Office

Deadline for Registration

COURSE OFFERINGS

All summer session courses are online courses and are offered during both

Walk In:

Algebra I Part I 4 Algebra I Part II 4 Algebra I 4 Algebra II 4 Geometry 4 *Geometry CP2 for original credit only 4 **Honors Pre-Calculus for original credit only 4 Biology 4 U.S. History I 4 U.S. History II 4 World History 4 English I (grade 9) 4

10:00 am on July 6, 2012—No exceptions. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Fees:

\$250.00 per credit recovery course

\$600.00 per original credit course

Registration Fee = \$20.00 per student regardless of the number of courses

Please make checks payable to Town of Falmouth.

department head prior to enrolling for the course in the summer session.

**Students seeking enrollment in Honors Pre-Calculus must complete an additional enrollment permission form that includes the course descriptions for the required online components.

NOTES

STUDENTS MUST BRING THEIR OWN HEADPHONES.

For more information about online learning at FHS, please refer to the 2012-2013 Program of Studies available on the FHS website. Click on the —Academics tab.

SPECIAL NOTE ABOUT EPPS AND SUMMER SESSION ENROLLMENT

Students registering for summer session courses to recover credit for a course required as part of an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP) must receive approval from the department head for that subject as part of summer session registration.

There is a required signature line on the summer session registration form that must be completed in order to register for an EPP-specific course.

At the mid-point of the summer session, all students enrolled in EPP-specific courses will have their progress evaluated, and those in need of more intensive support will be required to attend both sessions (7:30-11:30 am) for the remainder of the Summer School Program. There will no additional fee assessed for the extra time required.

Sessions I & II.

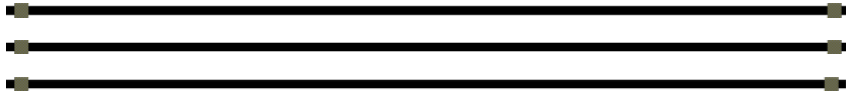
Course

Credits

English II-IV (grades 10-12)

Spanish I 4

2 per semester recovered *Students seeking enrollment in Geometry CP2 must gain approval from the mathematics



Location:

Times:

All classes will be held at

Falmouth High School 874 Gifford Street Falmouth, MA 02540

Session I = 7:30 am – 9:30 am (Mon-Thurs) Session II = 9:30 am – 11:30am (Mon-Thurs)

Questions:

Please call (508) 540-2200, extension 4045 updated 6/6/12

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