

January 2010 ES Meeting Compilation

(A compilation of questions and answers from the all ES meeting this month)

ES Specific Info:

Should we take any action if we think a student might be cheating

Absolutely! Hold your students accountable just as you would in the classroom! You should not count the assignment, or attendance, for that work you believe they did not do.

Will we get extra PG time for the video that needed to be watched prior to the meeting?

No. Look at the link to the law posted in our ES Recourses online--PG is to be given for "in person" trainings only.

What does "GA" stand for in "GA Filter" in FRED?

"Growth Area"

Educational Info (POs, Curriculum, Vendors, LRs, etc)

(None this month)

Assessment Info (Scantron, Writing assignment, state assessments, etc):

Can a regular education student take the STAR test over the four days if requested?

Yes. Do let your STAR coordinator know.

If we have a new student do they need to do the writing assignment now?

No. But they can if they wish.

Was the persuasive elements most important or the writing conventions? Some of our group felt the rubric was weighted in such a way that a student who wrote a good paper but did not correctly address the assignment could still score well.

The persuasive essay was given a specific structure and set of expectations, and the rubric followed those expectations. So it is possible that the score in part reflects how well a student followed the expectations of the rubric. That is why it is important that parents have a copy of the rubric and the practice materials so they comprehend up front what the expectations are for the assignment. The categories on the rubric are the same ones used by CDE and many aspects of the rubric were taken from the CDE rubric for persuasive writing. The topic category required that they include a counterargument, reasons and details that supported the position (relevance), so that would lean towards persuasive elements. Organization leaned less on persuasive elements. The Persuasive category emphasized "relevance"...how well did the reasons and details and use of transitions and word choice persuade the reader...so that category leaned toward persuasive. Sentence variety leaned more toward conventions, and "Conventions" toward conventions.

Is it OK to give a score like 3.27 for the writing assignment or do we need to round to 3.3?

Please round to tenths when you enter the score in ES Webfiles.

Where in ES Webfiles do we input the scores from the writing assignment?

The information is on the document linked to the agenda:

http://www.sscs.cc/Handbook/writing_2010/wr_pe_directions.pdf

Do we only enter concerns and phone number on the Assessment letter? There is no place to check that the student will/will not be attending like in the form.

Keep watch on ES Webfiles--this will be fixed.

Guidance Info:

Do students taking a basic course have to complete the standards?

Yes! A basic course is a lower level course, of the same standards. They will do different assignments, but address the same material.

How do our parents know what standards need to be completed to earn the credits?

That is part of the conversation you, their ES, has with the parents/students when they enroll with us and at the beginning of each school year! The parent printout of the standards is their guide--be sure you are providing that to them! Many of our parents do not wish to use a standard textbook, therefore they need the guide to see what material is expected to be covered (however they wish to cover it, and at whatever speed they wish to cover it) in their courses.

If a student enrolls part way through a semester, and comes with classes listed on a transcript with no credits, how does this work with LR's as it could appear they did not cover all of the standards?

LRs only have to show the work down while enrolled with us. It is typical when a student moves from one public high school to another in CA for it to be assumed that everyone is at the same place in the textbooks. Therefore, if you get a student 1/2 way through a semester, you can assume they have already covered the first 1/4 of the text (2.5 credits worth). You can award the full 5 credits when they complete the remaining 1/4 of the text typically completed for 1st Semester. If they choose to not do textbooks with us, then begin tracking the standards at about 1/4 of the way down the list of standards. Allowing parent choice takes more creative thought on the part of the ES, but that is what we are about as a school!

What do you do with a SME? Do you send a copy of the transcript or in progress grades from the prior school?

Yes, be sure you let your SME know that the student is to earn 5 credits, as they completed 1/4 of the textbook prior to enrolling with us. If the prior school sent in progress grades, you need to send that info to the SME as well, as those grades must be averaged in with the grade they earned with us. If the prior school sent no grade, then the HQT may assign the grade for the entire semester based on the work they see that was done while enrolled with us.

If a student is studying a topic in-depth and not progressing through the standards, can we add some sort of elective course that would cover the extra work completed? Lets say if they did excessive work in one area of Biology, would we use another science course such as Botany to make up the difference?

Absolutely, that is what we expect you will do! The beauty of our school is for students to be able to follow their interests as they arise, and study a topic in depth in their areas of interest. In the above example, if the student had earned only 2.5 credits of Biology, then deviated into an extensive study of Botany, add the class as an elective, collect a 2nd sample for this new course, and award the 2.5 credits of Botany they earned. ESs must not just be looking at their student's progress towards the standards in the courses they signed up for at the beginning of the semester, but must always be asking questions at your LR meetings that will allow you to discover what else they have been doing! That is a large part of your job! Don't just try to keep them on the same track they were on, allot for deviations!

Could a student earn 5 credits if they took and passed the AP test and had oral discussions with their ES about standards they had not met?

No, sorry, that will not work. We have checked into this in the past and it is not acceptable.

Is an AP score shown on the students' transcripts?

If a student takes the AP exam, lists our school as one for scores to be sent to, then yes, the scores will appear on their official transcript.

Could the grammar standards for English be covered within the essays and other writing that was completed rather than doing separate grammar assignments or worksheets?

That is a specific question for the HQT TOR who will be assigning the grades and credits to answer. If a standard is met in this way, then it is met!

"If it is not an a-g course, then awarding less than 5 credits in a semester is not an issue." We respectfully disagree. Having courses with less than 5 credits makes a transcript look like a continuation high school or less than successful completion of courses.

We send out our Learning Records along with transcripts if this is an issue for anyone. If the LR is well-written and supports the students wonderful, in-depth work, then it is not an issue for the institution receiving the transcript. We have done this now for 17 years! The only time we have been called on this has been when the LR has not provided enough detail to explain what the student was doing. (This is why we nag you about your LRS!!)

Can you clarify the sentence from the RC Scenarios?-- "Our school is parent choice, but our HS courses are not."

The HS course requirements are standardized and a transcript has a specific definition/understanding for every public school in CA. Every school/college/etc expects that every student in the state with 5 credits of Algebra 1 on their Transcript has met 1/2 of the state Algebra standards. We do not set the definitions of the course titles, and we do not set our own standards, but we report our student's progress towards those standards (as does every other CA public school) on the official transcript.

Charter schools are exempt from many ED code sections, but we are not exempt from the CA standards. On the other hand, we are exempt from the requirement to use only state adopted curriculum, and from the requirement to earn 5 credits of a course a semester or fail! Parents/students have the choice of what they will study when, and what they will use to meet each requirement in order to earn that credit. We have had some parents choose to NOT earn the grades and credits required for graduation, but to only follow their interests and earn credits in topics of their choice. We allow this (although talk to your advisor about getting this in writing so it doesn't come back on you later. Email is a great way to keep a trail of communication with your parents for issues like this.) In this realm of freedom and parent choice, it becomes critical that you diligently interview, track, and report on their progress towards standards to keep them on the track they wish to follow.

Just to clarify- A-G 5 credits must be completed in one semester?

Yes. That is a UC system requirement at this point. We have asked for reconsideration on this point, but have yet to receive a response.

May a student take an SME course for part of a semester?

Yes. If you earn your HQT certification during a semester, contact Shelley Ross.

May a student take a required course (i.e. Government and Economics) over 4 semesters?

A student may take 4 years to complete a course--that is in their choice, as long as they are doing enough work to earn attendance. (Unless it is an a-g course--see above question.)

May a student receive less than 2.5 units for a course in one semester?

Yes. A student may receive anywhere from .1 to 5 credits for any one course in a semester.

If a student has done in-depth research on one topic to the exclusion of some of the standards (scenario 2), may he quickly cover the needed standards to earn full credit for the course?

Yes, that is what you the ES would recommend to the parent/student to keep them on the track they wish to be on.

Will classic literature (Herodotus, Virgil, Dante, etc.) meet the requirements for a high school English course even if they are not on the SME list?

Yes. The SME list is a starting place for negotiation.

Can a 7th/8th grader take an AP test?

YES! There is no age limit for attempting AP tests.

Parent Specific Info:

(None this month)