

R277-700-5 Middle School Education Requirements Guidance

1. How many credits are required in middle school?

R277-700-5 does not require a specific number of credits for any course or for student advancement in middle school. Middle school courses must meet the requirements set forth in the standards associated with the course. Class schedules are set locally, and local boards may set credit requirements.

2. Does the rule differentiate between half year and full year courses?

It does not. The length of courses and the requirements for meeting the standards are set locally.

3. Are students still required to take all the middle school courses listed in R277-700-5?

Yes. Although R277-700-5(7) gives some flexibility to students and parents to request changes in schedules, the expectation is that all students will take the required courses unless given individual substitutions. Substitution to any course must be based on course, extracurricular activities, and experiences that are 1) similar to the course requirement or 2) consistent with the student's plan for college and career readiness.

4. May an LEA make substitute course decisions for groups of students, such as those involved in DLI?

No. Course substitutions are made at the request of individual parents and students and should not be made for groups of students.

5. Which classes may be substituted for?

Any class may be substituted for as long as the student demonstrates proficiency in the course. R277-700-7(1).

6. What constitutes a course, extracurricular activity or experience as described in the rule?

LEAs must establish policies governing acceptable course, extracurricular or experience substitutions that demonstrate sufficient knowledge and skill in a course that will align with the core standards and prepare students for success at the next grade level. LEA policies may include definitions of essential standards and methods of meeting course expectations when an outside experience only partially meets the standards.

7. Can a student use multiple experiences in combination to meet the essential standards of the course?

Yes.

8. Is there a minimum hour requirement for an outside experience?

The rule is silent on minimum hour requirements for outside experiences. Students will be expected to demonstrate competency according to local policies.

9. How do LEAs adopt policies to govern this rule?

Local policies must be established by local boards. R277-700-5(8)

10. Can an LEA deny a parent or student's request for substituting a class?

Yes, an LEA may deny the parent or student's request for substituting a class if the requested substitution does not meet the core standards, if a student fails to demonstrate competency, or if the request is outside the bounds of local policies. R277-700-7(1)

11. Is there an appeals process should the request be denied?

A student or parent may appeal a decision to the local school board or designated appointee. LEAs must establish policies that include a process for local appeal. R277-700-5(8b)

12. Can a student complete a competency exam to demonstrate proficiency in a course?

The rule is silent on the specifics of how a student can demonstrate competency. Districts and charter schools should adopt policies regarding requirements for demonstrations that will be recognized locally. R277-700-5(8)

13. How will a substituted course appear on a student transcript?

The rule does not specify how records will be maintained regarding substituted classes.

14. What grades are included in these changes?

The changes to R277-700-5 only affect grades 7 and 8. There is no change to requirements in 6th grade or to the high school graduation requirements.

15. Can family vacations or music lessons meet the criteria for course substitution?

Perhaps, course substitution policies are set locally. Local boards will decide which types of experiences and extracurricular activities meet expected standards.

16. Can extracurricular activities and experiences be used to replace grades?

No. The grade replacement policy in R277-717 applies only to high school. The course flexibility now in R277-700-5 applies only to middle school.

17. When does this rule take affect?

The rule became effective of March 14, 2018; however, operationally speaking schools may consider the rule to be actionable in the 2018-2019 school year.