Distributed Learning

Administrative Procedure 3.A.030

Board Governance Policy Cross Reference: 1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 13, 16
Legal Reference:

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Background Information

1. Distributed Learning is a learning model where students are able to access learning opportunities outside of the School District. Distributed learning takes place when a student is primarily at a distance from the teacher or is connected to teachers from a variety of accredited organizations. Various delivery modes may be used to customize a program of study.

   Distributed learning:
   - Provides web-based educational alternatives to students where local courses are not available.
   - Improves access, allows for more choice and flexibility to learn outside of classroom schedules.
   - Allows web-based courses to become integrated into overall programming offered by schools.

2. The School District of Mystery Lake will consider distributed learning to address
   - Under enrollment in District programs (ie French Immersion)
   - Difficulty in staffing courses and in providing a variety of course options in under enrolled programs.
   - Student interest in alternative methods for receiving credits
   - Timetable conflicts
   - Teacher availability, particularly in specialized areas.

3. Web-based courses differ from other distance learning models by being
   - Teacher-mediated (regular instructor contact)
   - Delivered asynchronously via the WWW
   - Flexible in scheduling – “anytime – anywhere” access to the course materials
   - Computer-mediated communications-based, i.e. e-mail, discussion groups

4. Distributed learning impacts teaching assignments in the following ways:
    - significant volumes of e-mail and discussion that must be handled by the teacher. This communication can be done at school or at home.
    - teacher time for delivery of an online course is at least equal to face-to-face delivery (one course equivalent to 1/8 FTE)
    - teacher "attentiveness" is important with immediate feedback to student questions and messages initiated by the teacher as integral to student success, engagement and motivation.
    - teacher must receive training prior to course delivery

Policy Guidelines

The School District of Mystery Lake will offer distributed learning courses to students in accordance with the following guiding principles:

- The District will deliver as many web-based courses as feasible based on data provided by the principal of RD Parker Collegiate regarding student needs and staff availability. This process will be coordinated by the District Office.
- if the school is unable to offer one of the required compulsory or optional credits for graduation, the school must make a reasonable effort to find an appropriate alternative means of delivery of that credit.
- registrations for web-based courses should not impact negatively on the viability of face to face sections of courses in schools
- students will be allowed to enroll in a maximum of 2 web-based courses per semester
- minimum student registrations for courses will be 15
- maximum students registrations will be 25
- in cases where minimum student registrations can not be achieved internally, the school district will allow students from other jurisdictions to register. In this case, a tuition fee may be charged and credited to the school where the teacher is based.

Fee Structure

Internal Courses: No fee

External Courses: Students may be required to pay the tuition fee being charged by the delivering institution. This fee may be refundable upon successful completion of the course (under the discretion of the principal).

School Responsibilities

- Principals are required to engage in an information-sharing process with students wanting to register for distance learning courses, and their parents/guardians. This process will facilitate informed decision-making.
- Supply on-site facilitators
- Provide access to the appropriate information and communication technology, including Internet access
- Ensure that any distance learning course for which a student registers is valid for credit towards Manitoba's graduation requirements
- Record the marks received by students in distance learning courses on students' transcripts
- Make arrangements for students to write any required Manitoba Standards Tests.