

Digital Education Program

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Fully Online Course Enrollment Guidance - Middle and High School

Question: *Can fully online courses that a student completes **before enrolling in the HCPSS** be accepted for credit?*

HCPSS Transcript Review Process

The review process for a student's transcript entering the HCPSS, which includes fully online courses, follows the same criteria for any course, regardless of the instructional method in which the course was taken. For a student transferring from another Maryland public school, the fully online course must be MSDE-approved. Any other fully online course that meets the content standards may be considered for approval. Note that a school counselor reviews each transcript received and completes a transcript review.

Question: *Can my child receive credit from a fully online course that is **not affiliated** with HCPSS or the JumpStart dual enrollment program?*

HCPSS Fully Online Courses

Current HCPSS students who are interested in enrolling in a non-HCPSS fully online class, other than a JumpStart dual enrollment course in collaboration with Howard Community College (HCC) or other college level course, should review the following information to ensure the course(s) meet MD COMAR and can be awarded high school credit. Board of Education [Policy 8200 Digital Education](#) specifies the eligibility criteria under which HCPSS students may enroll in HCPSS digital education.

Policy 8200 eligibility criteria includes:

1. The school does not offer the course.
2. There is a scheduling conflict which prevents the student from taking the course when it is available and there is no accessible alternative in future academic years.
3. The student has been approved for early graduation or early college access demonstrated through their four-year plan.
4. Home and Hospital Teaching Program.
5. Administrative placement.

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Students seeking to enroll in a course should meet with their school counselor to:

1. Discuss the readiness of taking a fully online course(s) and the appropriateness of the specific course(s) to be taken based on the student's four-year plan to progress towards graduation.
 - a. For students enrolling in a self-pay fully online course option, ensure the course enrollment takes place beyond the school day.
2. Determine if the student has met the course prerequisites listed in the HCPSS [Catalog of Approved High School Courses](#).
3. Ensure that the course(s) and course provider are approved by the HCPSS and can be awarded high school credit.

Parents/guardians who enroll HCPSS students in a fully online course(s) without the approval of the school counselor **are not guaranteed that the course(s) taken will be awarded high school credit**. Please note:

- MSDE maintains a list of courses and course providers that are approved for fully online instruction. The HCPSS does not offer all of the courses listed from MSDE. **Do not assume that a course on the MSDE list is accepted by HCPSS.**
- MSDE does not approve or recommend a third-party vendor. Instead, individual courses are approved and there may be multiple approved providers for a course. **Do not assume that all of a third-party vendor's courses will be awarded credit.**
- The MSDE course list is updated each year as course approvals are required to be renewed. **Do not assume that a course that was available in previous years will be available during the current school year.**
- Some third-party vendors may include misleading "approval" or "accreditation" language in their materials or on their website that claims they are approved by the MSDE for fully online courses. **Do not assume this is accurate.**

To help ensure that the course(s) taken will be accepted for high school credit, review the request with the school counselor before enrolling a student in a fully online course with a third-party provider.

Self-Pay Course Option

Students who do not meet the eligibility criteria but still wish to enroll in a fully online course, may do so but will be responsible for course tuition costs and fees. Students should meet with their school counselor to discuss the readiness of taking a fully online

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course(s) and the appropriateness of the specific course(s) to be taken. Students enrolling through the self-pay course option are required to take the course beyond the school day.

After submitting an enrollment request, Digital Education will send parents/guardians the approved course provider information for the course(s) to help ensure that the student may be awarded high school credit.

Middle School Students

Any high school course listed in the [Middle School Course Catalog](#) which is offered at the middle school is eligible for high school credit and will be treated as an equivalent. Students who meet the [Policy 8200 Digital Education](#) eligibility criteria for fully online courses may enroll in HCPSS digital education. The following exceptions apply:

- Students transferring into HCPSS who do not have the appropriate level course at their middle school.
- Students enrolled in a pilot middle school offering Spanish 2 who transfer to a middle school where the course is not available.

NOTE: It is recommended that middle school students do not accelerate math by enrolling in fully online course instruction.

For the Innovative Pathways High School Summer Program, entering Grade 9 students may take high school courses for which they have met prerequisite requirements or are available 9th grade course options (except English, Health and Lifetime Fitness). Credits earned in the High School Summer Program will count towards high school credit and graduation requirements but not included in the high school Grade Point Average (GPA).

JumpStart Program and Dual Enrollment Courses

HCPSS students in grades 8-12 at every middle and high school may elect to take and earn credit for courses that are included in the JumpStart program in collaboration with HCC. Current grade 8-10 students must show they are “gifted and talented” by HCC standards in a meeting with HCC admissions and advising staff prior to enrollment. For courses that are HCC-based courses, students may enroll in the face-to-face, hybrid or fully online version of the course.

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- Dual enrollment courses that are currently approved under the MOU between HCPSS and HCC do not require any additional review or approval by HCPSS staff.
- Courses taught at other institutions of higher education that have not been previously approved for dual credit in any format, including fully online, for HCPSS credit must be reviewed by the content area curriculum office. Please allow at least two months to evaluate the course and determine alignment with the desired HCPSS equivalent.

Home Instruction Programs

Parents/guardians who are interested in enrolling in a Home Instruction program, including a MSDE-approved private school or MSDE-approved online program used for home instruction oversight should contact the HCPSS Home Instruction Office. Information for [Home Instruction applications and programs](#) can be found online.