

Your Question:

You were interested in credit recovery policies, and how states define and regulate credit recovery. You expressed particular interest in policy examples from Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Tennessee.

Our Response:

Education Commission of the States searched statute and regulations in the six states of interest. Policies in a few of these states reference credit recovery (for example, [MD Code, Education, § 7-301.1](#) permits schools to allow pregnant or parenting students to participate in a credit recovery program to make up work the student missed). However, only one of the six states of interest – Tennessee – has established a definition of credit recovery in policy; Tennessee credit recovery programs are regulated by local policies aligned with state board standards for credit recovery.

In this respect, the remaining five states of interest are representative of states nationally. Relatively few states have adopted state-level credit recovery policies, including definitions of and mechanisms for regulating credit recovery. And in most state-level credit recovery policies that *do* exist, policies are framed as an “opt-in” – *if* a district or LEA chooses to offer credit recovery, programs must meet certain criteria.

The section that follows sets forth states’ policies establishing definitions and regulation of credit recovery programs. The final section identifies additional state policy components of interest.

Tennessee

[Tennessee State Board of Education Policy 2.103\(7\)](#) defines “credit recovery” as “a course-specific, standards based extended learning opportunity for students who have previously been unsuccessful in mastering the standards required to receive course credit or earn promotion. Credit recovery programs, in general, have a primary focus of helping students stay in school and graduate on time.”

Tennessee’s policy directs local boards of education to “develop credit recovery program rules, regulations and processes” that, at a minimum, address the following state board “standards for admission and removal, instruction, content and curriculum, and grades.” These local policies must be “posted to the district’s website, and provided in writing to any participating students, parents, or legal guardians.”

Tennessee has one of the more robust credit recovery policies nationally, aligned with many of Education Commission of the States’ essential policy components identified in a [2011 report](#). The comparison table below identifies Tennessee’s alignment with these essential policy components.

Additional data & links

[Using Online Learning for Credit Recovery: Getting Back on Track to Graduation](#) (iNACOL, September 2015) Includes suggestions for ensuring program quality.

[The Progress of Education Reform: Credit Recovery and Proficiency-Based Credit](#) (Education Commission of the States, June 2011) Proposes essential policy components for credit recovery.

[Blended Credit Recovery: Strategies for Integrating In-Person Instruction into an Online Credit Recovery Program](#) (Jobs for the Future, for the U.S. Department of Education, February 2014)

Education Commission of the States' Essential Policy Component for Credit Recovery	Tennessee State Board Standards for Credit Recovery Include This Component
Requiring the offering of credit recovery courses/availability	Yes
Getting the word out	Yes
Finance	Unclear
State standards	Yes
Pacing (self-paced, competency-based)	Yes
Quality of instruction	Yes
Clear program completion expectations	Yes. To earn credit, students must master all individualized standard-specific goals and assignments as established by the diagnostic process and the credit recovery teacher of record.
Evaluation	Yes. Local boards must track and designate students enrolled in credit recovery courses as directed by the Tennessee Department of Education.
Taking it to the next level (i.e., ensuring one-on-one assistance or other deeper supports are offered if a student is unsuccessful in a credit recovery intervention)	Unclear

Below is the full text of Tennessee's credit recovery policy.

a. Admission and Removal

- i. No LEA shall admit or otherwise enroll students in credit recovery courses unless all of the following are true:
 - 1. The student's parent or legal guardian gives written consent for the student to enroll in the proposed credit recovery course. Parents/guardians should be informed that not all postsecondary institutions will accept credit recovery courses for credit and that the NCAA Clearinghouse will not accept credit recovery courses for credit.
 - 2. The student has previously taken an initial, non-credit recovery section of the proposed course. Credit recovery is designed to be a remediation option for students, and a credit recovery course shall not be the first time a student is exposed to the course content.
 - 3. The student mastered at least fifty percent (50%) of the course standards as evidenced by the course grade in a non-credit recovery section of the course or a diagnostic assessment. Students who mastered below fifty percent (50%) of the course standards as evidenced by the course grade in a non-credit recovery section of the course or a diagnostic assessment, must re-take the course.
- ii. If a student is seeking to recover credit for the first semester of a two (2)-semester course, the student may not receive the full credit for the course until they have enrolled in and passed the second semester of the course and taken any applicable End of Course examinations.
- iii. Local board of education credit recovery policies may set additional requirements for admission to and removal from credit recovery programs including but not limited to attendance, discipline, availability of coursework, availability of space, appropriate progress, and grades.
- iv. Local boards of education shall track and designate students enrolled in credit recovery courses as directed by the Tennessee Department of Education.

b. Instruction

- i. Students enrolled in any credit recovery courses must be assigned to a teacher of record.

- ii. Credit recovery teachers of record must be endorsed and certified in any content area(s) for which they oversee credit recovery courses.
- iii. Credit recovery teachers of record must be responsible for reviewing initial student diagnostic results; assisting in determining appropriate goals, coursework, and assignments for students; working closely with credit recovery facilitators on class content and instruction; and reviewing final student work.
- iv. Credit recovery facilitators may be responsible for day-to-day oversight and facilitation of credit recovery programs, under the guidance of the credit recovery teacher of record.
- v. Local boards of education shall ensure that credit recovery facilitators receive training pertaining to the credit recovery course organization, online instruction management, and related technology.
- vi. LEAs shall ensure that all credit recovery courses:
 - 1. Align with Tennessee’s current academic standards for the relevant course content area, as approved by the State Board of Education.
 - 2. Are able to differentiate instruction to address individual student growth needs based on diagnostic assessment or End of Course data.
- vii. Credit Recovery content may be delivered through instructional technology.
- viii. Students in Credit Recovery programs:
 - 1. Shall complete a course standard-specific diagnostic to determine standard-specific goals.
 - 2. Shall meet individual standard-specific goals in a flexible time frame as established by identified student need.
 - 3. May be required to complete additional assignments as directed by local board of education credit recovery policy and credit recovery teacher of record.
 - 4. Shall master all individualized standard-specific goals and assignments as established by the diagnostic process and the credit recovery teacher of record, in order to earn credit.

c. Grades

- i. Students passing credit recovery shall receive a grade of seventy percent (70%).
- ii. The student transcript shall denote that the credit was attained through credit recovery.
- iii. The original failing grade may also be listed on the transcript, but shall not factor into the student’s GPA, in accordance with the State Board of Education’s Uniform Grading Policy 3.301.

Alabama

Definition: No definition in statute or regulation

Program specifics/how regulated: “Local boards of education may establish Credit Recovery programs allowing certain students learning opportunities to master concepts and skills in one or more failed courses. Course content for credit recovery courses shall be composed of standards in which students proved deficient rather than all standards of the original course. LEAs offering credit recovery courses must develop programs including regulations and processes addressing admission and removal, instruction, content and curriculum, grades, and credits. Schools may offer these courses using computer software, online instruction, or teacher-directed instruction. The curriculum shall align with State Board of Education Alabama courses of study content standards in which students are deficient.” ([Ala. Admin. Code r. 290-3-1-.02](#)(10))

Georgia

Definition: “a type of alternative/non-traditional program designed to allow students the opportunity to retake a course that he/she previously did not earn credits toward graduation.” ([Ga Comp. R. & Regs. 160-4-8-.12](#)(1)(e))

Program specifics/how regulated: Not set forth in statute or regulation.

South Carolina

Definition: “‘Credit recovery’ means self-paced, semester-long courses that target learning in areas of greatest weakness, allowing nontraditional or at-risk students to rapidly complete courses, recover credits, and progress to graduation.” ([Code § 59-16-30](#)) [Code § 59-16-15\(A\)](#) provides that students may enroll in credit recovery courses based on policies established by the state board of education. (No state board regulation adopted at this time.)

Program specifics/how regulated: Not set forth in statute or regulation. Statute provides for the state virtual high school to offer credit recovery courses.

Louisiana

Definition: “Credit recovery refers to instructional programs for students who have failed courses taken previously.”

Program specifics/how regulated: “LEAs may develop credit recovery programs which are self-paced and competency-based.

1. Students earning Carnegie credit in a credit recovery course must have previously taken and failed the course.
2. Students shall not be required to meet attendance requirements for credit recovery courses.
3. Credit recovery courses must be aligned with the state's content standards.
4. Credit recovery courses taught in a classroom setting using computer software programs designed for credit recovery must be facilitated by a certified teacher.
 - a. Additional instruction to cover standards and grade-level expectations not included in the software programs shall be provided by a teacher properly certified in the content area.
5. The end-of-course exam weight in a student's final grade determined by the LEA shall be the same for a traditional course and a credit recovery course. Students who have previously passed the end-of-course exam, but have failed the course, may choose to retain their previous end-of-course exam score in lieu of participating in an additional administration of the exam.” ([La. Admin Code. tit. 28, Pt CXV, § 2324](#))

Mississippi

Definition: “Credit recovery is defined as a course-specific, skill-based learning opportunity for students who have previously been unsuccessful in mastering content/skills required to receive course credit or earn promotion.” Eligible students must have completed and failed a course and/or failed an end-of-course assessment.

Program specifics/how regulated: See below

2. Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, any LEA that provides a credit recovery program shall develop and implement a policy that has been adopted by the school board and that includes rules, regulations, and processes. This policy shall be available to faculty, students, and parents/guardians. At a minimum, LEAs must address the following areas:
 - a. Admission to and removal from the credit recovery program

- i. LEAs shall establish an application process that requires parental consent.
 - ii. LEAs shall establish minimum criteria to determine eligibility for participation in the credit recovery program.
 - iii. LEAs shall determine the number of credit recovery courses that a student can take at one time.
 - iv. Students shall not remain in a credit recovery course for more than one year.
 - v. Only students who have failed a course may enroll in credit recovery to earn a minimum passing grade. Credit recovery cannot be used by a student who has passed the course to improve the students assigned course grade.
 - vi. A student who has passed a SATP class, but failed the SATP assessment may enroll in credit recovery for remediation only. The grade earned for the SATP class remains unchanged.
- b. Instruction:
- i. LEAs shall determine the instructional methodology used for the credit recovery program (e.g. online program, Mississippi Virtual Public School, direct instruction, computer assisted instruction, etc.)
 - ii. LEAs shall provide professional development for teachers and facilitators involved with the credit recovery program.
 - iii. Credit recovery curriculum shall be based on the Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks competencies and objectives.
 - iv. LEAs are responsible for establishing specific procedures for evaluation of student progress and determining grades.
 - v. Beginning with the school year 2016-17, a student who selects credit recovery to earn a Carnegie unit may only earn the minimal passing grade on the district's grading scale.

Source: [Miss. Admin. Code 7-3:28.5](#)

West Virginia

Definition: While not defined in regulation, regulation provides, “Researched-based successful credit recovery programs require students to successfully master content rather than repeat an entire course.” [W. Va. Code St. R. § 126-42-5.4.g.5](#))

Program specifics/how regulated: “County boards shall ... Select additional instructional resources, including virtual/online resources that will be used to provide opportunities for credit recovery. This does not include resources used to deliver first time course credit. When selecting additional credit recovery resources, the following protocols should be met:

7.8.a.1.A: verify that a local team of educators has reviewed the credit recovery program content for the respective courses to ensure that the material aligns with the approved content standards,

7.8.a.1.B: provide the WVDE with the name(s) of instructional materials used for credit recovery purposes, and

7.8.a.1.C: follow all state and local purchasing procedures when obtaining course content.” ([W. Va. Code St. R. § 126-42-7.8.a.1](#))

State Policy Components of Interest

Required Offering

Idaho: Regulations governing the middle grades credit system provide, “A school district or LEA must implement a credit system no later than grade seven (7) that includes components that address the credit requirements, credit recovery, alternate mechanisms and attendance. ... A student who does not meet the minimum requirements of the credit system shall be given an opportunity to recover credits or complete an alternate mechanism in order to become eligible for promotion to next grade level.” ([IDAPA 08.02.03.107.02](#))

West Virginia: “County boards of education shall adopt policies and programs that allow students to recover credit for failed high school courses. Researched-based successful credit recovery programs require students to successfully master content rather than repeat an entire course.” ([W. Va. Code St. R. § 126-42-5.4.g.5](#))

Reporting on Credit Recovery Offering

Colorado: School performance reports for middle and high schools must include credit recovery programs in “Course and Program Offerings” information.

Regulation defines credit recovery as “a program implemented at the school and/or District level that enables high school students who have fallen behind on graduation requirements to make up credits or middle school students who have fallen behind in grade promotion and/or transition into high school. This includes programs or activities that facilitate accrual of credits or course remediation especially in core courses (math, science, reading and social studies) and/or allow struggling students to continue earning course credits and make progress toward graduation or grade promotion. Credit recovery may occur as a student is completing other courses or as an extension activity, such as summer school. Examples include: self-paced digital content programs, online courses, work/study that awards credits, course remediation programs and alternative education programming that result in accrual of credits[.]” ([1 CCR 301-1:2202-R-11.05](#)(F)(21))

Promoted as Explicit Dropout Prevention and Recovery Strategy

Connecticut: A local or regional board of education for a district with a dropout rate of 8% or higher for the previous school year must offer an online credit recovery program, for students at risk of not completing high school graduation requirements to complete online coursework. “Each school in the school district shall designate, from among existing staff, an on-line learning coordinator who shall administer and coordinate the on-line credit recovery program[.]” ([C.G.S.A. § 10-223g](#))

Louisiana: LEAs with a four-year cohort graduation rate below 80% must identify targeted dropout prevention and recovery strategies. “Opportunities for credit recovery” is one of the nine methods LEA plans may include. ([LSA-R.S. 17:221.4](#)(B)(2)(h); [La. Admin Code. tit. 28, Pt CXV, § 1118](#)(A)(8))

Inclusion in Graduation Planning Documents (Individual Graduation Plans, etc.)

Colorado: Each Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) must “include a career planning, guidance and tracking component and portfolio” that includes, in addition to courses taken, any remediation or credit recovery. (C.R.S.A. § 22-2-136(2)(a)(II); [1 CCR 301-81:2.01](#)(1)(b))

Oklahoma: Similar to Colorado, beginning with students entering the ninth grade in the 2019-2020 school year ICAPs must include documentation of the student’s academic progress, including any remediation or credit recovery. ([70 Okl. St. Ann. § 1210.508-4](#)(B)(1)(d))