North Carolina's Implementation Guide for Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM)

PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA
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North Carolina Credit by Demonstrated Mastery Implementation Guide

How to Use This Guide

This document offers specific implementation guidelines for the North Carolina State Board of Education policy Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (GCS-M-001.8) addressing how students are able to earn course credit in a manner that does not require specific seat-time requirements. All NC students shall have the opportunity to earn Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) for high school courses by the end of the 2014-15 academic year to inform student placement in 2015-16.

This CDM Implementation Guide is provided by the State Board of Education (SBE) and the NC Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to help districts and schools implement the CDM policy for the benefit of students across the state.

This Guide is divided into four sections:

- **Section One** offers an overview of the CDM policy, the rationale, background, and development process.
- **Section Two** addresses recommendations for CDM implementation and logistical guidelines. These recommendations will be applied for students who wish to bypass entirely or "test out" of a course or subject area and earn course credit without traditional course enrollment. Some students may choose CDM for the purpose of accelerating and moving into another more advanced course.
- **Section Three** discusses the details of the SBE policy regarding the multi-phase assessment process required for students to earn CDM. This section also provides examination and artifact guidance, as well as suggestions regarding local requirements for CDM. Topics covered include testing windows, minimum scoring thresholds, use of standardized tests as local examinations, and types of artifacts and the artifact development process.
- **Section Four** addresses other considerations and areas that may be impacted by CDM including graduation-related issues, accountability impacts, and acceptance of CDM by outside organizations.

LEA Support

DPI is committed to supporting the implementation of CDM by local school districts. To accomplish this goal, DPI will systematically gather data from districts across the state and continue to bring together a CDM Working Group that will meet to analyze data and develop additional tools that would support local implementation.

CDM WIKI

This CDM Implementation Guide, Frequently Asked Questions, and CDM Toolkit may be found on DPI's Credit by Demonstrated Mastery wiki at cdm.ncdpi.wikispaces.net.

The CDM wiki will be updated periodically. If there are CDM-related resources or ideas that you find may be helpful to others, please share them with the contacts below and they will post the information to share.

CDM TOOLKIT

The CDM Toolkit provides LEAs with recommended timelines and documents which may be customized to meet a school district needs. The CDM Toolkit maybe found at http://cdm.ncdpi.wikispaces.net and contains at least the following:

- CDM Recommended Timelines
- CDM Long Term Considerations
- CDM Frequently Asked Questions
- CDM Student Record
- CDM Student/Familty Agreement
- CDM Local Team FlowCharts
- CDM Implementation Guide

Other types of documentation may be desired as well depending upon local procedures. These might include a results letter, an appeal form, an appeal decision letter, and other documentation.

DPI CONTACTS

Please contact the Division of Advanced Learning for any issues related to CDM:
- Stephanie Cyrus, State Consultant for AIG & Advanced Programs
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- Sneha Shah Coltrane, Director of Gifted Education and Advanced Programs
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Section One – Overview: CDM Policy

Introduction and Purpose of this Guide

The State Board of Education (SBE) encourages supporting students to accelerate their learning appropriately. Several long-standing policies document SBE intent, including:

- GCS-F-016, Policy Defining Academic Rigor;
- GCS-L-006, Policy for Adequately Informing Ninth Grade Students about Accelerated Preparation for College Entry;
- GCS-N-004, State Graduation Requirements; and
- GCS-M-001, Course for Credit, High School Courses in Middle School.

Policy GCS-M-001.8, Course for Credit, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery, specifically offers NC students the opportunity to personalize and accelerate their learning by earning course credit through a demonstration of mastery of course material and began at the end of the 2014-15 school year for course placement in 2015-16. Some school districts chose to implement CDM as early as 2013-14 school year to inform placement in 2014-15.

The addition of this Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM) provision to the Course for Credit policy resulted from feedback received from NC superintendents, district-level Academically and/or Intellectually Gifted (AIG) coordinators, principals, parents and students. In response to this feedback, DPI formed an initial working group with representatives from district-level staff from local school districts around the state, DPI Academic Services, and the NC Virtual Public School to study how the SBE might implement such a policy. The initial Implementation Guide and Toolkit are the direct work products from the CDM Work Group.

This revision of the CDM Implementation Guide (version 4.0) provides updated guidance to assist local schools and districts in implementation of the CDM policy.

Definition

The State Board of Education defines "mastery" as a student's command of course material at a level that demonstrates a deep understanding of the content standards and the ability to apply his or her knowledge of the material.

"Credit by demonstrated mastery" is the process by which LEAs shall, based upon a body-of-evidence, award a student credit in a particular course without requiring the student to complete classroom instruction for a certain amount of seat time.

SBE Policy Language

Section 8 of SBE policy GCS-M-001 provides the following Credit by Demonstrated Mastery policy:

8. Credit by Demonstrated Mastery (CDM)

   8.1 Credit by Demonstrated Mastery is the process by which LEAs shall, based upon a body-of-evidence, award a student credit in a particular course without requiring the student to complete classroom instruction for a certain amount of seat time.

   8.2 "Mastery" is defined as a student's command of course material at a level that demonstrates a deep understanding of the content standards and application of knowledge.

   8.3 Beginning with the 2013-14 school year, to inform student placement for the 2014-15 school year, LEAs may offer Credit by Demonstrated Mastery for NC students in grades 9-12 for high school courses and in grades 6-8 for high school courses offered in middle school. LEAs may choose to make CDM available for students in grades 6-8 for middle grades content.

   Beginning with the 2014-15 school year, to inform student placement for the 2015-16 school year, Credit by Demonstrated Mastery shall be available for all NC students in grades 9-12 for high school courses and in grades 6-8 for high school courses offered in middle school. LEAs may choose to make CDM available for students in grades 6-8 for middle grades content.

   8.4 Students shall demonstrate mastery through a multi-phase assessment, consisting of (1) a standard examination, which shall be the EOC/EOG where applicable, or a final exam developed locally and (2) an artifact which requires the student to apply knowledge and skills relevant to the content standards. LEAs may require additional requirements, such as performance tasks.

   This multi-phase assessment process builds a body-of-evidence that allows a committee to determine if the student has a deep understanding of the standards for the course or subject area, as defined by the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, thereby earning credit for the course without experiencing it in the school setting.

   8.5 DPI shall develop implementation guidelines for this policy. These guidelines shall provide guidance for LEAs regarding scoring of assessments as well as local implementation. The guidelines shall establish minimum scores for the standard examination and artifact

creation. Students must attain minimum scores to earn Credit by Demonstrated Mastery.

8.6 The following courses are excluded from Credit by Demonstrated Mastery:
– Career and Technical Education (CTE) work-based learning courses (co-op, internship, apprenticeship)
– CTE courses that have a clinical setting as a requirement of the course, such as ProStart, Early Childhood Education I/II and Nursing Fundamentals
– CTE Advanced Studies courses
– English Language Learner (ELL) courses
– Healthful Living required courses
– AP/IB Courses

Rationale and Philosophical Base

Every student deserves a high-quality education, and the Credit by Demonstrated Mastery policy ensures that every student has the opportunity for the most rigorous and appropriate course of study based on academic progress and need.

This policy emerged from shared views of the North Carolina General Assembly and the North Carolina State Board of Education. The General Assembly believes that "public schools should challenge all students to aim for academic excellence" (Article 9B), while the State Board of Education's mission, adopted in 2006, is that "every public school student will graduate from high school, globally competitive for work and postsecondary education and prepared for life in the 21st century." Achieving this requires that students are able to progress and advance in coursework when they are ready, without the traditional barrier of seat time. A student able to demonstrate a deep understanding of the knowledge and skills required of a particular course will earn credit for that course so that he/she may spend their time more effectively in another course where they will learn and experience new content and material.

The State Board of Education has stated, "A great public education system is one that is ambitious and prepares all students for postsecondary education, careers, citizenship, and lifelong learning. It sets high standards and fosters the critical thinking and other skills needed in today's global economy." By providing the opportunity to earn CDM, uniquely qualified students who possess mastery knowledge of content are able to personalize their learning and use their education time in courses that provide new challenges and content.

North Carolina's Approach

Currently, at least nineteen other states have policies allowing credit without seat time: Texas, New York, Tennessee, Oregon, Alabama, Iowa, Missouri, Ohio, Idaho, Utah, Oklahoma, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, Virginia, New Hampshire, Maryland, and Arizona. These states use either an examination only or the option of an examination or another product for a student to receive credit for a course. Implementation guidelines and expectations vary from state to state.

To develop a comprehensive approach designed to ensure students truly understand the material for which they want to receive credit DPI Academic Services established an initial CDM Working Group. This group began meeting in Spring 2012 and included DPI personnel from across the agency, NC Virtual Public School representation, and LEA representatives from around the state. During policy and guideline development, representatives from 12 different LEAs worked extensively on the committee to ensure quality and meaningful policy development. The CDM Working Group's goals were to develop a conceptual framework around this topic to ensure students are engaged in personalized learning by using their time most effectively, to develop an SBE policy, and to develop guidelines to support LEAs in policy implementation.

The result of the CDM Working Group is a policy specific to NC's needs which addresses NC's commitment to high quality education. NC's policy differs from other state policies related to earning credit without seat time and benefits from other states' experiences.

North Carolina's CDM policy requires a comprehensive, multi-phased assessment approach, designed to enable students to demonstrate a deep understanding of content, ensure appropriate student placement, allow students to receive credit for what they know and personalize their learning.

In an effort to support the effective implementation the CDM policy, a new working group has been convened to study data from the initial years of implementing CDM, and to review any new policies or practices that might impact the CDM process. As a result, this CDM Implementation Guide has been revised and resources have been updated and posted on the wiki site for school and district use.

Student Access

Access to the Credit by Demonstrated Mastery process is open to all NC public school students for high school courses in grades 9-12 and those high school courses offered in middle school that a district chooses to offer. Districts and schools should neither limit CDM to certain students nor exclude any student who wants to pursue this pathway.

The CDM policy recognizes that any student may have unique, individual circumstances in his or her learning path that has allowed the student to gain a deep understanding of content of a particular course or subject area without the traditional school setting. CDM promotes personalized learning and removes the requirement for seat time for student learning and earning credit for courses so that a student may take a more advanced course in that same subject area or provide time in the class schedule to explore a new topic. It allows subject-level acceleration without requiring full grade-level acceleration.

While the CDM process is open to all students, it is not for whole groups of students. It is not intended to replace the general accelerated pathways local school districts often provide advanced students. Instead, it is designed to provide opportunity for an individual student who has an exceptional mastery of course content prior to taking a course and who wishes to earn credit and move onto another course that is a better use of their time for learning.

While access should not be limited to any student, local schools and CDM committees are encouraged to have discussions with parents, the student, and appropriate district and school-based personnel, including AIG and content specialists and principal, to ensure the most effective decisions are made for an individual student. Effective matching for this learning experience is crucial for student success. Families and students have the right to pursue the CDM process, even if the school is not in favor.

Future Developments

During policy development, the CDM Working Group intentionally crafted a process that eventually will accommodate students wishing to **reduce**, rather than eliminate, seat time either for acceleration or for credit recovery purposes. The CDM Working Group is still assessing the complex implementation issues for on-going mastery-based learning experiences and additional guidelines will be available in the future to allow implementation for students in those situations.

Section Two – Overview: CDM Process and Logistics

Overall Process

A variety of logistical issues should be considered prior to implementing the CDM process and beginning the multi-phase assessment for students. Because different school districts manage operations in different ways based upon differing local conditions and needs, there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution for these considerations.

To support a school district's implementation of CDM, the following logistical recommendations have been developed by the CDM Working Group. These recommendations are not requirements but suggestions from the CDM Working Group as a place to start your thinking and implementation plans. The initial options will likely be adapted to fit local needs and context to best match a district's own CDM process and practices.

Implementation Teams

In order to facilitate CDM in a school district, the CDM Working Group recommends creation of the following teams to ensure effective implementation at the district and school level. This suggested structure is designed to help schools implement their local processes; it is not a mandated structure and school teams are encouraged to consider what will work most effectively for their students.

- District CDM Team to develop district-wide CDM process and practices. Determine timelines, documentation, policies, assessment protocols and tasks.
- School CDM Team to manage the CDM process at the school level. Guide the process at the school level and serve as the primary contacts for students/families as they go through the CDM process.
- **CDM Student Review Panel** (School or District Level) to lead the multi-phase assessment process, review assessments and determine CDM eligibility, especially with the Phase II Artifact Assessment.

DISTRICT CDM TEAM

Team members: Principals or other school-based leadership, District Curriculum & Instructional, AIG, and Accountability leaders and Teacher representatives form a District CDM Team designed to discuss policy implementation.

Purpose: This team develops the district-wide procedures and policies to implement CDM most effectively in the school district, including an appeal process

for families and any local testing procedures needed. Topics for discussion and decision-making include the communication plan, CDM timeline, student documentation and assessment protocols, structure and practices of School CDM committees, family appeals process, and whether CDM will be offered for courses not currently taught in a student's base school. This team will also guide the development and/or selection of tests (as applicable), artifacts, and rubrics for each course and subject area for which CDM is offered. The team will bring content experts together to determine these multi-phase assessment tools.

SCHOOL CDM TEAM

Team members: Principal or designee, curriculum specialist, AIG specialist, one or more teacher representatives, testing coordinator and/or counselor. The suggested structure includes a total of 3-5 members who represent various perspectives of personnel.

Purpose: This school-based team conducts the work of leading students through the CDM process at the school-level. This team communicates with the school community about CDM, meets with students/families for advisement and discussion of long-term implications of earning CDM, and leads the overall CDM application process. This team will also meet with students/families after the multi-phase assessment is complete to discuss the outcomes, based on the recommendation of the Student Review Panel.

CDM STUDENT REVIEW PANEL

Team members: At least two content-area experts related to the course being challenged, principal or designee and an AIG or Curriculum and Instructional specialist. Members will differ depending upon the subject for which a student is attempting to earn credit. In a single school, there may be several different Student Review Panels at any given time for different students.

Purpose: This school-based or district-based team will determine whether a student has met the requirements to earn CDM through the multi-phase assessment. This team shall work with the CDM School Team to facilitate the Phase I Assessment and then focus work on the Phase II Artifact Assessment and any additional performance tasks required. This group of at least three educational experts will review student examinations, student artifacts and presentations to determine whether a student has successfully met the requirements to earn CDM. This Student Review Panel will provide needed data and documentation to the School CDM Team to support effective communication with the student/family.

Suggested Implementation Timeline for Initial Year

It is the intent of SBE policy and DPI that LEAs would begin providing opportunities for CDM by the end of 2014-15 academic year to inform placement for 2015-16. LEAs determine the number of testing windows available for students. The only testing windows that DPI structures are the ones related to EOC, CTE Post-Assessments and the use of NC Final Exams.

<u>Spring Timeline:</u> This timeline is for students attempting to earn CDM during the spring semester for courses scheduled in the fall.

November – January: Develop local processes and practices to implement CDM.

January – Mid-February: Share CDM opportunities with students and families. Have student/family discussions and advisement. Accept CDM Applications. Set Application deadline date based on local needs and requirements of DPI's testing procedures. LEAs will report to DPI, student testing information for EOC access based on DPI's Accountability procedures, at least one week prior to the testing window. Work with your District's Testing Coordinator to ensure the *Procedural Guidelines* are followed.

Last 2 weeks of February: Implement Phase I Assessment of the CDM process.

- Complete the Phase I assessment portion of the CDM process for non-EOC courses. Determine process for student examinations.
- **The official DPI testing window for EOC courses is the last two weeks of February with required test security protocols.**
    – For students attempting to earn CDM for appropriate CTE courses, administer CDM post-assessments.
    – For students attempting to earn CDM for EOC courses, (Math I, Biology, or English II) administer the appropriate EOC.

First week of March: Report results to students/families. (English II exam results may take a bit longer.)

Remainder of March: Schedule Phase II artifact work for students who achieve the required standard on the assessment. Allow necessary flexibility to accommodate Spring Break in your district. *see page 15 regarding flexibility.*

First 2 weeks of April: Conduct school–level artifact review. Student Review Panel meets to review artifacts and determine results.

Mid-April: Provide results to students/families and discuss course schedule changes. Begin a ten-calendar-day window for submission of appeals.

First week of May: Conduct appeals reviews.

Second week of May: Finalize appeal decisions and share results.

Prior to End of June: Report final CDM results of EOC courses to DPI Accountability. Work with District Testing Coordinator to complete process.

Year-Long Recommended Timelines

Additional recommended timelines for a full academic year may be found in the CDM Toolkit. The CDM Working Group recommends following three implementation timelines for the CDM process in local school districts. These timelines are recommendations and are not required to follow. Consider adapting these timelines as needed to your local context and needs.

The only aspect of the timelines that is unable to be changed is the DPI Testing Window for the early administration of the EOC exams for Phase I Assessment.

Step-by-Step Student Process

Step 1: Information regarding CDM and application process is shared with all students/families and teachers.

Step 2: Discussions and advisement with interested students at the school level are held to ensure informed decisions are made regarding participation. Long-term implications are discussed to ensure full understanding. Students/families have the right pursue CDM process even if the school does not support the decision. An individual student, based on his or her own motivation or on a school personnel recommendation, initiates the process to earn CDM.

Step 3: Student/family completes the CDM Application.

Step 4: School CDM Team reviews application and initiates Multi-Phase Assessment process.

Step 5: Student completes Phase I Assessment to demonstrate foundational knowledge through a student examination, EOC, CTE Post-Assessment or local exam.

Step 6: CDM Student Review Panel reviews Phase I Assessment.

- If student <u>does not meet</u> minimum criteria, student/family is notified. Process no longer continues.
- If student <u>does meet</u> minimum criteria, student/family is notified and student continues on to Phase II Assessment *see page 15 regarding flexibility.*

Step 7: Student completes Phase II Assessment to demonstrate deep understanding and application of content through an Artifact Development process and any other criteria a local school district deems required.

Step 8: CDM Student Review Panel reviews Phase II Assessment and provides assessment information to School CDM Team.

- If student does not meet local criteria, student/family is notified. Student/family is notified of Appeals Process.
- If student does meet local criteria and earns CDM for the course, student/family is notified.

Step 9: School CDM team meets with family to discuss options for future course enrollment and other specific implications of earning CDM for that particular course.

Step 10: Student earns CDM. The combination of examination, artifact creation, and optional additional performance assessments will provide assurance that the student has met standards for the course or subject area, as defined by the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, and deserves credit for the course.

Step 11: School CDM Team or data manager enters into PowerSchool the CDM indicator for the appropriate course in the grade scale area. A CDM indicator will appear on a student's transcript for the course credit earned through CDM.

*Special Considerations regarding LEA flexibility with the order of the multi-phase assessment completion. DPI strongly recommends that Phase I assessments precede Phase II assessments. However, there may be unique circumstances for individual students that prompts the LEA to consider administering the Phase II assessment first. LEAs do have the flexibility to make the most appropriate decision in support of individual students.

Appeals Process

The CDM Working Group recommends that the District CDM Team develop an Appeals Process, which provides the opportunity for students/families to appeal committee decisions regarding the decision of earning CDM. The Appeals process should be given to families at the time they begin the process of earning credit through this policy and no later than the assessment date.

Students and their parents should submit appeals within ten days of receiving notification that an attempt was not successful and a subset of the various CDM teams will review and finalize appeal decisions within ten days of appeal submission. The CDM Working Group suggests use of a written appeal request to facilitate the process.

The following parameters are suggested at a minimum:

- EOC/EOG test scores are not appealable. Scores within one standard error of measurement are not qualifying scores.
- Appeals must be received in writing within ten days of decision.
- A review panel will conduct an appeals review within ten days of receiving an appeal request and will collect any additional data requested by the panel.
- Final recommendations will be made within ten days of Appeals Review.
- The decisions of appeals panels are final.

The Role of Other Data

For districts interested in a proactive approach to recognizing students who may benefit from earning CDM, consider other student-level data such as EVAAS, EXPLORE, PLAN, PSAT, ACT, and SAT scores. As with data from CDM attempts, these scores should also be used to inform instructional pathways and differentiation for students even if they do not earn CDM.

Section Three – Overview: CDM Multi-Phase Assessment

Introduction

Earning Credit by Demonstrated Mastery requires students to complete a multi-phase assessment process that includes an examination and an artifact. The Phase I assessment process focuses on the examination which establishes that a student has a strong foundational understanding of the course material. The Phase II process focuses on the artifact and establishes a student's ability to apply knowledge to show deep understanding. School districts may choose to add additional required tasks to demonstrate mastery.

This multi-phase design intentionally aligns with the conceptual underpinnings of the NC Standard Course of Study, which is designed to develop knowledge and support the application of the standards.

The multi-phase assessment process outlined below is based upon State Board of Education policy and is required of all LEAs, schools, and students for CDM credit to be awarded.

Ideally students should complete the CDM multi-phase process (assessment and artifact) within the same semester.

Course Eligibility and Pre-Requisites

At this time, students may earn CDM for all high school courses in grades 9-12 and high school courses offered in middle school in grades 6-8, based on LEA availability.

The following courses are excluded from CDM:

- Career and Technical Education (CTE) work-based learning courses (co-op, internship, apprenticeship)
- CTE courses that have a clinical setting as a requirement of the course, such as ProStart, Early Childhood Education I/II and Nursing Fundamentals
- CTE Advanced Studies courses or any course without state technical standards
- English Language Learner (ELL) courses
- Healthful Living required courses
- AP/IB Courses

For courses taught in a predetermined sequence, a student may only attempt to earn CDM for the next course in the sequence. For example, if a student has taken Math I

and would like to attempt CDM for Math III, s/he would need to first successfully earn credit for Math II, either through CDM or traditional enrollment in the course.

If middle school students want to CDM high school courses, students would attempt to earn CDM for the next course in the high school content sequence, which is determined locally based on district scheduling. Attempting courses out of sequence is not recommended. Based on SBE policy, middle school students are not eligible to take the high school courses English II, III or IV, and therefore cannot attempt CDM for these courses.

Students in middle school may attempt CDM for CTE courses. State Board policy does not allow middle school students to take high school CTE courses but they may attempt to earn credit through CDM. DPI recommends students select courses for CDM based on their experiences, interests and career plans. Middle schools must work with LEA and high school faculty to coordinate testing and completion of the artifact.

Phase I – Student Examination

Phase I of the multi-phase assessment process for earning CDM is the student examination. Phase I is intended for a student to show a foundational knowledge of the course content. Success at a minimally acceptable level on the Phase I exam affords a student the opportunity to continue onto the Phase II artifact *see page 15 regarding flexibility.* High school courses comprise three types of courses, EOC, CTE and non-EOC courses. Districts and schools should use different examinations for each.

EOC COURSES

For North Carolina EOC courses (Math I, Biology, and English II), a student's Phase I examination component will be the state's End-of-Course examination. Students must take the exam in a pre-determined testing window by DPI in a secure environment.

Additional information about testing windows may be found later in this section. Testing procedures developed by DPI's Accountability Services Division must be followed.

For EOC courses, students must achieve a Level V at the following scale scores exhibiting a superior understanding, to qualify for Phase II artifact development:

EOC Assessments Scale Scores
Math I >264
Biology >261
English II >165

These scale scores are research- and content-based, technically sound and based upon item-mapping standard-setting procedures conducted by the DPI during the summer of 2013.

CTE COURSES

For North Carolina CTE courses that are eligible, a student's Phase I examination component will be the CTE Post-Assessment. Students must take the exam in a pre-determined testing window by DPI in a secure environment. [Additional information about testing windows may be found later in this section.].

For CTE courses, students must achieve a scale score of 90 to qualify for Phase II artifact development.

When students successfully earn CDM for a CTE course, the credit shall be included in the required credits to earn CTE concentrations. Students should be aware that awarding articulated credit at the community college requires both a course grade of at least B and a **post-assessment score of 93 or higher**. At this time, students who request credit without completing the course will not be eligible for articulated credit.

NON-EOC COURSES

For non-EOC high school courses, students must take a local examination developed or selected by the district or school. The LEA has the flexibility to determine the examination window that meets the needs of the LEA. However, examinations shall be based upon the North Carolina Standard Course of Study for these courses and should be cumulative in nature where a qualifying score demonstrates mastery of the entire course. The number of questions included on the exam for each standard should be representative of the standard's relative weight within the course.

For non-EOC courses, students must achieve a 90 or higher on the local exam to qualify for Phase II artifact development.

Local exams will be developed at the discretion of the school district. Some options include:

- Ask subject-area teachers across the district to submit final examinations from their courses and choose the highest quality (or exams) from among

them, or use items from them to construct an exam for the purpose of CDM;

- Have principals or other school-based leadership to review examinations from teachers in the school and choose one or construct one to use;
- Have schools convene subject-area teachers to develop a CDM examination for students in the school; or
- Develop shared CDM examinations with neighboring districts.

Authority to establish the examination component for non-EOC courses rests with the school district and the CDM Working Group recommends a common approach district-wide.

NC FINAL EXAMS

A selection of NC Final Exams is now available for LEAs to use as Phase I assessments. Only NC Final Exams that were available in the online format during the previous operational testing window will be available for CDM use.

NC Final Exams are an option for LEAs to use for Phase I assessments for the select non-EOC courses. DPI will provide a minimum CDM score (prior to the testing window) for LEAs using the optional NCFEs during the February CDM window.

Refer to the CDM wiki for a list of NCFEs available.

EOC TESTING WINDOWS AND RESULTS

LEAs determine the number of testing windows available for students. The only testing windows that DPI determines are the ones related to EOC, CTE Post-Assessments and the use of NC Final Exams. LEAs are able to establish testing windows for non-EOC courses that can be flexible based on LEA and individual student needs.

For the purposes of EOC tests, CTE Post-Assessments and NC Final Exams, DPI provides three testing windows per year for Phase I for CDM. A testing window is offered each spring, each summer and each fall typically during the following timeline:

- Last two weeks of February
- Last two weeks of July
- Middle two weeks of September

Please see the Accountability Procedural Guide for final dates each year.

LEAs determine which of these windows to implement CDM, with a minimum of at least one window.

The turnaround time for online administrations of Math I and Biology EOCs is the

same as during an end of semester testing window. Online test records are not scored until any required accommodations coding is complete. If all required coding is complete by 7pm on the day of testing, the scores will be available to LEAs at 6:00 AM the next morning.

English II exams include constructed response items, necessitating a different scoring process. Scores for English II exams will take up to three weeks to process. Records will not be sent for scoring until all required coding is complete.

All LEAs must follow the appropriate CDM Testing procedures that have been set by DPI. These procedures may be found on the CDM Wiki.

EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

For EOC, NCFE, and CTE examinations, LEAs must adhere to the NC *Testing Code of Ethics* and follow the standardized test administration procedures located in the most current publication of the *Assessment Guide* for the End-of-Course Tests, the Testing Administrators' Guide for the North Carolina Final Exams, the NCCTE Admin for Instructional Management Coordinators: CDM Administration, and the NC CTE State Assessments Administration Guide for Classroom Administrators (CAs) for CTE exams. For all EOC courses, students must test online.

For all other examinations (non-EOC/CTE), LEAs should minimally adhere to the following guidelines:

- Exams should be administered during the normal school day in order to ensure equal access.
- Modifications and/or accommodations based on IEP/504 should be addressed in the testing plan.
- Testing procedures, including the setting for the exam, should be appropriate to ensure fairness to the student.
- If CDM District Teams determine additional assessments are necessary as part of the multi-phase assessment (for example, performance tasks in world language courses), these assessments must be consistently implemented across the LEA.

COLLEGE BOARD'S ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAM SCORES – PHASE I

If a student earns a 3 or higher on an AP exam without having enrolled in a specific course and wants to earn CDM for the equivalent high school course requirement, where applicable, the AP exam score may satisfy the Phase I assessment and provide evidence of foundational knowledge of the appropriate equivalent high school course. This is a local decision.

If an LEA uses the AP exam score to count as the Phase I assessment, students will then need to complete the Phase II artifact component to receive a CDM credit for the equivalent standard-level high school course for which the AP exam relates. This AP exam option offers an added bonus of potentially earning a student college credit as well as fulfilling the assessment requirement for CDM.

Students may not earn CDM for AP or IB courses themselves, because CDM is only available for standard-level courses based on the NCSCOS. AP and IB courses are not eligible for CDM.

Whether or not to use the AP score as part of the multi-phase assessment for CDM is a local decision and optional for school districts.

RE-TESTING

For EOC, CTE, and non-EOC courses, re-testing is not permitted. Students attempting CDM receive one opportunity per course to achieve the minimum standards to earn CDM.

Phase II – Artifact Development

While the Phase I assessment process establishes a student's strong foundational understanding of the course standards, the Phase II artifact development process establishes a student's ability to apply knowledge in a meaningful context to establish clearly that s/he should be awarded course credit. For all EOC and non-EOC courses, students are expected to create an artifact that demonstrates their deep understanding of the content standards, and their ability to apply the skills and knowledge expected for the course. Artifacts may be of any type, ranging from three-dimensional to paper-based to electronic to oral interviews.

Specific expectations for the type of artifacts are left to the discretion of the LEA and District CDM Team. It is recommended that the LEA provide students with clear expectations and guidance regarding the artifact development, including artifact scoring criteria or a rubric describing the local committee's expectations. **The committee may decide to assign an artifact to a student or allow student proposals.**

CTE CAPSTONE PROJECTS

For CTE courses that provide a capstone project, the capstone project shall be used as the artifact to demonstrate mastery. Capstone projects are student led projects that demonstrate an understanding of the technical concepts of the course and should represent at least 80% of the course standards.

In some CTE areas, capstone projects may require students to use tools and equipment to complete projects. Students should show evidence of training in how to use the tools and equipment safely. LEAs may require the completion of an OSHA 10 certificate or some other assessment that gives evidence of understanding of safety measures prior to work on the capstone project. For example, if a student wanted to demonstrate mastery in a carpentry course by completing construction of a wall segment, the student could demonstrate safety knowledge either by showing evidence of having completed a safety course such as an OSHA 10 certification or by earning a high score on the safety assessment included as part of the carpentry course. Students who earn a CTE credential may use the credential as the artifact component. Students will need to complete the examination component to receive CDM credit.

Additional Local Requirements

District CDM Teams may choose to implement additional requirements as part of the Phase II artifact development process, as appropriate to the course. Some suggestions for LEAs wishing to have additional requirements might include interviews, using other exam formats (multiple choice, constructed response, technology enhanced, portfolio, etc.), performance tasks (orchestra performance), oral presentations, videotaped performances, or other appropriate demonstrations of student knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Awarding Credit for Successful Attempts

Students who demonstrate mastery, through the CDM process outlined in this Guide, shall receive credit for the course toward graduation requirements.

Credit shall be indicated on a student's transcript with a "CDM" indicator. The school shall not grant a numeric or letter grade for the course and shall not include the grade in the student's grade point average (GPA) calculation. Specific PowerSchool directions are available on the CDM wiki and the NC SIS website.

For students who successfully earn CDM for courses with an EOC, Phase I EOC scores for these students must be submitted through DPI Accountability Division's approved process, no later than the close of the accountability year (last working day of June) to ensure the scores are included in accountability reporting. Students must successfully complete Phase I and Phase II for their scores to be included in DPI's accountability reporting.

Further details regarding reporting successful CDM completion for EOC courses are explained in the official *Procedural Guidelines for Implementing CDM*

developed by DPI's Accountability Division.

Unsuccessful Attempts

If a student unsuccessfully attempts to earn credit by demonstrated mastery, s/he does not receive credit for the course. To receive credit after an unsuccessful attempt to demonstrate mastery, a student is required to:

- enroll in and complete the course,
- receive a passing grade for the course, AND
- re-take the EOC (if applicable) according to existing State policies and procedures.

The CDM Working Group encourages schools to use data from the CDM process to inform instructional pathways and differentiation for students even if they do not earn credit by demonstrated mastery. No transcript record or other record of the unsuccessful attempt is required and it should NOT be recorded in PowerSchool/ Home Base. The local CDM committee may choose to note the attempt in the student's file. **Students shall not be penalized for an unsuccessful attempt and such attempts shall never, under any circumstances, affect the student's grades or transcript.**

Section Four – Additional Consideration for CDM

Long-term Considerations

Students attempting the CDM process need high-quality advisement on long-term implications of earning CDM and beginning a path of accelerated course work. When considering CDM with a student and his/her family, discuss all aspects of the student's development, including academic, cognitive and social/emotional development. This will ensure that students and their families are able to make an informed decision about participating in the CDM process. It the responsibility of the entire school CDM team, not just one person to counsel students and families.

See CDM LEA Toolkit for a document focused on Long-Term Implications.

ADVANCED COURSES THROUGH GRADE 12

Discuss current options available for advanced curriculum and instruction. Discuss CDM as well as other possible pathways for advanced learning through grade 12. Review how programs such as high school courses in middle school, AP/IB/Honors courses, CCP opportunities, and whole-grade acceleration may also support a student's needs. If a student does indeed subject accelerate with CDM or through other means, create a long-term plan to ensure the student, family and school are all working together and are aware of future opportunities.

GPA AND QUALITY POINTS

Share and discuss how CDM courses will not earn grades or quality points towards GPA. Credit for CDM courses will be granted to meet high school graduation requirements. This may be a concern for some students and families; however, CDM should be pursued when a student will benefit from a more challenging learning experience and move towards more advanced coursework. Students may earn CDM for all standard-level high school courses in grades 9-12 and those high school courses offered in middle school. A CDM indicator will be recorded specifically on the transcript in PowerSchool instead of a grade.

ATHLETIC/EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Discuss the implications for CDM on athletic and other extra-curricular activities. Discuss with the students/families how earning CDM may impact a student's participation in these school activities. There are some potential impacts to consider of CDM on athletic and other extra-curricular activities. Please see the

section on external organizations below to learn more about important considerations for students considering CDM.

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA ENDORSEMENTS

Discuss the criteria for High School Diploma Endorsements (SBE, GCS-L-007), Career, College and Academic Scholars. Walk through the CDM implications for interested Diploma Endorsements to ensure appropriate coursework is completed. For example: If a student desires to work towards the NC Academic Scholars Endorsement and achieves CDM for a standard-level course instead of enrolling in an honors-level course, develop a plan to enroll in another honors-level or above course criteria needed to attain the NC Academic Scholars Endorsement.

OPPORTUNITY FOR EARLY GRADUATION

Discuss the option for completing high school graduation requirements (state and local) early. Discuss post-graduation options that meet the student needs. Walk through examples of the implications on courses required for graduation and intended High School Diploma Endorsements (SBE, GCS-L-007) if a student earns CDM. CDM may help prevent some students from leaving high school to pursue other options before graduating.

External Organizations and CDM

One of the considerations of any policy that may award credit to students who have not completed a course in the traditional manner is the future impact on students when they interact with other stakeholder organizations. The CDM Working Group contacted several of the most common external organizations with which a student may interact during high school or following high school graduation including, the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA), the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), the University of North Carolina system, and the North Carolina Community College system.

NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (NCHSAA)

According to the NCHSAA, students' primary consideration with respect to earning credit by demonstrated mastery is maintaining eligibility if they are participating or wish to participate in high school athletics. According to Association by-laws, students must ensure they are enrolled in a number of courses that is at least equal to one less than the maximum number of courses available per the high school schedule. For instance, students in a high school on a block schedule must be enrolled in at least three courses of a possible four. For schools on a seven-course

schedule, students must be enrolled in at least six courses. More specific guidance regarding NCHSAA requirements may be found in the Association's eligibility handbook at http://nchsaa.org/eligibility-presentations-forms-policies.

NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION (NCAA)

According to the NCAA, students' primary consideration with respect to earning credit by demonstrated mastery is maintaining eligibility if they wish to participate in NCAA athletics. Please note that because North Carolina's current CDM procedure does not assign a final letter grade, CDM courses would not be used in the initial-eligibility process. Students would still be required to satisfy NCAA division-specific core course distribution requirements. More information about establishing initial eligibility may be found at the NCAA Eligibility Center website.

NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

Two primary considerations exist for high school students planning to attend a North Carolina community college – acceptance of the high school diploma and articulation of credit earned while in high school.

Community colleges in North Carolina have traditionally accepted the State Board of Education's authority to determine how students earn high school credit toward graduation and the credit by demonstrated mastery policy does not change that. Students with a diploma from a North Carolina high school will be recognized as high school graduates regardless of the presence of academic or career-technical credits earned via the CDM policy, thus ensuring students' ability to enroll in a community college following graduation.

Like many colleges and universities, North Carolina community colleges offer "credit for prior learning," either according to the high school-community college articulation agreement for CTE courses or through local college decisions to award credit for academic courses. The North Carolina Community College System Office has not established system-wide policies regarding credit for prior learning; final decisions are left to local college administrators. As such, students should anticipate that decisions regarding credit for academic courses will be made on a case-by-case basis, so students are not guaranteed a particular outcome with respect to high school credits earned through the CDM policy. Regarding CTE courses, students who request credit without completing the course will not be eligible for articulated credit at the community college.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM

Like community colleges, University of North Carolina member universities have traditionally accepted the State Board of Education's authority to determine how students earn high school credit toward graduation. Based upon discussions during the summer of 2013 with UNC-GA staff as well as enrollment managers across the system, the credit by demonstrated mastery policy does not change that. Students with a diploma from a North Carolina high school will be recognized as high school graduates regardless of the credits earned via the CDM policy, thus ensuring students' ability to enroll in a UNC system university following graduation. As always, minimum admission requirements must be satisfied.