



Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals



Star of Innovation Award Application Form

School Name Cambridge-Isanti High School Grade Levels 9-12
Name of School District Cambridge-Isanti Schools
Name of Principal Dr. Steve Gibbs
Application Submitted By Elizabeth Young, Assistant Principal
School Street Address 430 NW 8th Avenue
City, Zip Cambridge, MN 55008
Telephone Number 763-689-6008
MASSP Division Central
Name of Program Credit completion

Please answer the following questions on a separate sheet/s of paper.

- Description of the program.
- How has it impacted your school?
- What difficulties did you encounter in its implementation?
- What issue/s might another school encounter in replicating this program?
- Do you have any data to show the impact of this program? If so, please share it with us.

Applications must be submitted to MASSP offices by March 1.

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MASSP • 2 Pine Tree Drive • Suite 380 • Arden Hills, MN 55112

Questions? Please contact:
Bob Driver, Executive Director
612-361-6159

Star of Innovation Awards 2024
Cambridge-Isanti Schools
Cambridge-Isanti High School
Principal, Dr. Steve Gibbs
Assistant Principals, Elizabeth Young and Jeremy Miller
Special Education Coordinator, Courtney Karas

“Credit Completion”

Credit Completion is a program first designed and implemented in June of 2022 as a way for students to earn a passing grade in a course without retaking the entire course in a future school year. Students who earn at least 40% (number determined by department teacher leadership team) in a course are eligible to attend Credit Completion, which takes place the first three days of summer vacation, immediately preceding the traditional summer school programming. During the three days of Credit Completion, students are able to earn up to a passing grade of 60% by completing standard based tasks and assessments.

A trimester course is approximately 60 days of learning, with each course being just under an hour per day. If a student passes 40% of the course, theoretically they need to complete 20% of the course to reach a passing 60% grade. If we assume 20% of approximately 60 course hours is about 12 hours, students would earn the credit after successfully completing the three days (about four hours a day) of accurate course work. For students who completed the course in the original term with a higher percentage, the time spent in Credit Completion would be less.

The impact of Credit Completion has been positive financially, through increase in our graduation rate, and in our master schedule planning. In 2022 and 2023, Students had the opportunity to earn credit in English, Science, Social Studies, as well as Physical Education and Health. In 2022, students earned 91 credits toward graduation requirements, and in 2023 that number increased to 132 credits earned. Financially, even if we were to assume the 132 credits were earned by students each needing all subject areas (which was not the reality), at most, there would have been 33 different students. Those 33 students each completing four credits would be the same as four class periods of instruction in a trimester (assuming we could put all 33 students in the same class). The cost of a teacher, at \$60,000 per year at an FTE of .8 (four classes out of six periods in our day, with one period being a prep period) would cost our district approximately \$48,000, speaking conservatively, to have these same students retake their failed courses within our Master Schedule the following years. The cost for our Credit Completion program was rate-of-pay (approximately \$35/hour) for 15 hours per department (12 hours of facilitation and 3 hours of planning/preparation). The cost for the four departments to be represented was less than \$3000 in total, a savings of over \$40,000 to run this program rather than have the students retake the course(s) within the regular school year. Additionally, more students qualified to walk at graduation the following year, as they no longer needed to attend additional classes for longer periods of time in order to complete their work. Since students demonstrated *some* understanding of the course content by earning 40%+, they did not necessarily *need* the entire course repeated in order to take away priority standards. This also made students feel that passing a course was achievable, and not as daunting as retaking an

entire course when they already struggled with school for one reason or another. Summer school enrollment did decrease, but this allowed for more attention from staff to the students in attendance, and fewer distractions from students who were not needing the same level of support in summer school learning.

One hurdle that we encountered was buy-in from all departments, and as a result some department's credits were not able to be offered for completion, and the full course is needed during summer or night school. Teachers are not obligated to organize curriculum for this opportunity, and can not be assigned to the facilitation role of summer instructor, so those needs are filled only when someone is interested. Additionally, we had philosophical differences with a department about allowing students the opportunity to earn the credit when they did not reach a passing grade within the given term.

One thing to consider if deciding to implement this program in a different district would be to work closely with your teacher leadership team(s) to fully develop the plan for credit earning. Before sharing information with students and families, determine when the information will be shared with careful consideration to the impact it may have on students "choosing" to stop efforts once they reach and maintain 40% in the course.