

September 27, 2015

Dr. Barbara Gellman-Danley  
President, Higher Learning Commission  
230 South LaSalle Street Suite 7-500  
Chicago, IL 60604-1411

Dear Dr. Gellman-Danley & Respective Higher Learning Commission Members:

As you are well aware, a push is being pursued to urge the HLC to reconsider its decision regarding requirements for high school teachers teaching concurrent enrollment courses. It is my understanding that credentialing of institutions of higher education is a very thorough process and having a well educated teaching pool is a vital part of accreditation. While I value the insight of the HLC and truly desire to have high quality instructors for all students, I want to urge the commission to reconsider the refined requirements based on information I will provide below.

First, the concurrent enrollment program has been proven to be effective for high school students. Not only are the students saving money in this day of ever-rising college costs, but they are able to finish high school with their peers and take part in the rich environments that are their sophomore, junior and senior years of high school. To receive the academic rigor, while maintaining the developmentally appropriate social atmosphere a high school provides, is an opportunity that our highest achieving students deserve and is one that has proven successful. Students in this program have higher rates of graduation as well as higher rates of success once enrolled in a post-secondary institutions. In short, this program has proven to be good for students.

Second, concurrent enrollment instructors whom I know are of the highest quality in our district. Many of our teachers have master's degrees in education and pursue continuing education opportunities to gain a greater depth of content knowledge. The instructors have a deep dedication for teaching and a love for their content area. Whether it be through the many years teaching the content, or any advanced professional development, the care shown by our teachers to ensure students learn the advanced concurrent enrollment content is second to none. Our students emerge from concurrent enrollment courses with far deeper content knowledge and understanding.

Finally, it would be a lost opportunity to not offer a solution. I understand the inequities the HLC is looking to rectify and I appreciate the need to have a well trained instructor for each course. Due to the devastating impact the refined requirements would cause, I would urge the HLC to consider changing the requirement to one that requires a certain number of continuing education hours/5 years in lieu of requiring college credit hours or a master's degree. Allow teachers the option, but please do not handcuff post-secondary schools and high schools that already have highly qualified teachers teaching these courses. Thanks for your time today and if you should wish to contact me I can be reached at [bjoyce@isd177.com](mailto:bjoyce@isd177.com).

Regards,

Bryan Joyce

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