INTRODUCTION TO PREPARERI

PrepareRI is an initiative to prepare all Rhode Island youth with the skills they need for jobs that pay. It represents a strategic partnership between the Rhode Island government, private industry leaders, the public education system, universities, and non-profits across the state. PrepareRI launched in 2016, after Rhode Island was awarded a New Skills for Youth grant from JPMorgan Chase and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO).

For students, PrepareRI aims to close the gap between what students learn in school and what they need for high-demand jobs. The initiative was built on the belief that all young people — regardless of their previous background or intended career — will need some form of postsecondary credential and practical work experience to be successful.

For businesses, PrepareRI ensures that employers have the workforce they require to thrive in the economy of tomorrow. This fills a crucial need in Rhode Island; currently, less than 45 percent of residents have a post-secondary degree or industry-recognized certificate, yet 70 percent of jobs will require those credentials by 2020.

Making this goal a reality involves a coordinated effort from teachers, school leaders, superintendents, and all stakeholders in Rhode Island’s education system.

More information about PrepareRI can be found at www.Prepare-RI.org.

INTRODUCTION TO COURSE CHOICE

All efforts, big and small by schools, districts, and the state, including through PrepareRI, are in effort to help students find, be ready for, and participate in, the right experiences that will both prepare and accelerate students on the path after high school. To do this well we need to acknowledge that every school could not possible offer every course or experiences to meet the need of every student.

Enter course choice programs offered by the state. These programs that identify unique, low instance, high demand and/or high cost to replicate offerings of courses from districts, community organizations, partners of Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, and colleges, which schools can extend to their students.

These experiences are currently offered through three initiatives: Career and Technical Education, the PrepareRI Dual Enrollment Fund, and the Advanced Course Network. More information about each can be found at each of the links below.

- Career and Technical Education: www.ride.ri.gov/CTE
- PrepareRI Dual Enrollment Fund: www.ride.ri.gov/DualEnrollment
- Advanced Course Network: www.ride.ri.gov/ACN

INTRODUCTION TO THIS GUIDE

This guide will focus on the Advanced Course Network, a course choice program under the PrepareRI Initiative. The guide is formatted to reflect frequently asked questions and divided into sections based on the various program stakeholders. This guide along with other referenced documents will be updated frequently. Be sure to check back to the RIDE website often for the most recent versions.
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ABOUT THE ADVANCED COURSE NETWORK

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

WHAT IS THE ADVANCED COURSE NETWORK?
The Advanced Course Network (ACN) offers advanced coursework options for Rhode Island students with the goal of expanding access to advanced coursework opportunities that promote college and career readiness. The ACN enables students and their families to choose to enroll in an expanded number of high value academic- and career-focused courses while they remain enrolled at their public school. The ACN is made up of Network Members (schools and districts that voluntarily chooses to extend the ACN opportunities to students), and Network Providers (school districts, Rhode Island based community based organizations, higher education institutions and approved Department of Labor and Training (DLT) training partners) that extends advanced coursework opportunities to Rhode Island students.

WHAT TYPES OF COURSES ARE OFFERED IN THE ACN?
There are four types of courses offered in the ACN, all of which may be offered in a face-to-face, blended, or fully online setting. A printable handout explaining the types of ACN courses is available on the ride website.

- **Work-based Learning** courses assist students in accomplishing deep learning in a chosen area of interest and allow students to explore future career pathways. These courses meet the Governor’s Workforce Board (GWB) definition of work-based learning and incorporate Applied Learning Skills measured by either the RI Learning Champions or approved alternative rubrics. They may also align to the Career and Technical Education Board Standards and/or State-adopted content standards. Work-based learning courses result in one or more of the following:
  - Credit earned may be part of a certificate or degree program at the college/university
  - Experience and/or mentorship with practicing industry professionals
  - Experience on a worksite
  - Internship placement
  - Summer or afterschool employment related to skills gained in course
  - Completion of a real or simulated work project

- **Career Preparation** courses assist students in accomplishing deep learning in a chosen area of interest and prepares them for employment or further education in a career path. These courses incorporate one or more sets of standards from the Career and Technical Education Board. They may also incorporate State-adopted content standards and/or Applied Learning Skills measured by either the RI Learning Champions or approved alternative rubrics. These courses allow students to earn an industry-recognized
Credential, which leads to potential advanced standing for employment opportunities. They may also provide one or more of the following:

- Experience and/or mentorship with practicing industry professionals
- Experience on a worksite
- Internship placement
- Summer or afterschool employment related to skills gained in the course

**Dual Enrollment** courses are offered by colleges to allow students to explore college level coursework and college communities to determine their interest in possible postsecondary education paths. These courses require the same standards as in the college course, including rigor and expectations, as offered to degree- or certificate-seeking students. They incorporate standards from the Career and Technical Education Board, State-adopted content standards; and/or Applied Learning Skills measured by either the RI Learning Champions or approved alternative rubrics. These courses allow students to earn high school credit as well as college credit from the provider institution. They may also provide one or more of the following:

- Credit earned may be part of a certificate or degree program at the college/university
- Experience and/or mentorship with practicing industry professionals
- Experience on a worksite
- Internship placement
- Summer or afterschool employment related to skills gained in course
- Completion of an real or simulated work project

**Advanced Placement** courses are developed and approved by the College Board and offer students the opportunity to earn college credit through an end of course exam. The courses incorporate one or more sets of the College Board Standards for College Success and relevant State-adopted content standards. They may also be aligned to the Career and Technical Education Board Standards and/or Applied Learning Skills measured by either the RI Learning Champions or approved alternative rubrics. These courses allow students to earn high school credit as well as college credit from the provider institution. They may also provide one or more of the following:

- Credit earned may be part of a certificate or degree program at the college/university
- Experience and/or mentorship with practicing industry professionals
- Experience on a worksite
- Internship placement
- Summer or afterschool employment related to skills gained in course
- Completion of an real or simulated work project

**WHICH SPECIFIC COURSES ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE ACN?**

The ACN course listings are available online at [http://ride.GoSignMeUp.com](http://ride.GoSignMeUp.com). The catalog is easily searchable by discipline, type of course, and provider. The catalog is updated twice a year, once in late March for summer, fall and year-long courses, and additionally in October for spring courses.

**WHEN CAN STUDENTS REGISTER FOR COURSES?**

There are two main registration periods:

- Late March through the beginning of June for summer, fall, and year-long courses; and
- Late October through December for spring courses.
STUDENT AND FAMILY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Rhode Island Advanced Course Network provides qualified public high school and middle school students (in participating school districts) the chance to take an exciting catalog of college and career preparatory courses at no cost to participating students. Advanced Course Network courses are offered by Rhode Island colleges and universities, community based organizations, partners of the Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training and school districts at no cost to you and your family.

Governor Raimondo, the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) and stakeholders across our state created this innovative new program which began in the 2016-2017 school year. Taking advantage of advanced coursework of all kinds can better prepare students for success in college or future careers. Taking advantage of dual enrollment or advanced placement courses can reduce the time it takes a student to earn a college degree while significantly reducing the college costs a family will have to pay.

Contact your student's high school or middle school to ask if they are part of the Advanced Course Network. If so, an ACN Coordinator at your student’s can help you and your student understand the opportunities for taking advanced coursework and how your student can earn high school credit including graduation requirements by taking these courses while still in high school.

The ACN seeks to support schools in expanding opportunities Rhode Island students will have to graduate high school prepared for college and career success.

STUDENT REGISTRATION:

HOW DO I REGISTER FOR AN ACN COURSE?

Registering for a course is easy. Visit http://ride.gosignmeup.com for a listing of courses. The online course catalog is searchable in a variety of ways including type of course, modality, discipline, specific provider, or key word. School counselors or administrators can assist students in registering for ACN courses and help ensure that students receive high school credit for a course. A printable Quick Steps Guide (Summer/Fall Courses and Spring Courses) is available on the RIDE website.

There are three easy steps:

1. **Create an account at** http://ride.gosignmeup.com
   - Find the Create an Account link in the upper right hand corner of the page.

2. **Pre-register for your ACN course(s)**
   - Select the course you want to take and click the black Pre-register button below the course information which will add the course to your cart.
   - Check out by clicking on your cart or the green Complete Pre-registration button.
   - You will receive an email that confirms your pre-registration. See your counselor if you do not receive a confirmation email.
   - Your pre-registration will automatically be sent to your school for review / approval.
   - You will receive an email letting you know if you are (or are not) enrolled in the course.

3. **Follow course instructor's directions**
   - Be on the lookout for an email from your course instructor once you are approved.
   - This email will contain any additional information or instructions you will need to follow before the start of your course.
The Registering is EASY! video steps you through the process.

**IS THERE A COURSE LIMIT TO THE NUMBER OF COURSES I CAN TAKE AS PART OF THE ACN?**

We want students to be successful in this new opportunity. Students are currently eligible to take:

- **one course** over the summer; and
- **no more than two at a time** during the fall and spring semesters.

**WHEN CAN I REGISTER FOR AN ACN COURSE?**

There are two main registration periods:

- Summer and Fall course registration is opened in **late March through the beginning of June**; and
- Spring course registration is opened in **late October through the end of December**.

This [Important Dates](#) document is a handy reference guide.

**CAN MY CHILD/PARENT REGISTER FOR AN ACN COURSE OR DO WE NEED TO CONSULT WITH THE SCHOOL? IF SO, WHO AT THE SCHOOL SHOULD I CONTACT?**

Students should check with the school counselor and/or administrator before registering for a course to ensure that course earn high school credit including graduation requirements and support their individual pathways. Students and parents are able to view the course catalog and complete registration for courses online at [http://ride.gosignmeup.com](http://ride.gosignmeup.com) at any time. The online registration generates an email alerting school counselors to approve the registration.

**HOW CAN I FIND OUT IF MY REGISTRATION FOR A COURSE HAS BEEN APPROVED?**

Students receive an email once courses are approved by the school counselor. Students and families can also login to [http://ride.gosignmeup.com](http://ride.gosignmeup.com) to see course registration information, grades, and track email conversations. Students can also see their guidance counselor if they have any questions.

**WHAT ARE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A STUDENT/FAMILY WHEN TAKING A COURSE IN THE ACN?**

Students/families are responsible for:

- **Registering for Course(s)—**
  Registration occurs online at [http://ride.gosignmenup.com](http://ride.gosignmenup.com). This triggers an email to the student’s school’s ACN Coordinator, typically a school counselor or other administrator. The ACN coordinator reviews the registration and/or has conversations with students ensuring that the course is appropriate for the student’s pathway. Follow up with the school counselor if there are questions about the registration or approval.

- **Following Provider Instructions** -
  Once the registration is approved by the school counselor, the course provider will reach out through email with any further registration or course specific instructions. Students should be on the lookout for this email.

- **Attending Course(s) and Complete All Coursework** -
  Courses in the ACN earn high school credit that are included on the student transcript. Some courses,
Dual and AP courses, earn college credit and are included on a college transcript. Students should try their best throughout the course and seek help if necessary from course providers and/or school personnel.

- **Transportation** -
  Students/families are responsible for transportation to and from ACN courses. The majority of all courses meet after school and/or on weekends. Some providers help support transportation costs. See individual course descriptions for details.

### STUDENT ELIGIBILITY:

**IS MY SCHOOL AN ACN MEMBER SCHOOL MAKING ME ELIGIBLE TO TAKE AN ACN COURSE?**

A **Network Member** is any Rhode Island Local Educational Authority (LEA) or school that voluntarily chooses to extend the Advanced Coursework Network opportunities to students in their district and/or school. As Network Members, schools and districts enable students and their families to choose to enroll in formerly unavailable high value academic- and career-focused courses while they remain enrolled at their public school.

The following is a list of current ACN Member Schools:

**Advanced Course Network Member Schools (January 2018)**

- Academy for Career Exploration (ACES)
- Barrington
- Beacon Charter School
- Blackstone Academy
- Blackstone Valley Prep, A RI Mayoral Academy
- Bristol Warren
- Burrillville
- Central Falls
- Coventry
- Cranston
- Cumberland
- Davies
- East Providence
- Exeter-West Greenwich
- Foster-Glocester
- Highlander Charter
- Johnston
- Little Compton
- MET Career and Tech
- Narragansett
- New Shoreham
- Newport
- North Kingstown
- North Smithfield
- Paul Cuffee Charter School
- Pawtucket
- Portsmouth
- Providence
- RI Nurses Institute Middle College
- Scituate
- Segue Institute for Learning
- Sheila Skip Nowell Leadership Academy
- Smithfield
- South Kingstown
- The Greene School
- Times2 Academy
- Tiverton
- Trinity Academy for the Performing Arts
- Village Green Virtual
- Warwick
- Westerly
- Woonsocket

**WHAT DO I DO IF MY DISTRICT OR SCHOOL IS NOT LISTED AS A MEMBER SCHOOL?**

Becoming a Member School is voluntary. Contact the school or district administration and let them know that you are interested in taking an ACN course. If they have questions, the ACN team can be reached at **advancedcoursework@ride.ri.gov**.

**ARE STUDENTS WHO ARE HOME SCHOOLED AND PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ACN?**

Yes, ACN opportunities are available to home school and students enrolled in private schools. However, the state funding is designated for students enrolled in a public school and so these students would be responsible for the associated costs of taking an ACN course.
CAN I TAKE AN ACN COURSE IF I HAVE GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL?

The ACN was created for high school students to challenge themselves during high school and get ahead in college. Students who have graduated high school are no longer be eligible to participate in ACN courses.

STUDENT COSTS:

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO TAKE AN ACN COURSE?

The Rhode Island Department of Education supports the costs of Network coursework for students not enrolled as full time students at the Network Provider location. There is no cost to the district, school or family to be a Network Member or to take a Network course. The cost of books and course materials are covered by state funding via per student tuition payments to Network Providers.

While options are available in blended or online formats, many courses are offered face-to-face in a classroom setting. Students and their families are responsible for transportation the student to the course at the Network Provider’s location. The school or district may choose to support transportation of their students.

ACADEMIC CREDIT:

WHAT TYPE OF CREDIT DO I GET FOR TAKING AN ACN COURSE?

As part of the participating in the Network, LEAs agree to grant credit for Network courses. It is a local school decision as to how a Network course counts for high school credit (core credit or elective credit).

- **Work-Based Learning** courses are hands-on learning courses with industry professionals that earn High School credit.
- **Career Preparation** courses result in industry recognized certificate or credential and earn High School Credit.
- **Dual Enrollment** courses are offered by local colleges and universities and earn both High School and College Credit.
- **Advanced Placement** courses are college-level courses that end with an AP exam and earn both High School and College Credit.

Before registering for an Advanced Coursework Network course, a student should meet with their school counselor to make sure the course will contribute to their school requirements and support a meaningful pathway. The **ACN Course Type** handout found on the RIDE website can be helpful in understanding how the various types of course are aligned to standards and the course outcomes.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE AMONG REGULAR HIGH SCHOOL OR MIDDLE SCHOOL COURSES AND THE ADVANCED COURSE NETWORK COURSE OFFERINGS?

Students participating in the ACN earn credit toward their high school or middle school coursework requirements by enrolling in courses that are not traditionally offered at their public school. ACN courses are offered in a variety of modalities, including traditional (e.g. face-to-face), fully online, or a hybrid (e.g. blended) courses.

The main difference is that the student are taking courses provided by other LEAs, organizations or higher education institutions. ACN courses have the same rigorous educational expectations and learning objectives as traditional advanced classes for high school or middle school students, respectively.
WHAT GRADE DO I NEED TO RECEIVE FOR A NETWORK COURSE TO COUNT TOWARD HIGH SCHOOL OR MIDDLE SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS?
As part of participating in the Network, LEAs agree to grant credit for Network courses. The LEA must determine and publish the grading policy for Network courses. The minimum passing grade for ACN courses are listed in the course catalog found at http://ride.gosignmeup.com. The grade awarded for the course will be included on a student’s high school transcript. The school or LEA determines how the course credit will appear (core credit or elective credit) on the high school transcript. It is recommended that the course title on the high school transcript match the ACN course title.

WHAT IF I START TAKING A COURSE AND FIND OUT THAT IT IS NOT RIGHT FOR ME?
RIDE, Member Schools and Network Providers all want you to be successful. Talk to the course Provider right away. Don’t wait. Network Providers are required to have supports in place for all students. Additionally, talking to the school counselor is a great idea. They will explain your options and lead you supports that are in place.

ARE THE COURSES FOR COLLEGE CREDIT RELATED TO SPECIFIC PROGRAMS AT THE UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE OFFERING THE COURSE(S)?
There are a variety of course in several discipline areas available for college credit at no cost to students and families. Students and families are able to search the courses by discipline and/or provider in the course catalog at http://ride.gosignmeup.com.

ARE THESE COURSE CREDITS TRANSFERABLE TO OTHER UNIVERSITIES/COLLEGES?
All students earn transcript credit by taking college level courses in the ACN. Each institution of higher education has its own transfer policy. Students should consider credit transferability if aware of institution or type of program that they want to enroll in after high school. Students should call the institution they are interested in attending to see if the credits will be accepted.

DO ALL/SOME OF THE ACN COURSES LEAD TO A JOB FOR MY CHILD? OR CREDENTIAL?
Work-based Learning courses are designed to develop workplace skills including specific industry skills, applied learning skills or world languages. Courses are aligned to one or more set of standards from the Career and Technical Education Board or result in development of Applied Learning Skills measured by either the Rhode Island Learning Champions or approved alternative rubrics; and, allow students to gain experience with practicing industry professionals and/or work-site experience while earning high school credit.

Career Preparation courses culminate in a student earning an industry recognized credential and align to relevant established Career and Technical Education Board standards as well as earning high school credit.

A printable handout explaining the types of ACN courses is available on the ride website that gives additional insight into outcomes for the various types of courses available in the ACN.