



Self-Directed Learner Designation (I.C. section 33-512D)

The Idaho Department of Education is committed to providing guidance surrounding self-directed learners and offering opportunities for LEA's to offer a flexible pathway of instruction.

A student designated as a self-directed learner has the opportunity to engage in "flexible learning." Flexible learning may look different for each student and each LEA. It may include flexible attendance, virtual attendance, extending learning opportunities, and any other learning agreed upon by the student, the student's teacher(s), and the student's parent or legal guardian per district policy and available resources.

While the statute does not explicitly require administrative participation- IDE would highly recommend adding an administrator to this initial committee.

For students in the 8th grade and above, flexible learning should also further the student's progress for postsecondary goals and can be used in conjunction with the student's career pathway plan.

As LEA's implement self-directed learners, best practice encourages districts adopt a self-directed learner policy to provide the following procedures by which a student may seek a self-directed learner (SDL) designation:

- A) Teachers may designate a student as SDL;
- B) LEA's will monitor and support SDLs; and
- C) Teacher(s)/ administrator may rescind the SDL designation.

Criteria for eligibility:

Students are eligible to be designated SDL if they meet the following criteria:

- The student must be enrolled full-time in public school; and
- The student demonstrates mastery of content knowledge through grades, assessment, **or** mastery-based learning rubrics.

Flexible learning must be agreed upon by the following:

- Student
- Teacher

- Parent / Guardian
- Administrator – Highly recommended

Designation of SDL

Teacher(s) designates the student as a self-directed learner based on the following considerations (May consider the following to determine if a student is eligible for SDL):

- A. Mastery of content,
- B. Academic Growth,
- C. Timeliness for Assignments,
- D. Self-motivation,
- E. Ability to set goals, or
- F. Ability to reach appropriate learning outcomes

Grade 5 and Above:

Student must demonstrate mastery of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division for #0 - #10. Mastery is to be determined by the LEA.

Grade 8 and Above:

Student must demonstrate an informed choice of postsecondary career and educational goals by completing and updating a student career pathway plan.

"Student [career pathway plan](#)" means a plan that outlines a student's program of study, which should include a rigorous academic core and a related sequence of electives in academics, career technical education, or humanities aligned with the student's post-graduation goals.

The plan should include any or all of the following:

- A. Extended learning opportunity (I.C. 33-6401) - career readiness, internship, apprenticeship.
- B. Courses and Exams funded by Advanced Opportunities, or any credits/ programs permitted under Idaho code as applicable to the student's career pathway plan.
- C. Identify / written down self-determined personal life goals on how attending these specific classes will lead to fulfillment of personal goals.

After designation of SDL, further considerations will be given regarding supporting students with 504's, IEP's, English Learners, McKinney Vento, Military connected students, or other sub populations with unique learning needs to ensure FAPE.

In order to remain SDL, student must meet the following criteria as agreed by the following stakeholders:

- Student
- Teacher
- Parent / Guardian
- Administrator – Highly recommended

Criteria can include:

- A. Continued mastery of content knowledge and skills (e.g. [Content Standards](#) and [College and Career Competencies](#));
- B. Academic growth;
- C. Progress towards post-secondary goals; or
- D. Other measurement of student learning.

SDL may be rescinded if:

- If criteria and/or local policy is not met;
- Student does not stay current on classroom assignments, and;
- Student does not “cure the failure” within agreed timeline;

The SDL designation can be rescinded by the Administration upon recommendation by the teacher(s).

Internships or work-based learning opportunities

When awarding elective credits to students participating in school-approved internships, work-based learning, or similar programs, it is essential to ensure that:

- The activity aligns with the educational goals and standards set by the school or district.
- Documentation is maintained regarding the hours worked, tasks completed, and skills developed during the experience.
- The credit aligns with policies governing elective courses, ensuring consistency and fairness in its application.

If credits for core classes are awarded, it is crucial that students demonstrate proficiency in the relevant Idaho Core Standards for that subject area. This ensures that the awarded credit reflects a mastery of the essential knowledge and skills required for academic success and aligns with the state's rigorous educational benchmarks.

Proper structuring of these opportunities helps students gain valuable skills while earning meaningful academic credit.

ISEE Reporting: (Sec. 5)

In order to calculate support units and public-school funding, districts should report actual attendance, hours of instruction, for each SDL. The ISEE system will override the attendance for

all designated SDL students. The district and/or charter will receive full funding for self-directed learners.

Additional Resources are as follows:

Guidance on Career Pathway Plans can be found in [IDAPA 08.02.03.104.2.a.](#)

[IDE's Mastery Education Website](#)

[IDE's Flexibility Guide](#)