

# Francis Howell School District

# Missouri Option Program

# Information & Application



## MISSION

The Francis Howell School District has implemented the Missouri Option Program for those students who, for whatever reason, are not able to graduate with their cohort group. Also, the program is for those who would like to come back and re-enroll as a student to achieve their high school diploma. The FHSD Missouri Option Program is committed to helping those students who have realized the importance of earning a high school diploma achieve their dream of being a high school graduate.

**Mr. Rob Gaugh, Ed.S., Principal**

**Dr. Zack Sheets, Ph.D., Teacher Leader**

**Mr. John DeSpain, Program Coordinator and Instructor**

[John.despain@fhdschools.org](mailto:John.despain@fhdschools.org)

**(636) 851 - 4862**

Francis Howell Union High School  
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Graduates of the Missouri Option Program receive a full high school diploma. This diploma is backed by the Francis Howell School District and the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

## Student Eligibility

- **Age** - Student's must be at least *17-years old*, at least in their *senior year* and *no more than 20 years of age*.
- **Credits** - Students must be *at least one year's credit behind their cohort group (class)*, or for other significant reasons identified in the local plan, be unable to complete their diploma with their cohort group. Cohort is defined as the year that a student enrolled in Kindergarten
  - o **Less than 16 credits if applying at the beginning of senior year.**
- **Locator (Entrance Exam)** - Students must have *at least a 10<sup>th</sup> grade reading level and an 8<sup>th</sup> grade math level*. There may be exceptions pending the student's strengths and needs, but those exceptions are uncommon. Grade level is identified by administering a locator test (TABE). The test is 100 questions (50 reading & 50 applied math with a calculator), the test is untimed.
- Students must live within the boundaries of the Francis Howell School District.
- **Students in their junior year with less than 9.5 credits may apply and be admitted on a case by case basis. All other eligibility requirements still apply. Please contact the MO OP Coordinator for more information.**

## Enrollment Process

- Students must fill out The Missouri Option Program (MO OP) Application located in the back of this information packet.
  - o Students, along with their parent(s) or guardian(s), must complete Parts I and II and sign The Missouri Option Program Contract then return it to their counselor.
  - o The sending school's guidance counselor and principal will complete and sign Part III.
  - o The sending school's finance secretary will sign off that the student has paid all fines and all textbooks have been returned.
    - **It is not the responsibility of the MO OP Coordinator to collect fines. It is up to the sending school to collect any fines due.**
- The completed application is then sent to the MO OP Coordinator by the students counselor / principal
- After the MO OP application is reviewed, the student will take part in an interview with the Missouri Option Coordinator.
  - o During this time the student will also take a locator test over reading and mathematics to determine if the student is at a 10th grade reading and 8<sup>th</sup> grade math level (the test is 100 questions - 50 reading & 50 applied math).
- If the student is accepted into the program, they then must enroll at their sending school, **if not already enrolled.**
- If the student has a 504 plan or an IEP, the 504 plan or IEP must be sent to the Missouri Option Coordinator in order for it to be reviewed by the FHU Special Education teacher to determine the type of interventions or accommodations the student will be eligible to receive for the HiSET test

# Procedure and Requirements for Graduation

## 2 Phases of the Missouri Option Program

### - Phase 1 – Coursework –

- The student will begin with earning credit in the required courses
  - If the student already has one or more of the following passed on their transcript, they will not need to do them for MO OP.
- The following courses will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis
  - At least ½ credit in an American Government or Civics class
  - ½ credit in a Personal Finance class
  - ½ credit in a Health class
- The student will earn their credit by working on the courses on the Edmentum online learning system

### - Phase 2 – HiSET –

- The student will be required to take and pass the HiSET exam – this is the exit exam for the program.
  - At this point, the student will be taking a number of practice tests and working one on one with the MO OP Instructor
  - This test takes place at St. Charles Community College (SCCC).
  - **The student is responsible for their own transportation to and from SCCC**
  - Brief overview of the HiSET
    - **Language Arts - Writing – 2 parts**
      - Part I is an essay
      - Part II has 60 multiple-choice questions
      - 120 total minutes shared between part I and II
    - **Language Arts - Reading**
      - 50 multiple-choice questions
      - 65 minutes
    - **Mathematics** – A calculator will be provided for the entire math subtest
      - 55 multiple choice questions
      - 90 minutes
    - **Social Studies** –
      - 60 multiple choice questions
      - 70 minutes
    - **Science** –
      - 60 multiple-choice questions
      - 80 minutes

### - **4<sup>th</sup> year senior students** who have all of the criteria for graduation completed before the scheduled graduation date will be end dated when they pass their HiSET.

- This means that the student is finished with school, their attendance is not required and they will graduate in either December or May, depending on when they complete all of the graduation requirements.
- The student will not receive their diploma until their cohort group's graduation date (Either December or May). They may receive a copy of their transcript showing that all coursework is completed and a diploma will be issued in December or May.

### - **Those students whose cohort group has already graduated** and have all of the criteria for graduation completed are eligible to receive their diploma upon completion of the program,

regardless of when during the school year that may be. These students are allowed and encouraged to walk in the FHU / MO OP graduation ceremony for that year.

## End of Course Exams (EOC)

- The following EOCs are required for graduation: *Algebra 1, Biology, English 2, & American Government*.
- The student only needs to take the EOCs that they did not take at their homeschool
- The students must take all four EOC's, regardless if they were ever enrolled in that specific course or not.
- These are only given at certain points throughout the year. These points are determined by the State. If the student cannot be at school on those specific days, then they must come during the following semester to take the tests.
- Please contact the MO OP Coordinator or FHU Teacher Leader for more information about EOCs

## Other MO State Tests

- The State of Missouri requires every graduate in the state to take a number of tests.
- These include – *MO Civics exam, MO CPR test, MO Constitution test, US constitution test*
- These will be given to those students who have not already taken them

## Daily Schedule Options

**\*\*Options 1 – 3 REQUIRE a student to have a job/ volunteer**

- 1) AM – Monday – Friday 7:30am – 10:30am\*\*
  - a. With this option, students can take bus TO school, but must have a ride home at 10:30
- 2) PM – Monday – Friday 10:30am – 1:20pm\*\*
  - a. With this option, students must have a ride to school at 10:30, but can take bus HOME
- 3) 3 full days – 7:30am – 1:20pm any 3 days\*\*. Student OFF of school for the other 2 weekdays
  - a. With this option, students can take bus to and from school
- 4) Full days 7:30am – 1:20pm – If a student does not have a job or volunteer hours, they must come to school full days as usual. This is on a need basis and dependent on classroom space at the time. **This option is by no means guaranteed, only if space allows.**
  - a. With this option, students can take bus to and from school

## Bus

- Students are allowed to ride the bus, but please see above (Daily Schedule Options) for your options.
- **If you ride or plan to ride the bus at all, you need to contact Mr. DeSpain ASAP to get you on the bus list.**
  - o **If you do not do this, you will not have a bus!**

## Attendance Procedures

- **All missed hours or absences must be made up before a student will be allowed to GRADUATE.**
- **If a student is absent,** please call the Missouri Option Coordinator at the following number: 636-851-4862.
- If a student begins to accrue a large amount of missed hours, the parent or guardian will be contacted and a plan of action will be discussed to decrease the number of unexcused absences.
- If a student acquires 30+ missed hours, there will be a discussion with the admin. and the students' parents or guardians to determine if the student should be dropped from the program
- Each student is allowed to be enrolled in the Missouri Option program for a *maximum of 2 years*, if the requirements for graduation are not met in that time, the student will be dropped from the program.

## Cost

- The Missouri Option Program costs nothing to attend. However, there is a cost associated with the HiSet. The cost for the HiSet is \$95 (\$60 registration fee and \$7 per sub section). The Francis Howell School District pays for each student to take their first full test.
- **\*\*\*\*IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT EACH STUDENT HAVE A VALID STATE ISSUED ID (DRIVERS LISCENSE, PERMIT, NON-DRIVERS PHOTO STATE ID, PASSPORT). A STUDENT WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO TEST WITHOUT A STATE ISSUED PHOTO ID!\*\*\*\*** - contact the MO OP Coordinator if this is an issue at all.

## Post-Graduation

- If a student plans on attending college after graduation, it is important to let the MO OP Coordinator know. The MO OP Coordinator will contact the school of your choice to inquire about entrance requirements. Both the MO OP Coordinator and the FHU Guidance Counselor are very knowledgeable about post graduate studies and it would be prudent to go through them in order to quell any hiccups while applying.

## Program Location

- The Missouri Option program is located in room 231 at Francis Howell Union High School, which is located in the same building as FHSD Administration Office, but on floor 2. Please see front cover of packet for address.

## Work Requirement

**\*for those students not attending 5 full days per week**

- Students will be required to have proof of a job, community service, or other supervised activity before they are admitted into the program.
- Students will be required to work **a minimum of 15 hours a week.**
- Having a job is not the only option for this requirement, a student may do volunteer work, participate in a club or a sport, as long as it is a supervised out of school activity and gives the student at least 15 hours a week.
- Students will be required to stay at the same employment during the duration of this program unless legitimate and/or unplanned circumstances occur that forces the student to leave or quit.
  - o Being fired is not an option.

- If a student does not abide by this, he or she will be removed from the program
- **STUDENTS MUST HAVE ALL OF THEIR WORK HOURS UP TO DATE BEFORE BEING ALLOWED TO GRADUATE.**
- If finding or having a job or volunteer hours is an issue, please contact the MO OP Coordinator to determine if other options are available.

## **Graduation**

- Missouri Option Program graduates walk in the Francis Howell Union High School graduation ceremony
  - A student does NOT, and may not, walk with his or her home school
- ***In order to qualify to walk in the graduation ceremony ALL of the requirements for graduation (listed above) MUST be completed by Friday May 20, 2022***
  - Students completing their coursework after May 20 will still be eligible to graduate, just not walk in the graduation ceremony.
- Please contact the MO OP Coordinator for more info about the graduation ceremony.

## **All Discipline Issues**

- Discipline issues will be handled by the Missouri Option Coordinator, Teacher Leader, and/or Principal of Francis Howell Union High School.
- If discipline issues become disruptive to the positive learning environment, the student will be removed from The Missouri Option Program.

## **Calendar / School Closings**

- The Missouri Option Program follows the same exact calendar as the rest of the district. Also, if the district is closed for any reason (bad weather, pipe bursts, etc.), MO OP is also closed.

## **Transportation / Parking**

- Please see “BUS” section for that info
- Missouri Option Program students who drive are required to obtain an FHU parking pass. All past fines from their home school must be paid before a student is eligible for a parking pass.
  - See MO OP Coordinator about parking pass

# Frequently Asked Questions

(Partially taken from: [http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/Missouri\\_option\\_faq.htm](http://dese.mo.gov/divcareered/Missouri_option_faq.htm))

The Missouri Option Program is available in participating public school districts and eligible agencies during the regular school year. To offer this program, local schools must meet requirements established by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. Participation is voluntary for schools and students.

## **What is the Missouri Option Program?**

The Missouri Option Program is designed to target students who have the capabilities to complete Missouri High School Graduation Requirements, but for a variety of reasons lack the credits needed to graduate with their class and are at risk of leaving school without a high school diploma.

The program specifically targets those students who are 17 years of age or older and are at least one year behind their cohort group or for other significant reasons identified in the local Missouri Option Program plan.

**Note: For the Missouri Option Program, cohort is defined as when a student started kindergarten, not high school.**

## **Does the military accept the Missouri Option Program diploma?**

Yes, but with some caveats:

- **Marines** – Accepted, but cannot start until diploma is issued
- **Army** – Accepted with an ASVAB score of 50 or higher
- **Navy** – Accepted
- **Air Force** – Accepted

## **Do Colleges / Universities accept the Missouri Option Program diploma?**

Yes, but not all. I have contacted a number of universities in the area to request their entrance requirements for Missouri Option Program graduates; below are a couple of examples. If you are interested in attending a college / university and you would like me to check on their specific entrance requirements, I'd be happy to, just let me know.

- **University of Missouri, Columbia (Mizzou)** - At least a 15 on each subtest
- **Lindenwood University** – Admissible on a case by case basis
- **University of Missouri, St. Louis (UMSL)** – At least a 15 on each subtest AND at least a 24 on the ACT
- **Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO)** – At least a 15 on each subtest AND at least an 18 on the ACT

## **When did the Missouri Option Program begin in Missouri?**

In 2002 the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education initiated the Missouri Option Program. The program is approved by the American Council on Education (owners of the GED Tests) and the Missouri State Board of Education.

### **How does the Missouri Option Program benefit a school?**

School Districts approved by DESE to participate in the Missouri Option Program can continue to receive average daily attendance funds for the participating students. Additionally, students remain in school and are not required to dropout when it is time to take the HiSET. Once the school district issues a High School diploma, participants are then counted as graduates.

**Note: The FHSD Missouri Option Program diploma is a regular high school diploma; it is not “other” or “alternative”. The diploma awarded to graduates of the FHSD Missouri Option Program is exactly the same as a diploma awarded at one of the traditional high schools, the only difference being that it is awarded by the Francis Howell School District, not by a specific high school.**

### **How does the Missouri Option Program benefit a student?**

Students in the Missouri Option Program will be provided guidance and counseling services consistent with the high school program. Ongoing academic/career advisement will be provided by the Missouri Option Program instructor(s), with supplemental guidance and counseling provided, as needed. Students will have access to all educational programs and services available in the school district, have the opportunity to stay in school, receive valuable academic and life-skills instruction, earn a High School diploma, and have the option of taking part in commencement ceremonies.

### **What is required of Missouri Option Program students?**

A minimum of 15 hours of academic instruction per week will be provided. Students must also be enrolled in other school supervised instructional activities (career education courses, elective classes, work experience, etc.) that lead to student's classification by the district as a full-time student. The school district/eligible agency should provide a level and quality of education that ensures the integrity of the Missouri Option Program and locally issued High School diploma.

School districts may have additional requirements when issuing a regular high school diploma that is consistent with what is required of all students. They must take the EOC tests appropriate for their age/grade level. They must take a course in government and the functions of government and pass the required tests related to the U.S. and Missouri Constitutions. In addition, they must participate in appropriate substantive counseling and life-skills training that will assist them with job-readiness, financial management and independent living skills.

### **If a student takes the HiSET, what documentation will the district receive from the state verifying the students results?**

The HiSET test is designed to measure the major academic skills and knowledge associated with a high school program of study. Students enrolled in the Missouri Option Program take (and pass) the HiSET Test to demonstrate and document the attainment of high school-level skills. The HiSET score report is one of the academic components required for the awarding of a high school diploma by the local district, and as such, is placed in the student's permanent record.



### **What are some common misconceptions about the Missouri Option Program?**

The Missouri Option Program is NOT an "early out" program or "easy out" alternative. Schools that attempt to use it for these purposes will be disqualified. It is specifically intended to meet the needs of students who are credit-deficient (for whatever reasons), but who otherwise could be expected to meet regular graduation requirements. This program is NOT just intended to prepare students for the HiSET Test; it must provide substantive academic content aligned with the school's regular curriculum and expectations. Students must attend school regularly and have access to the kind of counseling and support services that are available to all students.

### **What are the requirements for the faculty in the Missouri Option Program?**

Teachers working in this program must have a valid Missouri teaching certificate in any secondary-level area or in Adult Education and Literacy (AEL). AEL certification is not required if the educator already has a valid teaching certificate.

**Note:** Mr. DeSpain (MO OP Coordinator, 2009/10 - Present) holds a Bachelor's Degree in History and a Master's Degree in Education from Truman State University. The 2022/2023 school year will be Mr. DeSpain's 14th year as Missouri Option Program Coordinator for The Francis Howell School District. Prior to his taking over the Missouri Option Program, Mr. DeSpain taught World History at FHHS.

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Francis Howell School District  
MISSOURI OPTION PROGRAM APPLICATION AND  
CONTRACT

This Application MUST be filled out completely.  
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Part I: To be filled out by the applicant along with the parent(s)/guardian(s)

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ School ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Student e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the student currently have an IEP, 504 plan? YES or NO (Circle one)

If the student has an IEP, who is their case manager? \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide the name(s) and phone contact(s) of the student's parent(s)/guardian(s)

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell or Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell or Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Does the student have any medical conditions that we need to be aware of? YES or NO

If yes, please list *(be sure to turn in the proper medical forms to the FHHS nurse as well)*:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Which session would you prefer? Circle one (please see "Daily Schedule Options" on p.5 of this packet)

**\*Option 1 (am)      \*Option 2 (pm)      \*Option 3 (3 full)      Option 4 (5 full)**

**\*Options 1 – 3 REQUIRE proof of a job or volunteer**

What is the student's plan for transportation to and from the program?  
\_\_\_\_\_

Student's plan for achieving the 15 hour work requirement:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please state where the student is working and or volunteering:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Part II: To be filled out completely by the student / applicant

Please answer each question completely and LEGIBLY!

Why do you feel you are a good candidate for the Missouri Option Program?

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What difficulties have you experienced in the past that has stopped you from succeeding?

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Why do you want to enroll in the Missouri Option Program as opposed to getting your MO HSE (Previously known as “GED”)?

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What do you feel are your strengths and weaknesses?

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**Part III: To be fully completed by the referring school's guidance counselor before sending**

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Cohort Graduation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Referring School: \_\_\_\_\_ Students FHSD ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Counselor: \_\_\_\_\_ Principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Current total credits: \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer yes or no to the following

\_\_\_\_\_ 1) Has the student ever been retained? If so, how many years and when? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 2) The student is currently enrolled in their home school

\_\_\_\_\_ 3) Parent/Guardian Contacted?

\_\_\_\_\_ 4) The Missouri Option application and contract is completed and signed by both student and parent / guardian (parent / guardian must approve and sign regardless of student age) with appropriate contact information

\_\_\_\_\_ 5) at least 1/2 credit of American Government / Civics complete

\_\_\_\_\_ 6) 1/2 credit in Health complete

\_\_\_\_\_ 7) 1/2 credit of Personal Finance complete

\_\_\_\_\_ 8) MO State Tests -

\_\_\_\_\_ US Const. Test \_\_\_\_\_ MO Const. Test \_\_\_\_\_ MO Civics \_\_\_\_\_ CPR

\_\_\_\_\_ 9) EOC Exams Completed: \_\_\_\_\_ Alg 1 \_\_\_\_\_ Bio \_\_\_\_\_ Eng II \_\_\_\_\_ Govt

Student's plan for achieving the 15 hour work requirement **(be specific as to where the student is working or volunteering):**

Counselor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Finance Secretary Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*It is not the Missouri Option Coordinator's or FHU's responsibility to collect fines; it is up to the home school to collect any fines owed. If the student owes fines, please either collect them **before sending the application** or contact the student directly. A student's diploma will NOT be held because of unpaid fines. If this is an issue, please collect any fines BEFORE sending this application to the MO OP Coordinator.\*\*

**Please attach a copy of the student's transcript.**

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**Missouri Option Program Contract  
Francis Howell Union High School**

**Student:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent / Guardian:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. All Students will follow all rules of Francis Howell Union High School. By signing this contract you are stating that you have read and understand the student code of conduct and all parking rules and regulations (copies of both may be obtained at parent's request from the FHU main office).
2. By signing this contract you are stating that you have read, understand, and will abide by the rules and guidelines outlined in the Missouri Option Program information packet, especially the sections listed below:
  - Procedure and Requirements for graduation
  - Attendance Procedures
  - Work Requirement
  - FAQs
3. ANY scores received on the HiSET test while in the Missouri Option Program are VOID if the student drops or is dropped from the program. The HiSET scores received while enrolled in the program CANNOT be used to receive a HiSET.
4. The student agrees to do all work assigned by the instructor, stay on task, and not disrupt other students during work times. If the student disobeys a request by the instructor, is off task, or disrupts other students, the instructor reserves the right to remove the student from class that day. Any time missed after being asked to leave for the day must be made up before being allowed to graduate.
  - If the student continues to be off task, not complete the work assigned by the instructor, or disrupts other students, a meeting will be held with the student's parent / guardian to discuss consequences up to and including being dropped from the program.

**PARENTS / GUARDIANS** (parent / guardian must approve and sign regardless of student age):

I give consent for \_\_\_\_\_ to be enrolled in Francis Howell School District's Missouri Option Program. I have read and understand these guidelines and will encourage my son/daughter to follow them.

Parent / Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENTS:**

I have read and understand the guidelines for the Missouri Option Program. I understand that if I violate these policies I will be dropped from enrollment.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_