

Executive Summary: Highland Community College Dual Credit MOU

This summary introduces the Dual Credit Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Stillman Valley High School and Highland Community College (HCC) for the 2026–2027 school year. This active agreement provides eligible high school students the opportunity to concurrently earn high school and college-level credits. This partnership expands student curriculum access, smooths post-secondary transitions, and leverages district assets without incurring new commercial tuition rates.

Dual Credit Program Offerings

The partnership explicitly focuses on the district's Agricultural and Horticultural career pathways. The agreed-upon technical courses for dual credit through Highland Community College include:

- Advanced Ag Mechanics: 4 College Credits
- Advanced Animal Science: 4 College Credits
- Advanced Plant Science: 4 College Credits
- Horticultural Production & Management: 3 College Credits
- Landscaping and Turf Management: 3 College Credits
- Ag Business Management: 2 College Credits

Key Terms and Operational Guidelines

Instructor Qualifications & Responsibilities

- **Credential Verification:** Courses will be taught by qualified School District or HCC instructors. To teach, district instructors must submit an Instructor Information Form, a resume, official transcripts, and a Course Similarities form to HCC. Because these are technical and occupational courses, instructors must also document and submit proof of at least 2,000 hours of workplace experience.
- **Syllabus & Grading Rigor:** District instructors must implement HCC's master course syllabi, utilize approved textbooks, and adhere to identical college learning outcomes. Instructors must issue copies of the syllabus to students on day one and submit final copies to HCC by the first week of classes each semester.

Classroom Evaluations & Site Rigor

- **Dean Access:** To ensure collegiate-level rigor, the district grants HCC Academic Deans or faculty designees physical access to conduct periodic classroom observations.
- **Personnel Protection:** These classroom observations are limited strictly to evaluating the delivery of college-level coursework. The agreement explicitly states that these evaluations shall not be utilized as part of the instructor's local performance evaluation under Article 24A of the School Code.

Student Registration, Support, and Accountability

- Prerequisites & Placement: The district and HCC will collaborate to ensure all participating students satisfy necessary college placement metrics (including English, reading, and mathematics) alongside any course-specific prerequisites prior to formal registration.
- Disability Support Services: Students with individualized education programs (IEPs) under Article 14 of the School Code or Section 504 plans will receive their mandated supplementary aids and accommodations. If a dual credit course takes place on a high school campus, the high school will manage these services. If a student takes a course on the community college campus, they will gain full access to HCC's disability services.
- FERPA & Information Sharing: To comply with federal privacy mandates, all participating students will execute targeted FERPA releases. These authorize the exchange of Accuplacer test scores, eligibility statuses, and final grades between HCC and the School District. Final grades are transcribed onto permanent college transcripts maintained by HCC.

Legal Duration, Renewal, and Termination

- Term: This agreement will be in effect for the 2026–2027 school year.
- Automatic Renewal: To ensure continuous programmatic stability, this agreement automatically rolls over from year to year unless either party delivers a formal written notice of intent to non-renew at least 60 days prior to the annual renewal date.
- Termination Clause: Either party may terminate the agreement upon 30 days' notice in the event of an uncured breach. Crucially, any modification or termination of this agreement is legally bound not to jeopardize or interrupt college credits for students currently enrolled in active courses.

Conclusion

This Memorandum of Understanding formalizes a high-value, locally tailored relationship with Highland Community College. By aligning our agricultural curriculum with collegiate standards, Stillman Valley High School students can accumulate up to 20 college credits before graduation. This opportunity enhances the academic profile of our district and reduces the future cost of higher education for our community's families.

Recommendation

The Administration recommends that the Board of Education consider the approval of the Dual Credit Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Meridian CUSD 223 and Highland Community College for the 2026–2027 school year.