

5-O-D: EXPANDED ONLINE LEARNING

Expanded online learning options through Section 21f of the State School Aid Act (MCL 388.1621f), allow pupils in grades 5 to 12 to enroll in online courses where each course is capable of generating credit or a grade while being provided in an interactive internet-connected learning environment where pupils are separated from their teachers by time or location, or both.

Online courses have a teacher of record who holds a valid Michigan teaching certificate identified and assigned to the course, who is responsible for determining appropriate instructional methods for each pupil, diagnosing learning needs, assessing pupil learning, prescribing intervention strategies, reporting outcomes, and evaluating the effects of instruction and support strategies. If the course will be taken in a self-scheduled format, the educating district must assign a certified teacher who will act as the on-site mentor to the pupil.

A district must allow a pupil to enroll in up to two (2) online courses per term, semester, or trimester with the consent of the pupil's parent or legal guardian. The statewide catalog will open for population of course syllabi during October 2013, and will be available for pupil use beginning in January 2014.

This section does not apply to pupils who enrolled in a cyber school as described in Section 551(2)(e) of the Revised School Code (MCL 380.551).

A) Requirements for Counting in Membership

All of the following requirements must be met for pupils claimed in membership under this section:

- 1) The **pupil must meet pupil membership eligibility requirements** pursuant to Section 6(4) of the State School Aid Act (MCL 388.1606).
- 2) The **pupil shall be enrolled and attending on the count day(s)** if membership is being claimed pursuant to Section 6(8) and Section 6a of the State School Aid Act (MCL 388.1606 and MCL 388.1606a). For off-site and self-scheduled pupils, the enrollment and attendance requirement shall be satisfied if the pupil is in attendance on count day for a course in which the pupil is concurrently enrolled with the primary educating district.
- 3) Pupil must be enrolled in any of grades 5-12 to be eligible under this section.
- 4) Each course being counted under this section must be selected from the course syllabi published in the statewide online course catalog maintained by the Michigan Virtual University (MVU), or in the district online course catalog.
- 5) The pupil must be enrolled in the course, and the course must be reflected on the class schedule of the primary educating district that claimed the pupil in membership on count day.
- 6) The course must not generate more FTE than a comparable course if offered in a traditional format by the district. Courses which offer less instruction than a comparable course must have their FTE prorated. Enrollment under this section in one or more online courses shall not result in a pupil being counted for more than 1.0 FTE.
- 7) The district may count a pupil for no more than 2 online courses per count.
- 8) For each online course placed in a local catalog or in the statewide catalog by a local district, the course must be academic in nature and must be approved by the board of education of the school district or board of directors of the public school academy.

- 9) The course must be capable of generating credit toward the pupil's high school diploma or grade progression.
- 10) A teacher of record must be identified and assigned to the course. The teacher of record must hold a valid Michigan teaching certificate, and is responsible for determining appropriate instructional methods for each pupil, diagnosing learning needs, assessing pupil learning, prescribing intervention strategies, reporting outcomes, and evaluating the effects of instruction and support strategies. If the course will be taken in a self-scheduled format, the educating district must assign a certified teacher who will act as the on-site mentor to the pupil.
- 11) For a pupil who is absent on count day, the attendance criteria can be considered met if the pupil returns to school within 10 days of an unexcused absence, or within 30 days of an excused absence.
- 12) The pupil has parent or legal guardian consent for enrollment in the online course(s). Consent is not required if the pupil is at least age 18 or is an emancipated minor.

B) Expanded Online Learning

Online courses that appear in the district or statewide catalog are capable of generating credit or a grade. Under this section, courses are provided in an interactive internet-connected learning environment in which pupils are separated from their teachers by time or location, or both. The teacher assigned to the course must hold a valid Michigan teaching certificate, and is responsible for determining appropriate instructional methods for each pupil, diagnosing learning needs, assessing pupil learning, prescribing intervention strategies, reporting outcomes, and evaluating the effects of instruction and support strategies.

1) Course Syllabi

The Department, in collaboration with MVU, may identify additional items that should be included in the syllabus for each online course that appears in the statewide catalog; however, each online course offered under this section must have a course syllabus that addresses the following:

- a. The state academic standards addressed in an online course.
- b. The online course content outline.
- c. The online course required assessments.
- d. The online course prerequisites.
- e. Expectations for actual instructor contact time with the online learning pupil and other pupil-to-instructor communications.
- f. Academic support available to the online learning pupil.
- g. The online course learning outcomes and objectives.
- h. The name of the institution or organization providing the online content.
- i. The name of the institution or organization providing the online instructor.
- j. The course titles assigned by the district and the course titles and course codes from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) School Codes for the Exchange of Data (SCED).
- k. The number of eligible nonresident pupils that will be accepted by the district in the online course.

- I. The results of the online course quality review using the guidelines and model review process published by MVU.

2) Program/Course Capacity

A district shall determine whether or not it has capacity to accept applications for enrollment from nonresident applicants in online courses. If the district determines that it has capacity for nonresident pupils, the district will then determine if the capacity is unlimited whereby all nonresident pupils can be accepted, or if there are a limited number of seats. If the number of applicants for a limited program exceeds the number of seats available, the district shall use a random draw system when selecting pupils for enrollment.

3) Course Catalog

A pupil may enroll in online courses published in the district's catalog of online courses or the statewide catalog of online course titles maintained by MVU. Districts offering an online course must provide MVU with the course syllabus for inclusion in the statewide catalog and provide links to the catalog on the district's website. Online courses offered under this section allow for open entry and exit enrollments, or enrollments that are aligned to a semester, trimester, or accelerated academic term.

4) Denial of Enrollment

A district may deny a pupil enrollment in an online course for any of the following reasons:

- a. The pupil has previously gained the credits provided from the completion of the online course.
- b. The online course is not capable of generating academic credit.
- c. The online course is inconsistent with the remaining graduation requirements or career interests of the pupil.
- d. The pupil does not possess the prerequisite knowledge and skills to be successful in the online course or has demonstrated failure in previous online coursework in the same subject.
- e. The online course is of insufficient quality or rigor. A district that denies a pupil enrollment for this reason shall make a reasonable effort to assist the pupil to find an alternative course in the same or a similar subject that is of acceptable rigor and quality.

5) Pupil Enrollment Denial Appeals

If a pupil is denied enrollment in an online course by a district, the pupil may appeal the denial by submitting a letter to the superintendent of the intermediate district where the educating district is located. The letter of appeal shall include the reason provided by the district for not enrolling the pupil and the reason why the pupil is claiming that the enrollment should be approved. The intermediate district superintendent or designee shall respond to the appeal within 5 business days after it is received. If the intermediate district superintendent or designee determines that the denial of enrollment does not meet 1 or more of the reasons specified in subsection 4 above, the district shall allow the pupil to enroll in the online course.

6) Counting Membership, Awarding Credit, and Payment of Tuition

The primary education providing entity (PEPE) shall count the pupil in membership for the course(s) enrolled under this legislation if all of the requirements for counting a pupil in membership have been satisfied.

If a pupil successfully completes an online course, the district shall grant appropriate academic credit for completion of the course and shall count that credit toward completion of graduation and subject area requirements. A pupil's school record and transcript shall identify the online course title as it appears in the online course syllabus.

The district shall pay 80% of the cost of the online course upon enrollment and 20% upon completion as determined by the district. A district is not required to pay toward the cost of an online course an amount that exceeds 1/12 of the district's foundation allowance or per pupil payment as calculated under Section 20 per semester or an amount that exceeds 1/18 of the district's foundation allowance or per pupil payment as calculated under Section 20 per trimester.

C) Course Location: On-site, Off-site, and Blended Learning

Courses may be delivered through on-site, off-site self-scheduled, or blended learning. On-site learning describes a course that is held at a supervised school facility. These courses may be scheduled for a specified time and date, or may be self-scheduled. A teacher of record is assigned to the pupil, but may be separated from the pupil by location or time.

Off-site learning courses take place away from the supervised school facility. The pupil has some control over the time, location, and pace of course delivery in this format. No physical attendance is required at school for courses with an off-site format. An off-site course may also include an optional or drop-in lab component that would be offered on-site at a supervised school facility.

Blended learning means a hybrid instructional delivery model where pupils are provided content, instruction, and assessment, in part at a supervised educational facility away from home where the pupil and a teacher with a valid Michigan teaching certificate are in the same physical location and in part through internet-connected learning environments with some degree of pupil control over time, location, and pace of instruction. *Blended learning courses represent an approach used to combine elements of online and face-to-face teaching, but will not appear in the statewide catalog of online course titles.*

D) Regulatory References

<u>State School Aid Act:</u>	<u>Revised School Code:</u>
388.1606	380.551
388.1621f	
388.1701	

E) Question and Answer

- Q #1** If a pupil plans to enroll in three courses with the district, and two of the courses will be self-scheduled online courses as allowed under 21f, does the third course need to be on-site and scheduled for regular attendance?
- A #1** Yes. With the exception of a seat time waiver pupil, he/she will need to enroll in at least one on-site course that is scheduled and requires regular daily attendance in order to allow the pupil to participate in courses that do not require physical attendance.
- Q #2** The manual describes the courses allowed through 21f as interactive internet-connected learning environments. What is an interactive course?
- A #2** The term interactive course typically describes material of an educational or informational nature delivered in an electronic format, which allows the user to directly impact the materials' content, pace, and outcome.

- Q #3** Districts are required to provide in each course syllabus the expectations for “actual instructor contact time with the online learning pupil and other pupil-to-instructor communications.” How is contact time defined?
- A #3** Instructor contact time refers to time that is set aside during a course where a form of live two-way interaction between the teacher and pupil can occur. This interaction may occur through a virtual environment, face-to-face meeting, or another medium that allows live communication.
- Q #4** The manual uses the terms instructor, teacher of record, and on-site mentor. Does each course require a separate person for each of these roles?
- A #4** A teacher must be identified and assigned to each role for each course. Depending on the course, the district may be able to effectively cover each role with only 1 teacher, or it could require a separate instructor for each role, or a combination of roles.
- The instructor will create lesson plans that are tailored to the online environment, instruct pupils through online lectures, lead class discussions, answer questions, grade pupil work, and serve as the primary pupil contact for communications related to the course. The instructor could also be assigned the role of on-site mentor (unless they provide instruction from a remote location), and/or the role of the teacher of record (if the instructor holds a valid Michigan teaching certificate).
- The on-site mentor monitors the pupil’s progress, and is available to the pupil to guide and assist the pupil throughout the course.
- The teacher of record determines the appropriate instructional methods for each pupil, diagnoses learning needs, assesses pupil learning, prescribes intervention strategies, reports outcomes, and evaluates the effects of instruction and support strategies. The teacher of record must hold a valid Michigan teaching certificate.
- Q #5** How can the district determine if the course is academic in nature?
- A #5** Academic courses can be applied toward the satisfaction of degree requirements (or grade progression) and are not in the subject areas of theology, divinity, or religious education, nor is the course based on a hobby or craft. Academic courses may include courses that are classified as electives in addition to those classified as essential. The classification of courses as academic is left to the discretion of the district.