

## 5-O-D: EXPANDED ONLINE LEARNING

**Expanded online learning options**, available pursuant to Section 21f of the State School Aid Act (MCL 388.1621f), allow pupils in grades 6 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.

Section 21f allows pupils to enroll in online courses from the district or statewide online course catalog by term, semester, or trimester. This enrollment may not cause the pupil to be counted in membership for more than 1.0 FTE. The district that counts the pupil in membership reports the enrollment on the pupil's class schedule and on the pupil's transcript.

### 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** set forth in Section 6(4) or 6(6) of the State School Aid Act (MCL 388.1606) **and any other applicable statute.**
- 2) The **pupil shall be registered, enrolled and attending on the count day(s)** if membership is being claimed pursuant to Section 6(4), Section 6(8) and Section 6a of the State School Aid Act (MCL 388.1606 and MCL 388.1606a).
- 3) **The participation requirement must be satisfied for membership purposes. The participation requirement states that a pupil must complete at least one (1) two-way interaction per week for each week of the four (4) week count period.**
- 4) The pupil must be enrolled in any of grades 6 to 12.
- 5) 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.
- 6) The course was selected from a course syllabi published in the statewide online course catalog maintained by the Michigan Virtual University (MVU) available at <http://micourses.org> **(or from the district's online course catalog if the course is also published in the statewide online course catalog).**
- 7) Unless the pupil is newly enrolled in the district, the request for online course enrollment must be made in the academic term, semester, trimester, or summer preceding the enrollment.
- 8) The pupil must be enrolled in the course on count day and the course must be reflected on the pupil's class schedule.
- 9) The course must not generate more FTE than a comparable course if offered in a traditional format by the district. Courses that offer less instruction than comparable courses must have their FTE prorated. Enrollment in one or more online courses shall not result in a pupil being counted for more than 1.0 FTE.
- 10) The district may count a pupil for no more than 2 online courses per count unless the pupil has demonstrated previous success with online courses and the school leadership and the pupil's parent or legal guardian determine that it is in the best interests of the pupil to enroll him or her in more than 2 online courses in a specific academic term, semester, or trimester.
- 11) The course must be capable of generating credit toward the pupil's high school diploma or grade progression.
- 12) A mentor must be assigned to the pupil.

**B) Instructional Components**

**Teacher of Record:** A teacher who holds a valid Michigan teaching certificate or who is an instructor employed by or contracted through a community college or university for courses provided by a community college or university; who, where applicable, is endorsed in the subject area and grade of the course; and is responsible for providing instruction, determining 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. As Section 1231 of the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1231) applies, the teacher of record shall be employed by the district.

**Mentor:** A professional employee of the district who monitors the pupil's progress, ensures the pupil has access to needed technology, is available for assistance, and ensures access to the teacher of record. A mentor may also serve as the teacher of record if the mentor meets the definition of a teacher of record.

**Participation:** Participation is measured for self-scheduled courses through the use of two-way interaction. For membership purposes, a pupil must complete at least one (1) two-way interaction per week for each week of the four (4) week count period.

The first week in which participation will be measured begins on count day (Wednesday), and continues through the following Tuesday. Each consecutive week will start on Wednesday and end on the following Tuesday, for a total of four (4) weeks including the week that began on count day. The district shall document and retain an online activity log detailing two-way interactions for each seat time waiver pupil. An illustration of this requirement appears below.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<-----week 1----->			
			Count Day			
-----week 1----->			<-----week 2----->			
-----week 2----->			<-----week 3----->			
-----week 3----->			<-----week 4----->			
-----week 4----->						

If the winter break is 4 school days or longer, the requirement for weekly two-way interaction does not apply for that week. If instruction has been canceled district-wide during a week for 3 school days or longer, the requirement for weekly two-way interaction does not apply for that week.

**Two-way Interaction:** Two-way interaction is the communication that occurs between the teacher of record **or mentor** and pupil, where one party initiates communication and a response from the other party follows that communication. Responses must be to the communication initiated by the teacher of record **or mentor**, and not some other action taken. This interaction may occur through, but is not limited to, means such as email, telephone, instant messaging, or face-to-face conversation. All two-way interaction must be documented and available to the pupil accounting auditor upon request. Interaction must be relevant to the course or pupil's progress. Parent or guardian facilitated two-way interaction may be required if the pupil is in grades K-5 and does not yet possess the skills necessary to participate in two-way interaction unassisted.

### **C) Section 25e Membership Transfer Exception**

The portion of the full-time equated pupil membership for which a pupil is enrolled in one (1) or more online courses under Section 21f shall not be transferred under the pupil membership transfer process under Section 25e of the State School Aid Act (MCL 388.1625e).

### **D) Course Provider Requirements**

- 1) Each online course must have a course syllabus that addresses at least the following:
  - a. The state academic standards addressed in the 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 who will be accepted by the district in the online course.
  - l. The results of the online course quality review using the guidelines and model review process published by MVU.
- 2) Each online course placed in a local catalog or in the statewide online course catalog by a local district 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.
- 3) A teacher of record must be assigned.
- 4) The providing district provides the enrolling district with the teacher's primary identification code.
- 5) The course must offer an open entry and exit method, or align to a semester, trimester, or accelerated term format.
- 6) Not later than October 1 of the current school year, provide the Michigan Virtual University with the number of enrollments in each online course offered to pupils pursuant to this section in the immediately preceding school year, and the number of enrollments in which the pupil earned 60% or more of the total course points for each online course. Community colleges participating under Section 21f are exempt from this requirement until 2016.
- 7) If the course is provided by a community college under Section 21f, the course must generate postsecondary credit.

### **E) Program and Course Capacity**

A providing district or community college shall determine whether it has capacity to accept applications for enrollment from nonresidents in online courses. If the providing district or

community college determines that it has capacity for nonresident pupils, the district determines if the capacity is unlimited, whereby all nonresident pupils can be accepted, or if there is a limited number of seats. If the number of applicants for a limited program exceeds the number of seats available, the providing district or community college shall use a random draw system when selecting pupils for enrollment.

#### F) Course Catalog

A pupil may enroll in online courses published in the providing district's catalog of online courses or the statewide online course catalog maintained by MVU. A district offering an online course must provide MVU with the course syllabus for inclusion in the statewide online course catalog and must provide a link to the catalog on the district's website. Online courses are offered on an open entry and exit method or are aligned to a semester, trimester, or accelerated academic term.

**Note:** Districts should not add course information to the statewide online course catalog for courses that do not meet the definition of an online course under Section 21f, such as content-only courses or courses with a non-Michigan certificated teacher.

#### G) Denial of Enrollment

Enrollment in an online course may be denied 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.
- f. The cost of the online course exceeds the amount allocated to a course under Section 21f unless the pupil's parent or legal guardian agrees to pay the cost that exceeds that amount.
- g. The online course enrollment request does not occur within the same timelines established for enrollment and schedule changes for regular courses.

**Note:** A district may not establish additional requirements that would prohibit a pupil from taking an online course.

#### H) Pupil Enrollment Denial Appeals

If a pupil is denied enrollment in an online course, the pupil may appeal the denial by submitting a letter to the superintendent of the intermediate district. The letter of appeal shall include the reason 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 F above, the pupil shall be allowed to enroll in the online course.

### **I) Counting Membership, Awarding Credit, and Payment of Tuition**

The enrolling district shall count the pupil in membership for the course(s) in which the pupil is enrolled under MCL 388.1621f 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.

A district is not required to pay toward the cost of an online course an amount that exceeds 6.67% of the minimum foundation allowance for the current fiscal year as calculated under Section 20 of the State School Aid Act (MCL 388.1620).

### **J) Statutory and Other References**

<u>State School Aid Act:</u>	<u>Administrative Rules:</u>
MCL 388.1606	R 340.11
MCL 388.1620	
MCL 388.1621f	
MCL 388.1701	

### **K) Question and Answer**

- Q #1** The manual describes the courses allowed through 21f as interactive internet-connected learning environments. What is an interactive course?
- A #1** 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 #2** 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 #2** Instructor contact time refers to time that is set-aside during a course where a form of two-way interaction between the teacher of record or mentor and the pupil can occur. This interaction may occur through a virtual environment, face-to-face meeting, or another medium that allows communication.
- Q #3** How can the district determine if the course is academic in nature?
- A #3** 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.