Career & College Ready MICHIGAN

Flexible Learning Options

Overview

The following document provides a brief overview of flexible learning options available to public school students in Michigan. The links and legislative references are offered to assist Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and Intermediate School Districts (ISDs) in considering implementation options to enhance instruction. Please contact Eric Lipinski or Sam Sinicropi at 517-241-4285 for questions regarding this document.

Seat Time Waivers: Section 101(9) of the State School Aid Act (MCL 388.1701) allows the State Superintendent to waive the required days and hours of student instruction for alternative education programs or another innovative program. This would include a four-day school week. The alternate program must be approved by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE).

Types of Seat Time Waiver Programs

100% Online Seat Time Waiver

This type of waiver allows a district to deliver all of a student's instruction online, with no requirement for the student to attend instruction physically, on-site. Districts may choose to include a drop-in, lab component, with courses as needed. A district may enroll up to 25 percent of its pupils in grades 6-12. If a public school academy is chartered by the intermediate school district offering the program, the program is limited to enrolling 10 percent of the ISD regionally combined student populations in grades 6-12.

Blended Learning Seat Time Waiver:

This waiver is a hybrid of frequent face-to-face instruction and computer-based or an internet-connected learning environment. Students are allowed some degree of choice over time, location, and pace of instruction. For students in grade 6-12 there is no limit on the percent of district student population participation. Students must receive at least 50 percent of their course through on-site, face-to-face instruction. Please see section 5-O-B of the pupil accounting manual for more information and this site for application information.

Online Learning without a Waiver:

Students in grades 6-12 may take up to 2 courses per year without a seat time waiver. Additionally, the Michigan Legislature took action in 2013 and adopted Section 21f of the State School Aid Act to expand student access to digital learning options. As a result, students enrolled in a public local district or public school academy in grades 5-12 are eligible (with parental consent) to enroll in up to 2 online courses during an academic term, beginning in January 2014. Please refer to section 5-O-D of the pupil accounting manual for more information.

Options for Hours and Days Waivers:

Under 388.1701 (9), waivers can be granted to districts for the minimum number of hours (as low as 878.4) and days (to 146) of student instruction. This waiver can be granted for a MDE-approved alternative education program or another approved

innovative program. The waiver can include a 4-day school week. Click for application information on Hours and Days Waivers.

The difference between a seat time waiver and an hours and days waiver hinges on the requirement for physical attendance.

- *An hours and days waiver requires physical attendance but reduces the length of the school year.*
- *A seat time waiver reduces or eliminates physical attendance.*

Work-Based Learning Experiences: This program involves a work-based learning experience coordinated by the school district through a contract with the employer providing the educational experience. The experience must be related to school instruction and a training plan of supervised work is required. The work experience is to be monitored by a certified instructor employed by the district. Students may receive high school credit for the learning experience if the requirements of the program are met. The experience must not generate more than one-half of the student's full-time equivalency (FTE) and the employment of the student must not exceed the maximum hours set by the district. Please refer to section 5-P of the pupil accounting manual for additional information.

College Course Enrollment and Early/Middle Colleges: Public school and approved nonpublic school students are potentially eligible to take up to 10 college courses while in grades 9-12. Click here for additional information on Dual Enrollment. A district or ISD may apply to implement an Early/Middle College school or program where a student may earn a high school diploma, an associate's degree, 60 transferable credits, or a certificate of merit over the course of 5 years. Click here for additional information on Early/Middle College High School Opportunities.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Options: The Michigan Merit Curriculum (MMC) specifies that credit is based on proficiency with the expectations outlined in the state's academic standards. This opens the door for alternative delivery methods of the academic content, including academic content naturally embedded in CTE instructional programs. Click here for more information on using CTE to deliver academic content.

Testing Out: Students can earn credit for content required under the MMC by simply testing out. According the MMC Law, Section 380.1278(1)(4)(c), a public school can grant credit to students for earning a score, determined by the MDE or by the school district, on the assessments developed or selected for the subject area. The school is responsible for ensuring that a student's understanding of the subject area content applies to the credit. Click for more information on testing out.

Personal Curriculum: The Personal Curriculum (PC) is a process to modify specific credit requirements and/or content expectations based on the individual learning needs of a student. PC is designed to serve students who want to accelerate, or go beyond, the MMC requirements and for students who need to individualize learning requirements to meet MMC expectations. Click for the complete PC guide