

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), Public School Academies (PSAs) and Intermediate School Districts (ISDs) in considering implementation options to enhance instruction. Please contact [Eric Lipinski](#) at 517-241-4285 for questions regarding this document.

Virtual Learning Options

Starting with the 2017-18 school year, the virtual aspect (including online and blended learning options) is governed by Section 5-O-D of the Pupil Accounting Manual. Section 5-O-D allows students to enroll in up to two virtual courses during an academic term, semester, or trimester. A pupil may enroll in more than two virtual courses if:

- The district has determined that it is in the best interest of the pupil.
- The pupil agrees with the recommendation of the districts.
- The district, in collaboration with the pupil, has developed an education development plan, in a form and manner specified by the Department, which is kept on file by the district.

[Under Section 5-O-D](#), students have the option of requesting courses from the statewide course catalog, or the courses may be selected from the board approved local district or intermediate district course catalog.

Offline and Project-Based Seat Time Waivers (STWs)

An intermediate school district, a local school district, or a public school academy seeking to offer pupils access to alternative learning options and seeking to offer the opportunity to continue working on a high school diploma or grade progression without physically attending at the school facility may choose to do so under a STW. The STW is a Department-approved alternative or innovative education program that removes the days, hours, and physical attendance requirements (unless required as a condition of the waiver). Applications for STWs are accepted on a yearly basis. More information is available at www.techplan.org and in [Section 5-O-B of the Pupil Accounting Manual](#).

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 to 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](#)