



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING


RICK SNYDER
GOVERNOR

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 19, 2016

TO: Local and Intermediate School District Superintendents
Public School Academy Directors

FROM: Norma Jean Sass 
Deputy Superintendent, Education Services

SUBJECT: 2016-17 Application and 2015-16 Prior Year Reporting Processes for
Grades K-5 Seat Time Waivers

Section 101(9), of the State School Aid Act (MCL 388.1701[9]), permits the State Superintendent to waive the minimum number of hours and days of pupil instruction for Alternative Education programs or other innovative programs approved by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). The State Superintendent will consider applications for Seat Time Waivers (STWs) for the 2016-17 school year, Grades K-5, which currently exists as a pilot program. The pilot program will be expanded to serve no more than 5,000 students statewide.

Applying for a Grades K-5 STW for the 2016-17 School Year

The 2016-17 Grades K-5 STW applications are [available at this site](#). In addition to an application for virtual STW options, districts may also complete an application to offer project-based options as part of a STW program. Please review all of the materials in the Grades K-5 STW section of this website before completing the application.

Grades K-5 STW applications for the 2016-17 school year are due on June 17, 2016.

We highly recommend that you allow your ISD Pupil Accounting Auditor to review any new programs to ensure that all 5-O-B requirements will be met. If you have further questions, please call the Office of Education Improvement and Innovation at 517-241-4285. For additional questions, please contact Brian Barber (for programmatic and application questions) at barberb2@michigan.gov or Eric Lipinski (for application or technical questions) at lipinskie@michigan.gov.

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The parameters of the 2016-17 Grades K-5 STW program include:

- 1) Each public school district, Public School Academy (PSA), and intermediate school district (ISD) **must apply individually to the MDE for approval to run a STW program**. The STW application must be completed and submitted to the MDE along with any additional information requested by the Department. It should be noted that this is an optional program and carries additional requirements set forth in Section 5-O-B of the Pupil Accounting Manual. Failure to comply with Section 5-O-B, including non-participation in program research and evaluation, may result in the termination of a district's entire STW program. Each entity approved for a Grades K-5 STW must also abide by all other applicable sections of the Pupil Accounting Manual.

While the application process will remain open year-round, districts seeking to operate STW programs during the 2016-17 school year must apply to the MDE no later than June 17, 2016, to ensure approval of applications in time for the Fall 2016 Full-Time Equivalency (FTE) count day.

- 2) Districts may apply to operate any and all of three types of programs:
 - An ISD-led STW Consortium program (each district must have local board approval as identified in the application)
 - Individual district-designed and operated STW program
 - Blended Learning Option described in #4 below
- 3) Districts approved to operate a STW program may enroll a maximum of **25 percent of their enrolled student population, Grades K-5**, in instructional programs that use online learning to deliver up to 100 percent of the pupil's instruction. It is recognized that districts may choose to utilize other means and methods for facilitating instruction, such as experiential and project-based learning. In these cases, districts must explain the unique approach in the individual implementation plans accompanying the district application.
- 4) A district approved to operate a Blended Learning Option under its STW program may enroll **100 percent of its enrolled student population, Grades K-5, in blended instructional programs**. In this case, blended instruction is the practice of combining frequent face-to-face interaction with online learning to deliver the pupil's instruction. The Blended Learning Option will allow districts to use online learning to deliver **up to 50 percent of the pupil's instruction**.
- 5) An ISD-chartered PSA approved to operate a STW program may enroll **100 percent of its enrolled student population, Grades K-5, in blended instructional programs**. For the purposes of STWs, blended instruction is the practice of combining frequent face-to-face interaction with online learning to deliver the pupil's instruction. Enrollment in this type of waiver program is limited to **10 percent of the ISD region's combined Grades K-5 student population**.

* In the case where the ISD has chartered multiple PSAs, the combined enrollment of ISD-PSAs under this provision cannot exceed 10 percent of the ISD region's combined Grades K-5 student population. The ISD shall determine which ISD-PSAs can enroll students in the program and how many students they may enroll.

This application process is competitive and there is no guarantee that a program will be approved. New applications will be reviewed and approved using a rubric, also available for viewing at the website referenced above.

Reporting for the 2015-16 School Year

Any district that is currently approved by the MDE for a Grades K-5 STW must complete the 2015-16 year-end report, [which can be found at this link](#). **This report is due on July 22, 2016.** A district that has been approved for a Grades K-5 STW in the past need not reapply as long as the year-end report is completed by the deadline.

Failure to submit the required report may result in revocation of the Grades K-5 STW for the following school year.

cc: Michigan Education Alliance