

Requirements for Teacher of Record for Online or Computer-Based Instruction

Michigan Compiled Laws (MCL) [380.1531](#) and the Administrative Rules Governing the Certification of Michigan Teachers ([Teacher Certification Code](#)) **require** teachers to hold the endorsement for the subject(s) in which they are assigned to teach. Online instructional programs have taken on many forms in the past few years. It is vital to determine how, and by whom, instruction is occurring. This will ensure the appropriate teacher is placed in the assignment. In addition, instructional programming options vary from courseware or software that acts as a digital textbook to interactive, face-to-face instruction via live stream. This can include “Open Educational Resources” when they are used by a teacher.

A first step in determining requirements for teacher certification is to review the definitions of “Teacher of Record” (TOR) and “Mentor” in the most current [Pupil Accounting Manual](#) (PAM) from the Michigan Department of Education. Both the TOR and Mentor must be employed or contracted by the district (see [MCL 380.1231](#)) or the individual may work regularly and continuously with the district through a contract with another entity or a contract with the individual directly (see [MCL 380.1230](#)).

Once the TOR is determined, the next step is to determine if that TOR is delivering instruction or facilitating instruction according to the following guidance:

- A. If a school utilizes a TOR to **provide instruction** using online learning services such as live streaming or online learning platforms (e.g., Blackboard, ANGEL, Moodle), or in conjunction with courseware or software (e.g., NovaNET, Read 180, PLATO), then the TOR must be endorsed in the corresponding grade level and subject area, or be appropriately permitted. A REP reporting code for the subject being taught should be utilized for this assignment (e.g., 000CC, 000EX).
- B. Where courseware or software is used for delivery of content, a school or district must at least provide a TOR who is employed by the school or district to **facilitate** learning through courseware or software. In this situation, the teacher must minimally hold a valid Michigan endorsement matching the grade level of the students using that courseware or be appropriately permitted. While appropriate endorsement in the discipline area is recommended, it is not required. The Registry of Educational Personnel (REP) reporting code 000ZW should be used for assignment as a facilitator.

See below to better understand the difference between instruction and facilitation.

Instruction*:

Assessing
Re-teaching
Guiding student work
Evaluating
Developing curriculum
Modifying lessons

Facilitation*:

Transferring grades
Referring students to content experts
Documenting completion
Providing classroom management
Supporting technology
Reporting programming developments/issues

*Note that guidance from the Office of State Aid and School Finance requires the TOR to take attendance in any situation.

In the case of staffing an alternative education classroom which utilizes online instructional programs, please refer to the [Alternative Education Placements](#) guide.

A mentor (as defined by the PAM) may **additionally** be assigned to the classroom to assist students. Once again, it is important to review the definition provided by the PAM. Since guidance from the Office of State Aid and School Finance requires a TOR to be assigned to a class, a school can therefore not assign a mentor without first assigning a TOR. While the definition of mentor as provided in the PAM may seem similar to the roles of a facilitator as described above, the descriptions of Instructor and Facilitator in this document only apply to someone already identified as a TOR.

A mentor does not need certification if and only if there already is a TOR assigned to the course who adheres to the definitions set forth in the PAM, and who is certified and endorsed according to their role either as instructor or facilitator, as defined above.

Additional supports can be found in the following resources:

- [Adherence and Decision Tree for Virtual and Online Learning](#)
- [Michigan Department of Education and Michigan Virtual Online Decision Tool](#)