



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 11, 2017

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

FROM: Venessa A. Keesler, Ph.D., Deputy Superintendent 
Division of Educator, Student, and School Support

SUBJECT: Seat Time Waiver Changes for the 2017-18 School Year

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). Seat Time Waivers (STWs) have historically existed as a result of this legislation. For the 2017-18 school year, the processes and relevant pupil accounting language will go through a transitional phase.

STWs in 2016-17 and Prior

Over the years, STWs have been governed by Department policy, as allowed under Section 101(9), which has been provided in detail through Section 5-O-B of the Pupil Accounting Manual. The purpose of STWs has been to allow additional flexibility related to virtual and project-based learning (PBL) options by waiving the traditional attendance requirements. STWs have been approved through a yearly application and reporting process in previous years. This process will cease to exist for the virtual aspect of STWs.

However, all school districts that were approved for a Seat Time Waiver for virtual options between 2011-12 and 2016-17 are still required to submit the year-end report, which is due on July 21, 2017.

- [Link to Grades 6-12 Seat Time Waiver Year-End Report](#)
- [Link to Grades K-5 Seat Time Waiver Year-End Report](#)

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Districts that were approved for additional flexibility to operate a PBL STW are also required to submit a year-end report. Districts that were approved for the PBL option will receive a link to a separate report that includes both virtual and project-based learning options and should only complete the report that is sent to them.

STW Transition Starting in 2017-18

Starting with the 2017-18 school year, the virtual aspect (including online and blended learning options) will be governed by Section 5-O-D of the Pupil Accounting Manual. The application and reporting procedure that has historically existed for STWs under Section 5-O-B will cease to exist for virtual pupils in this school year. 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.

Section 5-O-B of the Pupil Accounting Manual will only continue to govern the project-based aspect of STWs for which an application and reporting process will still exist.

2017-18 Project-Based Learning and Offline Seat Time Waiver

Districts will continue to have the option of providing project-based learning (PBL) and offline seat time waiver programs to students during the 2017-18 school year. The application for the 2017-18 Project-Based Learning and Offline Seat Time Waiver is posted in the Seat Time Waiver section of www.techplan.org. Further information and instruction is available on the application.

Contacts

For questions relating to the programmatic or process related aspects of this transition, please contact Eric Lipinski (lipinskie@michigan.gov). For questions related to pupil accounting, please contact Brian Ciloski (ciloskib@michigan.gov).

cc: Michigan Education Alliance
Michigan Pupil Accounting and Attendance Association