

31o FAQ – 2022-2023

For clarifying questions, please email: MDE-31o@michigan.gov

The legislated recommended ratios are as follows:

Psychologist 500:1

Social Worker 250:1

Counselor 250:1

Nurse 750:1

**If a district [public school, public school academy (PSA), or Intermediate School District (ISD)/Regional Education Service Agency (RESA)] has fewer total students than the legislated ratios, enrollment becomes the primary driving factor. An entity is not disqualified for not having a “minimum number” of students.

Definitions

Application/applying/apply: The process of giving the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) the names, credentials, annualized costs, and other required information so that MDE can review and award a Grant Award Notification to be able to disburse the funds to applicants.

Reporting/report: The process of giving MDE the names, credentials, annualized costs, and other required information of **positions hired or retained from the prior year’s application** so that MDE can award the current year’s disbursement amount.

Year 1: This is referring to the hiring dates between July 1, 2021, and March 1, 2022.

Year 2: This is referring to the hiring dates between March 2, 2022, and March 1, 2023.

Year 3: This is referring to the hiring dates between March 2, 2023, and March 1, 2024.

District: a public school, PSA, and ISD/RESA

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ISDs/RESAs

The legislative language was changed this year to include ISDs/RESAs as eligible for 31o funds. However, it still holds that the ISDs/RESAs cannot use 31o funding to replace Federal Special Education funding. These funds are to be used to fund new positions or increase Full Time Equivalent (FTE), not supplant existing positions or other state funding.

Year 1: ISDs can **report** positions hired between July 1, 2021, and March 1, 2022, that began servicing students by June 30, 2022, for 100% of the **annualized costs for a full year (salary + benefits)**. ISDs will also **report** those positions they were able to retain from the 2021-2022 school year as of July 1, 2022, for 66% of the annualized costs. Both these actions will take place in the [MILogin for Third Party](#) Grant Electronic Monitoring System (GEMS) portal in October each year.

Years 2 & 3: ISDs can **apply** for new positions according to the chart on page 7.

Districts

Districts who retained hires according to the chart on page 7 can **report** those positions for a percentage of the **annualized costs for a full year (salary + benefits)**. This action will take place in the [MILogin for Third Party](#) GEMS portal in October each year.

For new positions hired according to the chart on page 7, districts can **apply** in NexSys for a percentage of the annualized costs.

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Applying

Can private schools apply?

Private schools are not eligible for 31o funding.

Is there a deadline for districts to submit their application?

Yes, there will be an **application** portal in NexSys after March 2, 2023 for those districts wishing to use 31o funds for new hires made between March 2, 2022, and March 1, 2023.

What is the process for reviewing submitted applications?

MDE will review submitted **applications** to ensure they meet the requirements of the legislative language. If MDE sees something in the **application** that does not meet intent, MDE may ask for further clarification or adjustments and applicants will be notified in NexSys to make those modifications.

In applying for 31o funds, can a district amend the application later if it is before deadline?

Amendments can occur at any point throughout the application window.

Amendments cannot be made after the application closes. Approved **applications** will see funds disbursed on the schedule in the chart above.

In applying for the 31o funds, does the district count federally funded special education positions in the number of providers?

If a district has providers that are **fully funded with federal special education funds**, they are not counted. Also subtract the number of students being served by these providers from the overall school count in the application.

For example, if a district has 2,000 total students, with 200 students served by 10 fully federally special education funded providers, the number reported for this application is 1,800 students. This represents the ratios more equitably. Districts could have 14 total providers (10 of which are fully federally funded); if MDE were to go strictly on number of students and providers, the ratio would be 2,000:14 or about 143:1. However, those 4 providers are serving 1,800 students or a ratio of that population of 450:1, while the other population is 20:1.

If districts are hiring a position where all those same types of providers are serving all students, then please include the total enrollment numbers when showing the need for that position.

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The district has an existing opening for a service provider for special education needs. Could they apply for these funds to fund this position?

The 31o funds for these positions would not have any restrictions on students served. However, MDE recommends checking with the Special Education rules and regulations to see if districts could fully fund a special education position with non-federal funds and to ensure that this is not a supplanting situation.

Is this grant only for new FTE Positions?

No, this funding is for new positions hired between the dates listed on the chart above. Funding will be dispersed according to that chart. New positions could include a newly created position, filling an opening caused by a retirement or resignation, or increasing an FTE from part-time to a 1.0 FTE. The additionally added portion of the part-time FTE to a full FTE is what districts could use 31o funds for (increasing from a 0.4 FTE to a 1.0 FTE would mean 31o can fund the newly added 0.6 FTE).

When a district applied for 31n from the local ISD, they were required to participate in Medicaid. Will that be a requirement for 31o?

This is **not a requirement** for 31o.

In the Michigan Complied Law (MCL), under sections 3a-d, are districts more likely to gain the funding by being closer or farther from those stipulations?

Districts are responsible for monitoring provider-to-student ratios as they are considering hiring positions to be funded by 31o. For example, if a district **applies** for an additional social worker, but adding that provider puts the district far below the legislated ratio, MDE may not fund that position. If there any questions about a scenario and an acceptable ratio, please email MDE-31o@michigan.gov.

Who can districts hire with these funds?

Each position has certain licensure or certificate requirements that **must be followed**.

Each provider type **must not go beyond** their scope of practice as defined by their respective licensure or certification.

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Please note: It is within a district's best interest, for the sake of liability purposes, to require anyone hired to be school certified within the first 24 months of employment if they are not already school certified.

For Psychologists, the following options are allowable:

- School Psychologist Certificate – preferred
- Preliminary School Psychologist Certificate
- Psychologist (Doctoral License)
- Psychologist (Doctoral Educational Limited License)
- Licensed Master's Psychologist
- Limited Licensed Master's Psychologist, under the supervision of a Doctorate-level Psychologist

For Counselors, the following options are allowable:

- School Counselor License (SCL) - preferred
- Michigan Teaching Certificate with the School Counselor (NT) endorsement
- Preliminary School Counselor Credential (PSCC)
- Temporary School Counselor License (TSCL)
- Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)
- Limited Licensed Professional Counselor (LLPC), under the supervision of an LPC

For Social Work, the following options are allowable:

- School Social Worker (SSW) – preferred
- Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW)
- Limited Licensed Master Social Worker (LLMSW)
- Licensed Bachelor Social Worker (LBSW)
- Limited Licensed Bachelor Social Worker (LLBSW)

For Nurses, the following options are allowable:

- School Nurse Certification – preferred
- Nurse Practitioner (NP)
- Registered Nurse (RN)
- Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN), under the supervision of a Registered Nurse

Can districts contract through a third party for these positions?

Yes, if the providers have the credentials/licensures as stated above (psychologist, social worker, counselor, and nurse).

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Funding

What are the salary caps from the Bureau of Labor and Statistics for the four provider types?

	Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Median Annual Wage (50th percentile)
Clinical, Counseling, and School Psychologists	\$ 76,731
Registered Nurses	\$ 76,710
Social Worker	\$ 49,254
School Counselors	\$ 49,296

Is there a reporting requirement to maintain funding from Year 1?

Yes, districts will need to **report** whether the hires made in Year 1 (between July 1, 2021, and March 1, 2022) are still employed in Year 2.

How long do districts have to expend the funds?

This is a 3-year work project. If there are carry-forward funds after Year 1, those **must** be **spent first in Year 2**.

How long does the district have to commit to the new FTE position? What if the entity cannot afford to keep the position without the funding?

The funding is for 3 years. Year 1 = 100%, year 2 = 66%, year 3 = 33%. If the district is applying to hire an FTE, they are expected to fully fund the FTE starting in the 4th year. It is the expectation that it will remain funded after the 3rd year.

What if a district was unable to apply in Year 1 of the grant and would like to apply this year? What does funding look like in this case?

Funding for 31o is on a diminishing scale. If districts were unable to hire by March 1, 2022, to receive funds in Year 1, they could **apply** in NexSys for 31o funding if they hired a position between March 2, 2022, and March 1, 2023. In Year 2 funding will be 66% of the **annualized costs for a full year (salary + benefits)**. Awards will remain 66% of annualized costs in Year 2 and 33% of annualized costs in Year 3 regardless of when a district begins receiving funds.

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A district that received funds in Year 1, however, and made additional qualified hires after March 1, 2022. Can the district apply for funding to help cover the costs of those hires in Year 2 of the grant?

Yes, however, this hire will be on the diminishing scale (see following chart). For hires made in Year 2 (between March 2, 2022, and March 1, 2023), recipients will receive 66% of the **annualized costs for a full year (salary + benefits.)**

Position Hire Date	Begins Servicing Students	100%	66%	33%
Between July 1, 2021, and March 1, 2022	Between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022	Paid Spring 2022	Paid Fall 2022	Paid Fall 2023
	Between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023		Paid Fall 2022	Paid Fall 2023
	Between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024			Paid Fall 2023
Between March 2, 2022, and March 1, 2023	Between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023		Paid Spring 2023	Paid Fall 2023
	Between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024			Paid Fall 2023
Between March 2, 2023, and March 1, 2024	Between July 1, 2023, and June 30, 2024			Paid Spring 2024

A district is considering using these funds along with other funding sources to braid fund (split fund) service providers. The district would be applying for 4 FTEs and would really be hiring 4 new people and that’s how we would be applying for the funding. However, the funds would go towards partially funding all the other positions. Is this allowable?

Yes, districts are not supplanting. Districts are simply restructuring how they are using their existing funding streams in conjunction with this funding stream and are still hiring 4 new FTEs. Districts should consider how they are going to maintain this level of effort beyond the 3 years of 31o funding.

What if a district contracts through the ISDs/RESAs for their providers? Do they apply for the funding and hire?

If a district applied for funding under 31o and sent the funding to the ISD, the district remains responsible for those hires for which Year 1 funding was received. The district would continue to report retention of those Year 1 hires and continue to send the funds to the ISD/RESA in Year 2 and in Year 3.

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However, now that ISDs are eligible to receive 31o funding they can hire and contract with local districts to provide new providers to districts. To do this, they would need to request funds using the enrollment of the students within the contracted district.

What happens if a district cannot hire providers by the March 1, deadline?

The district could apply for funds for any positions hired between the deadlines shown on the chart above, knowing that the disbursement would be the percentage noted of annualized costs.

Is it a requirement of these hired positions that these individuals are ONLY providing direct services to students?

There is no requirement that the individual “ONLY” provides direct services to students, but it is expected that most of their FTE is spent providing direct services to students. Some ways that districts can use these service providers would include, but are not limited to, one on one and small group services, case management, student behavior meetings, and other job-related activities. Remember, each position **must stay within their scope of practice.**

Does MDE expect to be able to fully fund all the applications that are submitted?

MDE cannot anticipate the number of applications, the amount of funding districts will be requesting, or the number of providers hired. Given the amount of appropriation, the legislative language requirements, and provider shortages, it is anticipated that MDE will be able to fund all applications without needing to prorate.

In subsection 6 of the legislation, however, it does state that if all the applications that are accepted request more than the appropriation, there will be prorated funding on an equal percentage basis. MDE would not know final amounts until after the 2023 **application** deadline.

If a new hire works only a partial year for Year 2 (2022-2023), is the funding only paying out a portion of the 66% funding?

Districts will receive the full 66% of the submitted **annualized costs for a full year (salary + benefits)** in the second year even if the position is not filled for the entire year. Districts will then receive 33% for those positions that are retained in Year 3.

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If a new hire is a partial FTE and works only a partial year for Year 2 (2022-2023), is the funding only for a portion of the 66% funding?

The software will do the calculations. Districts will submit the amount of FTE in one column, the **annualized salary costs**, as if it were a 1.0 FTE in another column, the **annualized benefits costs** as if it were a 1.0 FTE in another column. The calculation of **(salary + Benefits) * FTE * 0.66** will be performed by the software and the amount will be inserted into the last column. An example would be

Amount of FTE	Annualized Salary as if it is a 1.0 FTE	Annualized Benefits as if it is a 1.0 FTE	Total funds requested per provider
0.6	49,254	36,000	NOT entered by the applicant, yet is auto calculated by performing $0.6 * (49,254 + 36,000) * .66$

Can a district use grant funds after Year 3 to fund staff?

MDE does not anticipate any districts having funds left over from previous years' funds to use after Year 3. If that should happen, however, the funds must be used first in the following year.

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Disbursement of Funds

Is there a deadline to award districts the money if they meet the application standards?

After the **application** deadline, official Grant Award Notices (GANs) and funding disbursements will be made to districts in late Spring of 2023.

A district hired positions for the 2022-2023 school year and were paid 66% on those costs. For the 2023-2024 school year, those positions' salaries have risen because of steps or Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs). Will they be paid on those new salary amounts?

No. The language is clear that districts will report their **annualized costs (salary + benefits) for a full year** and that is what MDE will use for calculating payments for the remainder of the program. Payment will be based on:

1. **Annualized** costs for **salaries** reported or the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported cost for that position type (whichever amount is smaller) **plus** the estimated annualized cost for **benefits** for that position type.
2. Example: In June of Year 1, a district received \$60,000 for Mrs. Jones who is a social worker. Mrs. Jones is retained and working in Year 2 as a social worker. The district reports those same amounts for Mrs. Jones in October of Year 2 and will receive \$40,000 (66% of \$60,000) in the fall of Year 2. The district **will not** give any new salary amounts for Mrs. Jones.

What would payment look like if a district hires a provider on March 2, 2022, versus January 4, 2023?

Regardless of when the position is hired (between March 2, 2022, and March 1, 2023), districts will receive 66% of the **annualized costs (salary + benefits) for a full year**. The award amount for the **salary** portion will be adjusted down if it is more than the wage (**salary**) data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). MDE will disburse payments based on the **annualized costs (salary + benefits) for a full year** as submitted by the district, or the reduction of the salary portion based on the BLS. If the hire date is later in the fiscal year, MDE suggests using the excess salary funds to help offset the costs of retaining the position in the following year.

When can districts expect to be paid for the costs of the providers they have been able to hire? How will funds be disbursed?

For districts and ISDs that **report** hires that were retained from Year 1, funds will be disbursed in Fall of 2022.

For districts and ISDs that are **applying** for new hires made between March 2, 2022, and March 1, 2023, funds will be disbursed in Spring 2023, after the April 30 **application** window closes. In both cases, funds will be disbursed through the State Aid Management System (SAMS).