

FAQ for Section 21f of the State School Aid Act (MCL 388.1621f)

Developed by the Michigan Department of Education and Michigan Virtual University

3. Under Section 21f, how many online courses may an eligible student enroll in at one time?

With the consent of the student's parent or legal guardian, a student may enroll in up to two online courses as requested by the pupil during an academic term, semester or trimester. Consent of the parent or legal guardian is not required if the student is at least age 18 or is an emancipated minor.

4. Can a district deny a student request to enroll in an online course?

Yes. In addition to cost limits described in question #10, there are five approved specific reasons for denial, including:

1. the student has previously gained the credits provided from the completion of the online course
2. the online course is not capable of generating academic credit
3. the online course is inconsistent with the remaining graduation requirements or career interests of the student
4. the student does not possess the prerequisite knowledge and skills to be successful in the online course or has demonstrated failure in previous online coursework in the same subject
5. the online course is of insufficient quality or rigor. If a district denies a student enrollment because the online course is of insufficient quality or rigor, the district shall make a reasonable effort to assist the student to find an alternative online course in the same or similar subject that is of acceptable rigor and quality.

5. Is there an appeal process if a district denies a student's request to enroll in an online course?

Yes, a student and his or her parents may appeal the denial by submitting a letter to the superintendent of the intermediate school district (ISD) in which the student's educating district is located. A response to the appeal must be issued within 5 days after it is received.

9. Are districts required to pay the costs of online course enrollments for their students?

Yes, with limits; see question #10. Section 21f requires districts to use their foundation allowance or per pupil funds calculated in the State School Aid Act to pay for the expenses associated with the online course(s).

10. What is the limit on the costs that districts are required to cover for online course enrollments?

Districts are not required to pay more than 1/12th of the district's foundation allowance or per pupil payment as calculated in the State School Aid Act for a semester course, or more than 1/18th of the district's foundation allowance or per pupil payment as calculated in the State School Aid Act for a trimester course. For example, using the state's minimum foundation allowance of \$7,076 for the 2013-14 school year, a semester course could not exceed \$589 and a trimester course could not exceed \$393. These numbers are based on the state's minimum foundation and could be higher based on each district's per pupil allocations.

11. What kind of access to technology does a district need to provide students enrolled in online courses?

A student enrolled in an online course must be provided the same rights and access to technology in his or her educating district's school facilities as all other pupils enrolled in the district. The educating district is the district that counted the pupil in membership during the Fall or Spring of the current school year.

13. Can enrollments in online courses generate an increase in a district's full-time equivalent count for students?

No, under Section 21f, the enrollment of a student in one or more online courses cannot result in a pupil being counted as more than 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) pupil.

28. Is a district allowed to deny a student enrollment in an online course if the cost of the online course exceeds 1/12th or 1/18th of their foundation allowance?

Yes, the district may deny a student enrollment request in an online course if the cost of the online course exceeds 1/12th or 1/18th of the district's foundation allowance.

36. Under Section 21f, are school districts required to honor student/parent requests to enroll in online courses beyond a full student course load?

No, under Section 21f, the enrollment of a student in one or more online courses cannot result in a pupil counting for more than 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) pupil. Districts are not obligated to provide a student with a course load that exceeds a full-time schedule.