



STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING


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STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 21, 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: Reminder of Seat Time Waiver Changes for the 2017-18 School Year
and Extension of Project-Based Learning Option

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 pursuant to this legislation. For the 2017-18 school year, the processes and relevant pupil accounting language are transitioning.

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 where appropriate. STWs have been approved through a yearly application and reporting process in previous years. This process has ceased to exist for the virtual aspect of STWs in 2017-18.

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. *Districts that had previously only received a virtual seat time waiver, who wish to provide an offline program through a seat time waiver, such as a project-based learning program, will need to apply for a separate offline program seat time waiver.*

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STW Transition Starting in 2017-18

Starting with the 2017-18 school year, virtual programs that in prior years relied on a seat time waiver (including online and blended learning options) will now be governed by Section 5-O-D of [the Pupil Accounting Manual](#) (PAM).

Extension of the 2017-18 Project-Based Learning and Offline Seat Time Waiver Application Window

Districts 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. Districts that were approved for a PBL STW in the past do not need to reapply. Districts offering PBL programs that are not changing traditional attendance requirements do not need to apply.

We urge districts that offer non-virtual (offline), self-scheduled learning programs, such as some shared time partnership programs, verify that the district has received a PBL STW from the Department that allows them to offer and receive funding for their program. To provide this type of programming (outlined in Section 5-O-B of the [PAM](#)), an application must be submitted by the extended deadline **October 2, 2017**. The application is posted in the 'Seat Time Waiver' section on www.techplan.org.

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