

GUIDANCE FOR DETERMINING PUPIL INSTRUCTIONAL TIME FOR "VIRTUAL" CLASSES

Many school districts are offering non-traditional courses, such as classes via the Internet, which may not require regular attendance or the typical amount of "seat time" required of most classes included on a pupil's schedule. Computer or Internet courses in which pupils participate during the school day while in attendance in the school building pose little problem for pupil accounting because the pupils are in regular daily attendance. Such courses taken as a part of dual enrollment through a postsecondary institution also pose little problem since "seat time" and the location of the class are not issues in counting dual enrollment classes toward a pupil's membership. However, interest is growing in offering options to pupils to take *virtual* classes providing pupils with the flexibility to participate outside of the regular school day and/or off-site. In order to address this situation and provide guidance for districts in counting these classes and this time toward a pupil's full-time equivalency (FTE) for purposes of generating state aid, the following is being offered ON A PILOT BASIS FOR THE 2000-2001 SCHOOL YEAR. These are minimum criteria. Any district may choose not to offer these classes or to place greater restrictions on their high school students and/or on the courses offered than those provided here; that is the local district board's prerogative.

- These provisions will be permitted during this pilot period for high school pupils only (grades 9 - 12).
- Any course in which a pupil participates must be approved by the local district and must generate credit toward the pupil's diploma in order to count toward the pupil's membership.
- This type of class is limited to two courses per semester per pupil. (If the pupil is taking more than this limitation, only two per semester will count toward the pupil's membership.) In addition, the pupil must also concurrently be enrolled in and attending at least one course offered by the district in which credit is earned and regular attendance is required.
- There must be an on-site mentor teacher assigned to the pupil and the *virtual* course, who will be available to the pupil for assistance and to monitor the pupil's progress in the *virtual* course. The on-site mentor teacher would be responsible for reviewing any final exam or project that would indicate the pupil's success in the course. The course and the on-site mentor teacher will appear on the pupil's class schedule (even if regular attendance is not required).
- Each course will count as one class in the pupil's schedule and will generate that portion of an FTE membership that a comparable course offered by the high school would generate. This is similar to the pupil accounting for dual enrollment classes.

- Because a pupil's enrollment in the course will generate state aid, the district is required to pay associated tuition charges for the course similar to the tuition requirement for dual enrollment as described in Section 21b of the State School Aid Act. A district may choose to provide more financial support than the minimum described in that section.
- The pupil must enroll by and be in attendance on the appropriate count day (September or February) or during the 10-day / 30-day period during the class time designated for the course on the pupil's schedule. As with any pupil, actual attendance in at least one course during the school day is necessary to count toward the district or building's 75% attendance requirement.

In summary, the general guidelines listed above should assist a district in determining the pupil accounting requirements for counting this type of course toward a pupil's FTE membership. It must be kept in mind that **the majority of the decision-making regarding course quality and content, anticipated outcomes, approval of individual pupils to participate, and other issues that may be specific to a district or building will be the responsibility of the local district**, and that not all districts may choose to participate at this time. Activity in this area and its effect on pupil accounting practices will be evaluated periodically and may result in the pilot being extended and/or eliminated.

EMM/MDE 10/18/2000

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT - NEW SECTION 95 GRANTS and THE SECTION 101(11) EXCEPTION

New in state school aid beginning in FY2001 (for the 2000-2001 school year) are provisions involving teacher professional development. Section 95 provides \$ 10 million to reimburse districts and ISDs for the per them compensation paid to teachers for professional development programs meeting certain criteria. New language in Section 10 1 allows districts to elect to count up to 51 hours of teacher professional development as pupil instructional hours in order to fulfill the requirement of at least 1,098 hours of pupil instruction. The two provisions are mutually exclusive for each district. That is, a district that elects to count any teacher professional development time as pupil instructional hours is not eligible for the Section 95 professional development reimbursement program. AND A district that receives reimbursement funds under Section 95 may not count teacher professional development time as pupil instructional hours.

Following is additional information on these two provisions that should be helpful as districts revisit and finalize their calendars with these new items in mind.

Additional information concerning the 101(11) exception:

1. Each district is required to inform the Department of its decision to count teacher professional development time as pupil instructional time. **The Department will request the information so the district need not initiate the reporting process.** The current thought is that the Department will include a question to that effect in the DS-4168B form, 2000-2001 Planned Days and Clock Hours of Instruction, on which the districts report the number of days and hours of pupil instruction they plan to provide during the current school year. The form is usually made available in February and is due in April. On that form, the district will need to demonstrate that the combined number of hours of pupil instruction and teacher professional development meets or exceeds 1,098 hours and that the number of teacher professional development hours reported in this way does not exceed 51 hours.

2. Although the *hours* of teacher professional development may be counted as *hours* of pupil instruction and may be counted toward the required 1,098 *hours*, a *day* of teacher professional development does not count toward the required 180 days of pupil instruction.

3. A district may either use the exception in 101(11) and count teacher professional development time as pupil instruction time OR the district may request reimbursement under Section 95 for professional development. A district may not do both, even for different professional development sessions.

4. Because the teacher professional development time is being counted toward the instructional time requirement of 1,098 hours, that time must be accounted for in the same way as pupil instruction time. That is, actual start and end time must be recorded, and lunchtime cannot be included.

*Not described here is the \$110 million "teacher technology" initiative which may involve teacher professional development in the area of technology.

5. To count toward the 1,098 hours, the professional development time should be recognizable on the district calendar and take place either within the academic year or contiguous to the year. However, it may take place during evenings or weekends and still be countable. It may also take place during the week immediately preceding the start of school in the fall or immediately following the end of school in the spring.

6. In order for the teacher professional development session(s) to be countable toward the 1,098 hours, the teacher group participating should be a recognizable group reflected by the building or grade level calendar. For example, when the hours are reported, all 1st through 5th grade pupils may have been scheduled for 1,080 hours and the corresponding 1st through 5th grade teachers scheduled for 18 hours of professional development, meeting the required 1,098 hours. The actual pupil instructional hours vs. teacher professional development hours may differ by building and/or by grade level. However, teacher professional development time counted as instructional time may not exceed 51 hours for any building or grade level.

7. In calculating the FTE for a pupil in a district in which the teacher professional development time is being counted as instructional hours, the calculation should use a denominator of 1,098 and the time scheduled as teacher professional development should be assumed to be standard pupil instruction for purposes of the FTE calculation. For a part-time pupil, the class(es) in which the pupil is enrolled should be assumed to be provided during the time that the teacher professional development is being provided for purposes of calculating the FTE. (An example would be counting a 6th hour class as being held on a day on which the afternoon classes are replaced by teacher professional development.)

Additional information concerning the Section 95 \$10 million reimbursement program:

1. The professional development program for which the district is requesting reimbursement must meet three criteria:

- It must be required under Section 1527 of the Revised School Code.
- It must be provided during time that is not pupil instruction time (when the pupils are not scheduled to receive instruction).
- The district must not have elected to use the exception under Section 101 (11).

2. In order to request reimbursement, the current thought is that the districts will be provided a reporting form later in the school year on which to report the amount paid to the teachers for the per them compensation for the professional development programs meeting the criteria above. Most likely, the payments will not be made to the districts until very late in the school year. Further, because the total amount available is limited to \$10 million and the level of participation is, at this point, unknown, it is very likely that the -reimbursement amount will be prorated (that is, will be paid at less than 100% of what is reported.)

3. Although districts may provide teacher professional development programs in excess of the four days required in Revised School Code 1527, reimbursement will be limited to the four days since one of the criteria for eligibility under Section 95 is that the program is required under Section 1527.

4. To be eligible for reimbursement under Section 95, as long as the program meets the three criteria in Section 95 (identified above under item #1), the program can be offered anytime during the 2000-2001 school fiscal year for reimbursement from the \$10 million allocated for FY 2000-2001. That is, the program must have taken place between July 1, 2000 and June 30, 2001. However, the program cannot be held *at the same time* that pupil instruction is taking place. Examples of acceptable times include summer, weekends, evenings, and afternoons of school days on which pupils are in attendance only in the morning.

5. The Section 95 professional development reimbursement program is for teacher professional development programs only. It does not provide reimbursement for other (non- instructional staff) professional development.

6. The reimbursement under the Section 95 professional development program is for the per them compensation the district paid to the teachers for that time. Speaker fees, supplies, etc., are not considered payments to teachers and are, therefore, not included.

7. The amount paid per teacher under Section 95 is district-specific. That is, the amount paid by one district to its teachers (and, therefore, being requested for reimbursement under Section 95) may differ from the amount paid by and reimbursed to another district. Of course, the final Section 95 grant amounts are subject to proration.

8. Payments under Section 95 are made to the districts; the payments are not made to buildings or to the teachers themselves.

9. Public School Academies are considered "districts" under Section 95 and are eligible for reimbursement under that section.

ADDITIONAL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS CONCERNING THESE TOPICS CAN BE DIRECTED TO THE FOLLOWING STAFF. E-MAIL COMMUNICATION IS RECOMMENDED:

Section 10 1 (11) - teacher professional development time counted as pupil instruction - Elaine Madigan Mills, MadiganMillsE@state.mi.us.

Professional Development Requirements and Program Content; Revised School Code Sections 1526 & 1527 - Cheryl Poole, PooleCL@state.mi-us OR Frank Ciloski, CiloskiF@state.mi-us.

Eligibility for Section 95 reimbursement - any of the above.

Section 95 payment amounts and reporting mechanism - Elaine Madigan Mills, MadiganMillsE@state.mi.us.

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