THE STATE SCHOOL AID ACT OF 1979 (EXCERPT)
Act 94 of 1979

***** 388.1698 THIS SECTION IS AMENDED EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 1, 2022: See 388.1698.amended
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388.1698 Michigan Virtual University; Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute; Michigan Virtual School; online and blended educator professional development programs; virtual course offerings; home-schooled or nonpublic school student; report; advisory group; submission of budget; definitions.

Sec. 98. (1) From the general fund money appropriated in section 11, there is allocated an amount not to exceed $7,500,000.00 for 2021-2022 for the purposes described in this section. The Michigan Virtual University shall provide a report to the legislature not later than November 1 of each year that includes its mission, its plans, and proposed benchmarks it must meet, including a plan to achieve the organizational priorities identified in this section, in order to receive full funding for 2022-2023. Not later than March 1 of each year, the Michigan Virtual University shall provide an update to the house and senate appropriations subcommittees on school aid to show the progress being made to meet the benchmarks identified.

(2) The Michigan Virtual University shall operate the Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute. The Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute shall do all of the following:

(a) Test, evaluate, and recommend as appropriate new technology-based instructional tools and resources.

(b) Research, design, and recommend virtual education delivery models for use by pupils and teachers that include age-appropriate multimedia instructional content.

(c) Research, develop, and recommend annually to the department criteria by which cyber schools and virtual course providers should be monitored and evaluated to ensure a quality education for their pupils.

(d) Based on pupil completion and performance data reported to the department or the center from cyber schools and other virtual course providers operating in this state, analyze the effectiveness of virtual learning delivery models in preparing pupils to be college- and career-ready and publish a report that highlights enrollment totals, completion rates, and the overall impact on pupils. The Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute shall submit the report to the house and senate appropriations subcommittees on school aid, the state budget director, the house and senate fiscal agencies, the department, districts, and intermediate districts not later than March 31 of each year.

(e) Provide an extensive professional development program to at least 30,000 educational personnel, including teachers, school administrators, and school board members, that focuses on the effective integration of virtual learning into curricula and instruction. The Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute is encouraged to work with the MiSTEM council described in section 99s to coordinate professional development of teachers in applicable fields. In addition, the Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute and external stakeholders are encouraged to coordinate with the department for professional development in this state. Not later than December 1 of each year, the Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute shall submit a report to the house and senate appropriations subcommittees on school aid, the state budget director, the house and senate fiscal agencies, and the department on the number of teachers, school administrators, and school board members who have received professional development services from the Michigan Virtual University. The report must also identify barriers and other opportunities to encourage the adoption of virtual learning in the public education system.

(f) Identify and share best practices for planning, implementing, and evaluating virtual and blended education delivery models with intermediate districts, districts, and public school academies to accelerate the adoption of innovative education delivery models statewide.

(g) Provide leadership for this state's system of virtual learning education by doing the following activities:

(1) Develop and report policy recommendations to the governor and the legislature that accelerate the expansion of effective virtual learning in this state's schools.

(2) Provide a clearinghouse for research reports, academic studies, evaluations, and other information related to virtual learning.

(3) Promote and distribute the most current instructional design standards and guidelines for virtual teaching.

(4) In collaboration with the department and interested colleges and universities in this state, support implementation and improvements related to effective virtual learning instruction.

(5) Pursue public/private partnerships that include districts to study and implement competency-based technology-rich virtual learning models.
(vi) Create a statewide network of school-based mentors serving as liaisons between pupils, virtual instructors, parents, and school staff, as provided by the department or the center, and provide mentors with research-based training and technical assistance designed to help more pupils be successful virtual learners.

(vii) Convene focus groups and conduct annual surveys of teachers, administrators, pupils, parents, and others to identify barriers and opportunities related to virtual learning.

(viii) Produce an annual consumer awareness report for schools and parents about effective virtual education providers and education delivery models, performance data, cost structures, and research trends.

(ix) Provide an internet-based platform that educators can use to create student-centric learning tools and resources for sharing in the state's open educational resource repository and facilitate a user network that assists educators in using the content creation platform and state repository for open educational resources. As part of this initiative, the Michigan Virtual University shall work collaboratively with districts and intermediate districts to establish a plan to make available virtual resources that align to Michigan's K-12 curriculum standards for use by students, educators, and parents.

(x) Create and maintain a public statewide catalog of virtual learning courses being offered by all public schools and community colleges in this state. The Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute shall identify and develop a list of nationally recognized best practices for virtual learning and use this list to support reviews of virtual course vendors, courses, and instructional practices. The Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute shall also provide a mechanism for intermediate districts to use the identified best practices to review content offered by constituent districts. The Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute shall review the virtual course offerings of the Michigan Virtual University, and make the results from these reviews available to the public as part of the statewide catalog. The Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute shall ensure that the statewide catalog is made available to the public on the Michigan Virtual University website and shall allow the ability to link it to each district's website as provided for in section 21f. The statewide catalog must also contain all of the following:

(A) The number of enrollments in each virtual course in the immediately preceding school year.

(B) The number of enrollments that earned 60% or more of the total course points for each virtual course in the immediately preceding school year.

(C) The pass rate for each virtual course.

(xi) Support registration, payment services, and transcript functionality for the statewide catalog and train key stakeholders on how to use new features.

(xii) Collaborate with key stakeholders to examine district level accountability and teacher effectiveness issues related to virtual learning under section 21f and make findings and recommendations publicly available.

(xiii) Provide a report on the activities of the Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute.

(3) To further enhance its expertise and leadership in virtual learning, the Michigan Virtual University shall continue to operate the Michigan Virtual School as a statewide laboratory and quality model of instruction by implementing virtual and blended learning solutions for Michigan schools in accordance with the following parameters:

(a) The Michigan Virtual School must maintain its accreditation status from recognized national and international accrediting entities.

(b) The Michigan Virtual University shall use no more than $1,000,000.00 of the amount allocated under this section to subsidize the cost paid by districts for virtual courses.

(c) In providing educators responsible for the teaching of virtual courses as provided for in this section, the Michigan Virtual School shall follow the requirements to request and assess, and the department of state police shall provide, a criminal history check and criminal records check under sections 1230 and 1230a of the revised school code, MCL 380.1230 and 380.1230a, in the same manner as if the Michigan Virtual School were a school district under those sections.

(4) From the funds allocated under subsection (1), the Michigan Virtual University shall allocate up to $500,000.00 to support the expansion of new online and blended educator professional development programs.

(5) If the course offerings are included in the statewide catalog of virtual courses under subsection (2)(b)(x), the Michigan Virtual School operated by the Michigan Virtual University may offer virtual course offerings, including, but not limited to, all of the following:

(a) Information technology courses.

(b) College level equivalent courses, as that term is defined in section 1471 of the revised school code, MCL 380.1471.

(c) Courses and dual enrollment opportunities.

(d) Programs and services for at-risk pupils.
(e) High school equivalency test preparation courses for adjudicated youth.
(f) Special interest courses.
(g) Professional development programs for teachers, school administrators, other school employees, and school board members.

(6) If a home-schooled or nonpublic school student is a resident of a district that subscribes to services provided by the Michigan Virtual School, the student may use the services provided by the Michigan Virtual School to the district without charge to the student beyond what is charged to a district pupil using the same services.

(7) Not later than December 1 of each fiscal year, the Michigan Virtual University shall provide a report to the house and senate appropriations subcommittees on school aid, the state budget director, the house and senate fiscal agencies, and the department that includes at least all of the following information related to the Michigan Virtual School for the preceding state fiscal year:
(a) A list of the districts served by the Michigan Virtual School.
(b) A list of virtual course titles available to districts.
(c) The total number of virtual course enrollments and information on registrations and completions by course.
(d) The overall course completion rate percentage.
(e) In addition to the information listed in subsection (7), the report under subsection (7) must also include a plan to serve at least 600 schools with courses from the Michigan Virtual School or with content available through the internet-based platform identified in subsection (2)(b)(ix).

(8) The governor may appoint an advisory group for the Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute established under subsection (2). The members of the advisory group serve at the pleasure of the governor and without compensation. The purpose of the advisory group is to make recommendations to the governor, the legislature, and the president and board of the Michigan Virtual University that will accelerate innovation in this state's education system in a manner that will prepare elementary and secondary students to be career and college ready that will promote the goal of increasing the percentage of residents of this state with high-quality degrees and credentials to at least 60% by 2025.

(9) Not later than November 1 of each year, the Michigan Virtual University shall submit to the house and senate appropriations subcommittees on school aid, the state budget director, and the house and senate fiscal agencies a detailed budget for that fiscal year that includes a breakdown on its projected costs to deliver virtual educational services to districts and a summary of the anticipated fees to be paid by districts for those services. Not later than March 1 each year, the Michigan Virtual University shall submit to the house and senate appropriations subcommittees on school aid, the state budget director, and the house and senate fiscal agencies a breakdown on its actual costs to deliver virtual educational services to districts and a summary of the actual fees paid by districts for those services based on audited financial statements for the immediately preceding fiscal year.

(10) Not later than November 1 of each year, the Michigan Virtual University shall submit to the house and senate appropriations subcommittees on school aid, the state budget director, and the house and senate fiscal agencies a detailed budget for that fiscal year that includes a breakdown on its projected costs to deliver virtual educational services to districts and a summary of the anticipated fees to be paid by districts for those services. Not later than March 1 each year, the Michigan Virtual University shall submit to the house and senate appropriations subcommittees on school aid, the state budget director, and the house and senate fiscal agencies a breakdown on its actual costs to deliver virtual educational services to districts and a summary of the actual fees paid by districts for those services based on audited financial statements for the immediately preceding fiscal year.

(11) As used in this section:
(a) "Blended learning" means a hybrid instructional delivery model where pupils are provided content, instruction, and assessment, in part at a supervised educational facility away from home where the pupil and a teacher with a valid Michigan teaching certificate are in the same physical location and in part through internet-connected learning environments with some degree of pupil control over time, location, and pace of instruction.
(b) "Virtual school" means a full-time instructional program of virtual courses for pupils that may or may not require attendance at a physical school location.
(c) "Virtual course" means a course of study that is capable of generating a credit or a grade and that is provided in an interactive learning environment in which the majority of the curriculum is delivered using the internet and in which pupils are separated from their instructor or teacher of record by time or location, or both.


In subsection (1), as amended by Act 121 of 2001, the phrase “and for 2002-2003” was vetoed by the governor September 28, 2001.

For legislation increasing tax on cigarettes and dedicating a portion of increased revenue to state school aid fund, see 2002 PA 503, Imd. Eff. July 18, 2002.

For the transfer of powers and duties of the MiSTEM advisory council from the department of technology, management, and budget to the department of labor and economic opportunity, abolishment of the MiSTEM advisory council and the positions of executive director and executive assistant for the MiSTEM network, and creation of the MI-STEM Council within the department of labor and economic opportunity, see E.R.O. No. 2019-3, compiled at MCL 125.1998.

In subsection (1), as amended by Act 58 of 2019, the following phrase “and, for 2019-2020 only, from the talent investment fund money appropriated in section 11, there is allocated an amount not to exceed $1,075,000.00” was vetoed by the governor on September 30, 2019.