Cyber Schools

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Things that we will be discussing

- What is a cyber school?
- Pupil Accounting Requirements
- Deep-dive into Participation Requirement
- Practitioner Perspective
- Clinic Time

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What is a cyber school?

- It is a type of a public school academy.
- It is a separate from the authorizer and educational services provider.

- Per MCL 380.551(2)(e)
  - A school of excellence operated under section MCL 380.552(2).
  - That provides full-time instruction to pupils.
  - Through online learning or otherwise on a computer or other technology.
  - Where instruction and learning may be remote from a school facility.

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What is a cyber school?

- Modeled after a high-performing school or program.

- Must demonstrate experience in delivering a quality education program that improves pupil academic achievement.

- May develop and implement personalized, nontraditional, or flexible learning opportunities that include, but are not limited to, project-based learning or competency-based education.

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What about their teachers

- Cyber schools must utilized certificated teachers UNLESS
  - authorized by a state public university, may use a teacher who is a full-time faculty member employed by the state public university and who has been granted institutional tenure, or has been designated as being on tenure track
  - authorized by a community college, may use a teacher who is a full-time member of the community college faculty who has at least 5 years' experience at that community college in teaching the subject matter that he or she is teaching at the cyber school.
- They may utilized adults in addition to certified teachers to assist with student oversight.
- The requirements of Section 1231 apply if the cyber school directly hires teachers.

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Responsibility of teachers

What must teachers do?

- (i) Improving learning by planned instruction.
- (ii) Diagnosing the pupil's learning needs.
- (iii) Assessing learning, assigning grades, and determining advancement.
- (iv) Reporting outcomes to administrators and parents or legal guardians.

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Are there caps that apply to cyber schools?

- In addition to any cap that applies to a traditional district, the following also apply:
  - "Statewide" authorizers are limited to 15 cyber schools total.
  - "Regional" authorizers are limited to 1 cyber school each.
  - Not more than 2,500 students in the first year, not more than 5,000 in the second year, not more than 10,000 in subsequent years.
- 2% membership cap statewide.

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Other restrictions

- Shall not be located in a school district that has a grad rate over 75 for three recent school years.
- Shall not be organized by or have contractual affiliation with a church or other religious organization.
- Cannot enroll pupils part-time; if a district's board determines that a full-time pupil's schedule consists of six (6) courses, then no less may be scheduled.
  - May claim partial FTE if they elect to do so… Section 6(4)(n)

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What else is unique?

- May sell courses offered to its students to other public schools.
- They are required to track student participation for state aid purposes, which is in addition to ensuring 1,098 hours of instruction are provided. More on this later…
- They must offer each pupil's family a computer and subsidize the cost of internet access.

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What else is unique?

Reporting

- Cyber schools must submit a report to the department monthly on the number of pupils enrolled.
- At the end of the second school year, the cyber school must submit a report to the Department and legislature detailing the operation of the cyber school, providing statistics of pupil participation and academic performance, and making recommendations for any further statutory or rule change related to cyber schools and online learning in this state.
- A school of excellence may develop and implement new teaching techniques or methods or significant revisions to known teaching techniques or methods, and shall report those to the authorizing body and state board to be made available to the public. A school of excellence may use any instructional technique or delivery method that may be used by a school district.
- By November 1 of each year, the cyber school shall submit to the department a report that details the per-pupil costs of operating the virtual learning by vendor type and virtual learning model. The report shall include information concerning the operation of virtual learning for the immediately preceding school fiscal year, including information concerning summer programming.

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Student Enrollment

- Students in K through 12.
  - If the schools is not a K-12 initially, they must work toward operating all of grades 9 to 12 within 6 years after it begins operations.
- Depending on the type of authorizer, may not be required to enroll students statewide.
- Must allows pupils who were enrolled in the year preceding to continue unless the grade is not offered.
- May enroll students expelled under 380.1311(2).

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Student Enrollment

- Must use random draw if there are more applicants than seats.
- Priority given to
  - Siblings
  - Children of employees
  - Students from a public school where a matriculation agreement specifies priority.
  - If its authorizing body is a school district or intermediate school district, enrollment priority is given to pupils who reside in the school district or intermediate school district that is the authorizing body.

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Student Enrollment

- Except for a foreign exchange student, a school of excellence shall not enroll a pupil who is not a resident of this state.
- May not charge tuition.
- The student and parents must be provided with a parent-student orientation.
- Student are not required to be physically present or attendance in a classroom.

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Other requirements for membership

- Enrolled and participating in each scheduled course on count day.
  - Absent students follow the 10/30 day rule.
- Registered in all scheduled courses as of count day.
- Participation … a pupil's participation in the cyber school educational program is considered regular daily attendance…

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Participation

On count day for each course:

- Attended a live lesson.
- Documented login to lesson/activity.
- Teacher and student had subject oriented telephone conversation.
- Documented email dialog between teacher and student.
- Documented work between learning coach and student.
- A form determined between auditor and district/student.

OR

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Participation

… for a pupil enrolled in a cyber school and utilizing sequential learning participation means …

- a two-way interaction for one course per week for each week of the four (4) week count period. Two-way interactions must be relevant to the course progress or course content of one of the courses on the pupil's schedule.

OR

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Participation [*Sequential learning student cont.]*

For each scheduled course the student is currently working on, one of the following on count day:

- Documented attendance in a “live” virtual course.
- Documented completion of a course assignment.
- Documented completion of a course lesson, or lesson activity.
- Documented pupil access to an on-going lesson; this is not a login.
- Documented physical attendance on count day in each scheduled course may be used for pupils who will attend at least 50% of the instructional time for each scheduled course, onsite, face-to-face with the teacher of record.

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Participation [*Sequential learning student cont.]*

- Each scheduled course refers to the courses currently being attempted by the pupil, rather than every course on the pupil's schedule for the entire term.
- Must provide proof of payment for each course included on the pupil’s class schedule to the pupil membership auditor.
- Must create an educational development plan (EDP) that reflects the expected attempt dates for all schedule courses.

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Instructional Time Requirement

Are cyber schools bound to the instructional time requirements? What about attendance?

- A requirement that the cyber school will make educational services available to pupils for a minimum of at least 1,098 hours during a school year.
- … track a pupil's participation through attendance in the educational program offered by the cyber school **for the proportionate number of instructional hours from the date of enrollment of the pupil**.

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Instructional Time Requirement

- A cyber school cannot claim a pupil in membership if at the time of enrollment less than 1,098 hours of instruction can be provided to the pupil during the school year.
- This measure can be composed of a combination of the instructional time provided in another educational environment prior to a student transferring to the cyber school along with the instructional hours remaining in the cyber school's calendar.
- This does not prevent a district from enrolling a pupil who will not receive 1,098 hours of instruction if no membership will be claimed.

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Instructional Time Requirement

- Must have a method for tracking that pupils participated for the proportionate number of hours of instruction remaining in the school year based on the pupil's date of enrollment.
- A cyber school must provide the pupil membership auditor with documentation of the tracking method and a sample report for review.

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Instructional Time Requirement

The following calculation is used to verify that the cyber school's educational services were made available to pupils for a minimum of 1,098 hours during the school year:

[# of days teachers are scheduled for instruction per year] x
[# of hours teachers are scheduled for instruction per day]

= [hours of educational services available to pupils per school year]

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Instructional Time Requirement

A pupil schedule must provide full-time instruction during the school year.

Example of a district that provides six (6) courses as part of its full-time schedule:

[((min. per lesson for course #1) x days of instruction per year)/60] +
[((min. per lesson for course #2) x days of instruction per year)/60] +
[((min. per lesson for course #3) x days of instruction per year)/60] +
[((min. per lesson for course #4) x days of instruction per year)/60] +
[((min. per lesson for course #5) x days of instruction per year)/60] +
[((min. per lesson for course #6) x days of instruction per year)/60]
= number of hours of pupil instruction scheduled per year

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What to expect when audited

Who audits the cyber school?

- The ISD auditor where the administrative office is located.

What will they ask for?

- Enrollment records for each pupil.
- A certified alpha list of enrolled pupils (MSDS).
- Board-approved graduation requirements.
- Board-approved attendance policy, which includes the number of classes required by the district to be considered a full-time pupil.

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What to expect when audited

What will they ask for?

- A course program or listing of approved courses, which are aligned to the approved instructional platform identified in the district's charter agreement.
- A class schedule for each pupil that is effective on the count day.
- Pupil attendance and participation records for the count period.
- An absence list starting on count day that includes each day through the 30-day count period and documentation of excused absences.

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