Online learning continues to grow at all levels, from kindergarten to graduate school. Increasingly, individuals of all ages and backgrounds are leveraging the power of the internet to informally learn more about photography, travel, art, history or a new language. In addition, record numbers are pursuing online degrees or certificate programs as part of their formal education.

More than 10 years ago, Michigan adopted the nation’s first online learning requirement for high school graduation. This policy recognizes the importance of teaching students how to learn effectively in new environments, which is essential for future learning. From an infrastructure standpoint, we have witnessed many exciting changes, including expanded access to smartphones, tablets, fully networked schools and free Wi-Fi services in many communities.

It has never been easier for K-12 students to enroll in online courses provided by local schools, intermediate school districts, postsecondary institutions, private companies and nonprofit organizations. Through support from local schools, public and nonpublic students can access a growing variety of online courses, ranging from anthropology to business ethics to computer programming.

The choices are growing, and online course enrollments have increased exponentially. Unfortunately, academic success hasn’t always kept pace and too many students are failing online courses. Online learning can be a powerful option to help students address a variety of needs, but a large number of schools appear to only use this innovative delivery model for low-achieving students. Others have not developed sufficient internal systems to support students enrolled in online courses.

We believe local boards of education can play a larger policy role to improve the effectiveness of their districts’ online learning programs. To that end, the Michigan Association of School Boards and Michigan Virtual have partnered to create this practical guide to help introduce school board members to the key policy considerations and best practices of K-12 online learning.

We hope you find this guide beneficial in answering your basic questions and is helpful when you need additional references and resources for more in-depth study.

Don Wotruba
Executive Director
MASB

Jamey Fitzpatrick
President & CEO
Michigan Virtual
ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide has been prepared by the Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute®, with review and support from the Michigan Association of School Boards, to acquaint school board members with K-12 online learning. The guide includes general information about K-12 online learning, successful attributes of online learners and online programs, and Michigan-specific requirements that all districts need to abide by. It also references many practical resources for more in-depth study.

While Michigan has a few cyber schools — schools that typically deliver 100% of their instruction online — the majority of online learning is delivered by traditional public schools who are supplementing their face-to-face offerings with online enrollments where students can take a small number of online courses as part of their class schedule. This guide focuses primarily on supplemental online learning, though much of the information applies equally to full-time online programs and schools.

INTRODUCTION

Research has shown that online learning is academically effective and can provide meaningful alternatives for students who need greater flexibility with their education, due to individual learning preferences, health conditions, employment responsibilities, lack of success with traditional school environments or to pursue advanced coursework. Michigan policy leaders have nurtured an environment to foster more options and expanded choices for students and online learning. Many of these policies were created to allow students to accelerate and personalize their learning.

Unfortunately many online programs implemented by districts are showing less than desirable student outcomes. For the past several years, the statewide pass rate for online courses has been about 60%.¹

The students that schools are enrolling in online courses tend not to be those looking to get ahead, but rather those who are struggling academically in their face-to-face courses. Data show that on average these students continue to struggle in online courses, and in some districts struggling students are being provided with large numbers of online enrollments. For instance, in the 2015-16 school year, there were over 7,800 students who took five or more online courses and failed every online course they took.²

Local boards of education play a key role in interpreting state guidelines and developing local policies that reflect their community standards. With the information in this guide, school board members can help craft online learning programs in their districts that better achieve the desired student-learning outcomes.


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An online or virtual course is defined in the State School Aid Act as:

>a course of study that is capable of generating a credit or a grade and that is provided in an interactive learning environment where the majority of the curriculum is delivered using the internet, and in which pupils may be separated from their instructor or teacher of record by time, location or both.³

It is important to note that some online courses do not include an embedded instructor — schools instead assign a local teacher as the teacher of record. Online courses without an embedded instructor appear to work best for students who have demonstrated independent learning skills or have significant interest in the content area of a particular course.

Online learning is also being leveraged by districts to provide professional development opportunities for school personnel. Through online learning, districts are finding solutions that limit the amount of time teachers have to be out of the classroom, as well as individualizing the professional learning opportunities to align with the professional development needs of each staff member.

Because online learning is still new to many school staff and students, it is common for there to be misunderstandings about online courses — specifically how they are similar to and different from face-to-face learning. For example, a common misconception is that online courses are easier. Certainly some online courses are less challenging than what a student experiences face-to-face, but several years of data collected from end-of-course surveys indicate students often report online courses to be at least as challenging — if not more so — than what they experience in their face-to-face courses. This tends to be because the student has to learn the same content knowledge as in the face-to-face course, but in an unfamiliar learning environment; students have to develop skills for navigating the online course, self-regulation strategies for staying on pace to complete the course and new ways of asking for help when they have a question, all without being in the same physical location as their online teacher.

Many online learning experiences provide students with the same learning opportunity as face-to-face instruction, but with a different delivery method. In online instruction, students are given the chance to work one-on-one with their instructor such that both can focus on the individualized needs of that student. Students are able to work at their own pace, allowing them to have ownership in their learning. This is not always possible in a face-to-face classroom. — Online Teacher
DEFINITIONS / KEY TERMS

There are some commonly used words or phrases that may be helpful when engaging in discussions about online learning.

Blended Learning
The Christensen Institute defines blended learning as a formal education program, in which a student learns 1) at least in part through online learning, with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace; 2) at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home; and 3) the modalities along each student’s learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience.

Mentor
An on-site mentor monitors student progress and supports the students as they work through an online course, serving as the liaison between the student, online instructor, parents and administrators. Some mentors are paraprofessionals while others fill different roles in the school such as counselor or media center director. In most cases, the mentor must have a Michigan teaching certificate and be employed by the school district.

Learning Management System (LMS)
The password protected LMS houses the online course. Through the LMS, students access courses and related documents and activities; assignments are exchanged between student, the online instructor and often the mentor; and communication among students and the instructor takes place.

Provider (also often referred to as a Vendor)
The provider is the source of the online course. The provider may be a school, a school district, a community college, Michigan Virtual™ or another third-party entity, including colleges, universities and private companies.

Credit Recovery
Some students choose or are assigned to online courses when they need to repeat a class they have failed that is required for their program or graduation.

Students want to learn online for a variety of reasons. The Foundation for Blended and Online Learning, along with Evergreen Education Group, published a report based on surveys, focus groups and interviews with students, along with other data. The report identified three broad reasons students pursued online and blended learning: 1) academics, 2) social-emotional health and safety, and 3) interests and life circumstances. Many schools and students use online courses for credit recovery. Others enroll in online courses that their school cannot or does not offer face-to-face; Advanced Placement (AP) courses are a common example because schools often do not have enough students to offer a face-to-face class for particular courses. Sometimes, students turn to online courses to overcome a scheduling conflict, and some use online courses for elective credit and personal enrichment — including taking courses over the summer.

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Students who have a successful, satisfying experience learning online tend to share several critical characteristics.

### Self-Motivation
The student has a strong desire to learn skills, acquire knowledge and fulfill assignments in online courses because of an educational goal and can maintain focus on that goal.

*This class was really hard for me. I would not recommend this to somebody that has a hard time learning by themselves or somebody who needs a class full of people to help them.*

### Academic Readiness
The student has the basic reading, writing, math and computer literacy skills to succeed in the class.

### Technologically Prepared
The student knows how to open, create and/or save a document; use various technology tools (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus, grammar checker, calculator); and identify various file formats (e.g., .docx, .xlsx, .pdf, .jpg).

### Good Time Management
The student creates and maintains a consistent study schedule throughout the semester and is able to do so without significant prodding from a teacher.

*I wish I had used my time wisely and used the pacing guide more. It helped me set specific due dates. I just didn’t work on my class as hard as I should have.*

### Effective Communication
The student knows when and how to ask for help and is able to clearly describe any problems she/he is having with the learning materials using email, texting and/or the telephone. This includes seeking help from the online instructor, a mentor, or even other students in the online course.

*I enjoyed the interaction with classmates in the form of discussion board posts that allowed us to debate and discuss our ideas. It allowed me to share my opinions with my peers and see different sides of situations.*

### Independent Study Habits
The student studies and completes assignments without direct supervision and maintains the self-discipline to stick to a schedule.

*I really like being able to relax and just work on my class and finishing my work early to the best of my ability.*

### Start With One to Two Courses
Students enrolled in traditional schools tend to perform better in their online courses when they only take one or two online courses at a time. Unless a student has already proven they can be successful taking one or two online courses, it is not advisable to provide them with more.

*I wish I had used my time wisely and used the pacing guide more. It helped me set specific due dates. I just didn’t work on my class as hard as I should have.*

*Good Time Management*

*Academic Readiness*

*Technologically Prepared*

*I really enjoyed doing the listening and speaking activities in my Japanese class. I felt like in a regular class I wouldn’t get to listen to such a fluent speaker so many times. I can literally just click the repeat button and keep speaking after the speaker. In class they only say it one to two times.*
SUPPORTS FOR SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS

Most K-12 students benefit from a structured learning environment that is well supported — whether in face-to-face classrooms or virtual learning environments. Successful online students tend to be surrounded by a team of adults who are focused on student success. Particularly, when students are taking the course for credit recovery, the role of each of these supports is even more important and often takes more time and effort to help students stay involved and on pace to successfully complete their courses.

Parents

Parents are an integral partner in the team that can affect student success. Their responsibilities may be a little different when their students are enrolled in online courses. Recent research involving interviews with online teachers and school-based mentors found that teachers and mentors believed that students would most likely succeed in online courses when parents/guardians:

1. Advised students on their course enrollments;
2. Monitored student performance and progress;
3. Motivated students to more fully engage in learning activities;
4. Organized and managed student learning at home; and
5. Assisted students as they worked on assignments.

The same research suggests that online programs might see an increase in parental engagement by:

1. Involving parents/guardians in online course enrollment decisions;
2. Educating parents/guardians about learning online and how they can support their students;
3. Maintaining regular contact with parents/guardians by inviting them to be involved in specific ways; and
4. Assisting parents/guardians in keeping up on their students’ academic performance by regularly providing student progress reports and offering an online parent portal, so they can easily track student engagement and performance.

Counselors

School processes differ in how the student gains access to online courses. Some schools have registrars. Others have mentors enroll students and, in many places, counselors fill that role. Whether this discussion takes place when the counselor and student are engaged in academic planning or as a student is being enrolled in courses for the next semester, reviewing important school information such as attendance, grades and test records is another important step in determining whether online learning is a good fit for each individual student — regardless of the reason for taking a course online.

Attention to a student’s motivation for enrolling in an online course can go a long way toward eventual success. Students are most successful when there is a genuine desire to succeed: e.g., if I pass this course, I will reach my goal of graduation, acceptance to a particular college, a desired occupation, etc. Conversely, students are more likely to fail an online course when there is little motivation: e.g., my counselor made me take this course; I don’t need this credit to graduate; it doesn’t matter if I pass or fail, so who cares?
SUPPORTS FOR SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS

Mentors

Many people have the misconception that online learners don’t have the benefit of the traditional human relationships established in the face-to-face classroom. On the contrary, the school-based mentor provides that important personal, usually face-to-face connection for students learning virtually: effective mentors work with the students every day, support them and build trusting relationships.

In some schools, mentors are part of the school’s multitiered system of support and do more than support online learning. They engage with others in the school, contributing to a vision of the whole student and his/her personalized learning. Mentors are part-time paraprofessionals, although mentors often fill other roles in the school, such as teachers, counselors, media center specialists and even administrators. Research has found that students who learned in a facilitated lab were almost twice as likely to pass their online courses as students who were not required to attend a lab. The most successful online programs tend to have someone who is devoted to mentoring online students full time. Regardless of who they are and what else they do, mentors are an indispensable adult who knows the student and provides perspective and support.

“Research has found that students who learned in a facilitated lab were almost twice as likely to pass their online courses as students who were not required to attend a lab. The most successful online programs tend to have someone who is devoted to mentoring online students full time.”

Online Teachers

While some models of online learning tend not to include an online teacher, including many credit recovery models just like in face-to-face settings, an online teacher can be instrumental in student success. Many teachers and students report that online learning offers the opportunity to develop closer relationships than a face-to-face environment.

While that may seem counterintuitive, consider that online students are asked to respond to all teacher questions, not just the few times they get called upon in class; also, in many cases, the student response is seen only by the teacher, not like a public classroom setting where their peers are listening and perhaps judging their responses. It is not surprising that teachers and students alike develop close relationships.
570 Michigan public school districts reported at least one virtual enrollment.

Over half of the 1,026 schools with virtual enrollments had 100 or more virtual enrollments.

Almost 91,000 Michigan K-12 students took at least one virtual course in 2015-16, totaling over 450,000 virtual enrollments.

Schools are disproportionately enrolling students in poverty into online courses. On average, schools tend also to be enrolling students who are struggling academically in their face-to-face courses or for a subject in which a student has failed rather than for advanced coursework or for a subject in which the student is proficient.

The overall pass rate for virtual courses was 58%, however, over half of the virtual learners — more than 45,000 students — passed every virtual course they took. The pass rate is low because of cases where students are being provided with large numbers of virtual courses without passing any of them. Restricting the number of virtual courses a student can take to one or two at a time until the student demonstrates successful completion might dramatically improve the statewide pass rate.

Some districts are clearly more effective in using virtual learning than others. Twenty-eight percent of districts had virtual pass rates of 90% to 100%.

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Research also suggests that Michigan adults are not very informed about Michigan’s online learning laws. A survey with 800 Michigan adults in the winter of 2016⁹ found that only 22% of those surveyed were aware of Michigan’s online learning graduation requirement and less than 40% were aware that middle school and high school students were allowed to take up to two online courses per academic term. Despite the lack of awareness, these same adults tended to hold a favorable view of online learning, including 80% indicating that it was very important (38%) or somewhat important (42%) for students in middle school and high school to have the option of enrolling in an online class at their local district. Seventy-one percent of respondents strongly agreed (39%) or somewhat agreed (32%) that their local school district should offer more online courses for middle and high school students.

**Michigan’s Online Learning Requirement**

As mentioned above, Michigan students are required to have an online learning experience in order to graduate from high school. This requirement was adopted in 2006 as part of the Michigan Merit Curriculum and was intended to prepare K-12 students for the digital world they will encounter in higher education, their future workplaces and in their personal lives.¹⁰ Schools were provided with flexibility in how they could fulfill the online learning requirement — in part due to the vast difference in technology access and readiness of schools in 2006. The options included:

1. Take an online course
2. Complete a meaningful online experience of at least 20 hours
3. Complete the meaningful online experience of at least 20 hours incorporated into the required courses of the MMC

While Michigan was the first state in the country with such a requirement, several other states have since followed suit.¹¹ These states have adopted more stringent requirements than Michigan, requiring students take an online course rather than have a 20-hour minimum experience.

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Section 21f of the State School Aid Act

Since 2013, the State School Aid Act\(^\text{12}\) has required Michigan public schools to honor parent or student requests for enrollment in up to two online courses per academic term or more if parents, students and school leadership agree that more than two are in the best interest of the child. Eligible courses for enrollment include those published in the student’s school district’s catalog of board-approved courses or from those in a statewide catalog of virtual courses.\(^\text{13}\)

The purpose of the statewide catalog of course offerings is to assist schools, parents and students in making informed decisions when selecting among the variety of online providers. Each course contains information such as:

\[\begin{array}{|l|}
\hline
\text{Syllabus} & \text{Description} & \text{Prerequisites} & \text{Course Outcomes} & \text{Course Structure} & \text{Required Assessments} & \text{Academic Support Available} & \text{Past Student Performance} \\
\hline
\end{array}\]


\(^{13}\) The Pupil Accounting Manual is available from http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/2017-18_PAM_599453_7.pdf
While the Act specifies some reasons a school district may choose to deny the parent or student request, the number of denial reasons are few and narrow in scope. Denial reasons include:

1. The pupil is enrolled in any grade K-5.
2. The pupil has previously gained the credits that would be provided from the completion of the virtual course.
3. The virtual course is not capable of generating academic credit.
4. The virtual course is inconsistent with the remaining graduation credits or career interests of the pupil.
5. The pupil has not completed the prerequisite coursework for the requested virtual course or has not demonstrated proficiency in the prerequisite course content.
6. The pupil has failed a previous virtual course in the same subject during the two most recent academic years.
7. The virtual course is of insufficient quality or rigor. A primary district that denies a pupil’s enrollment request for this reason shall enroll the pupil in a virtual course in the same or a similar subject that the primary district determines is of acceptable rigor and quality.
8. The cost of the virtual course exceeds 6.67% of the minimum foundation allowance for the current fiscal year, unless the pupil or the pupil’s parent or legal guardian agrees to pay the cost that exceeds this amount.
9. The request for a virtual course enrollment did not occur within the same timeline established by the primary school district for enrollment and schedule changes for regular courses.
10. The request for a virtual course enrollment was not made in the academic term, semester, trimester or summer preceding the enrollment. This subdivision does not apply to a request made by a pupil who is newly enrolled in the primary district.

The Act expressly prohibits districts from denying enrollment requests for reasons other than those mentioned above and those listed are optional — the district may choose not to block an enrollment request, even if one of the denial reasons may exist (for instance, a request from a student in grades K-5).
ONLINE LEARNING IN MICHIGAN

**District Responsibilities Under 21f**

Regardless of whether a district decides to provide their own online courses, the Act requires all Michigan school districts to:

- Include a link on the district’s website to the statewide catalog of online courses;
- Document parental consent before enrolling a student in an online course;
- Allow students from the district — with the exception of those mentioned on previous page — to take up to two online courses or more during an academic term;
- Pay the cost of the online course. Only if a course fee is in excess of 6.67% of the state’s minimum foundation allowance may a parent be asked to pay — and only for the excess amount. During the spring 2017 period, over 95% of course titles in the statewide catalog ranged from $250 to $400 per semester-length course with courses at the higher end usually representing Advanced Placement (AP) courses;
- Assign each student a mentor;
- Include the course(s) on the student schedule using the online course title as it appears in the district catalog or the statewide catalog;
- Provide online students with the same rights and access to technology as the district provides to all other students; and
- Grant academic credit for successful course completions, including toward graduation and subject area requirements.

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14 **Consumer Awareness Report – Cost Structure.** Available from https://media.mivu.org/institute/consumerawareness/coststructures.html
Districts may deliver online courses as part of the Act. Online courses offered may be restricted only to district students or can include district students and students statewide. For online courses restricted to in-district students, the district must:

- Ensure that each virtual course has been published in the district’s catalog of board-approved courses or published in the statewide catalog of virtual courses maintained by Michigan Virtual;
- Assign to each student a teacher of record; and
- Offer the virtual course on an open entry and exit method or aligned to a semester, trimester or accelerated academic term format.

If the virtual course is also offered to students outside of the district, the following additional requirements must be met:

- Provide Michigan Virtual with a course syllabus in a form and manner prescribed by Michigan Virtual for inclusion in a statewide catalog of virtual courses;
- Assign each student a teacher of record and provide schools with students from outside the district with the personnel identification code assigned by the Center for Performance and Information (CEPI) for the teacher of record;
- Ensure a course quality review is conducted for each course syllabus and submit the results of each review through the statewide catalog of online courses — including for courses offered in partnership with a third-party online course provider;
- Identify a single price for each course title; and
- Provide Michigan Virtual, not later than October 1 of each fiscal year, with the number of enrollments for each virtual course the district delivered and the number of those enrollments in which students earned 60% or more of the total course points.

Frequently asked questions (FAQ) about Section 21f of the State School Aid Act is published online to address particular nuances about the Act.

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16 A list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) about this section (21f) of the State School Aid Act is available from http://media.mivu.org/institute/pdf/21F_FAQs.pdf
Districts should be aware of the state rules for counting students in membership and the required documentation for verifying participation in virtual courses. These rules are communicated in Section 5-O-D of the Pupil Accounting Manual. This section also provides definitions and requirements for staff tasked with providing instruction and supporting learners in online environments. Each virtual enrollment must be assigned a "teacher of record," who is responsible for providing instruction, determining instructional methods for each pupil, diagnosing learning needs, assessing pupil learning, prescribing intervention strategies and modifying lessons, reporting outcomes and evaluating the effects of instruction and support strategies. The teacher of record may also coordinate the distribution and assignment of the responsibilities defined above with other teachers participating in the instructional process for the course. Requirements for a teacher of record include:

1. Holding a valid Michigan teaching certificate or a teaching permit recognized by the Department for the grade level being instructed through the virtual course. Note: The teacher must also hold a teaching certificate or teaching permit that is endorsed in the subject area of the course, and the teacher must be highly qualified if applicable.

2. The teacher of record must have a personnel identification code provided by CEPI.

3. The teacher of record must be employed by the district, as applicable under Section 1231 of the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1231)

Each virtual enrollment must also be assigned a mentor of record who is a professional employee of the district, monitors the pupil’s progress, ensures the pupil has access to needed technology, is available for assistance and ensures access to the teacher of record. A mentor may also be the teacher of record if the mentor meets the definition of a teacher of record and the district is the provider for the course.
SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK DISTRICT ADMINISTRATORS

Here are some examples of questions that may help facilitate conversations with district administrators about online learning options.

**Communication**
- How is the district communicating online learning options to parents and students?
- How and when are students expected to make a request for an online course?
- When were district websites and handbooks last reviewed for language about online learning?

**Online Providers**
- What online providers are used in the district, and how were these providers selected?
- What quality assurances do we have from providers about their alignment to Michigan standards and to nationally recognized course quality standards?
- How does the district budget for online courses provided by third-party providers?

**Online Providers (Cont.)**
- What steps does the district take to ensure that online students are able to be counted in membership and therefore eligible to receive state payment?
- What plan, if any, does the district have to offer full-time online programs (district virtual school) to their own students or others?
  - Do any plans include details about:
    - Contract requirements with third-party providers?
    - Student recruitment and information sharing campaigns?
    - Enrollment and student monitoring procedures?
    - Assurance of student count requirements?
    - Teacher effectiveness and overall student performance?
    - Program evaluation to ensure it is serving its intended purpose?
CONCLUSION

Many Michigan districts are implementing high-quality online learning options for their students — too many are not. The best practices and data shared in this guide can help school boards evaluate their online learning programs and take steps to improve student learning outcomes. Working alongside parents, students, school personnel and school board members can positively impact their districts’ online programs to improve learning and improve student lives.
Michigan Virtual and the Michigan Virtual Learning Research Institute have developed several guides and practical resources to support school administrators, counselors, teachers, parents, and students in response to stakeholder requests gathered through surveys, focus groups, customer feedback and conversations.

**Parent Guide to Online Learning**
[https://mvlri.org/resources/guides/parent-guide/](https://mvlri.org/resources/guides/parent-guide/)

This guide was prepared for parents and guardians to help students decide whether online courses are a good option for them. It includes the characteristics of a successful online learner, how to prepare for learning online and advice for parents.

**Student Guide to Online Learning**
[https://mvlri.org/resources/guides/student-guide/](https://mvlri.org/resources/guides/student-guide/)

Research shows that students who are well prepared and well supported for virtual learning do better in their classes. Most of the guide’s content comes from teachers, mentors and students involved in online teaching and learning.

**Teacher Guide to Online Learning**
[https://mvlri.org/resources/guides/teacher-guide/](https://mvlri.org/resources/guides/teacher-guide/)

The Teacher Guide to Online Learning is intended to support those new to teaching online.
Mentor Fundamentals: A Guide to Mentoring Online Learners
https://mvri.org/resources/guides/mentor-guide/
Mentors are critical partners in ensuring student success with virtual learning. This guide is based on the insight of experienced Michigan mentors and full of practical research- and experience-based best practices for school employees or parents who provide on-site support for online learners.

Access for All: Serving Students with Disabilities in Online and Blended Learning Environments
https://mvri.org/research/publications/access-for-all/
This resource provides strategies and guidelines for educators working with students with disabilities in online and blended courses. It is divided into sections about the needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing, blind or visually impaired; those with learning disabilities, emotional or behavioral disabilities, autism or intellectual disabilities; and those who have other health impairments. The report also provides an overview of accessibility versus accommodation, special education terminology and disability law, as well as 504 plans and individualized education plans.

Meeting the Needs of Students with Disabilities in K-12 Online Learning: An Analysis of the iNACOL Program, Course, and Teacher Standards
https://mvri.org/research/publications/meeting-needs-students-disabilities-k-12-online-learning/
This is the overview of another series of reports intended to help identify potential barriers that students with disabilities may face when learning online. The reports are a four-part analysis of the iNACOL standards for quality online teachers, courses and programs to identify improvements for the design of online courses and online programs, as well as the preparation of online teachers.
Supporting Online Learners: Michigan Mentor Program Case Studies
https://mvlri.org/research/publications/michigan-mentor-program-cs/

The case studies of 14 mentors in 10 Michigan schools illustrate the range of mentoring programs across the state and offer points of comparison for mentors, instructors, administrators, parents and students about alternative support structures and strategies for online learners. The report reveals the variety in staffing configuration, how mentor time is allocated, mentor preparation, mentor experience, program size and student demographics.

Michigan’s K-12 Virtual Learning Effectiveness Report 2015-16
https://mvlri.org/research/effectiveness-report/

The State School Aid Act requires Michigan Virtual to submit to the House and Senate appropriations subcommittees on state school aid, the state budget director, the House and Senate fiscal agencies, and the MDE a report highlighting virtual enrollment totals, completion rates and the overall impact of virtual learning on Michigan K-12 pupils.

Implementation Guidelines: Section 21f of the State School Aid Act
https://mvlri.org/resources/implementation-guidelines/

This publication explains the legislation and implementation related to the policies found in Section 21f of the State School Aid Act and identifies basic implementation decisions schools need to consider.

21f Tool Kit
https://micourses.org/resources/21f_Tool_Kit.html

Michigan Virtual, with input from the MDE, MASA and several other Michigan K-12 associations, created the Section 21f Tool Kit. The Tool Kit includes links to relevant sections of the Pupil Accounting Manual; draft letters for parents, school personnel and school board members; sample school board policy; and even sample surveys that can be used to gauge local interest in online learning.

OLOT – The Online Learning Orientation Tool
http://olot.mivu.org/

OLOT is a free, self-paced, web-based resource for students to increase their readiness for learning online. OLOT is intended to help students understand what online learning entails while introducing them to the skills and knowledge that are key to success in online learning. OLOT is compatible with any device, so it is widely accessible.
Online Learner Readiness Rubric
Counselors and teachers often use the *Michigan Virtual* Online Learner Readiness Rubric to help students understand what is required of a successful online learner. If adults supporting the student can identify areas in the rubric where the students are challenged, they can determine what needs to be addressed to best support students in those areas.

**National Standards for Online Learning**

iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Teaching
https://www.inacol.org/resource/inacol-national-standards-for-quality-online-teaching-v2/

iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Courses
https://www.inacol.org/resource/inacol-national-standards-for-quality-online-courses-v2/

iNACOL National Standards for Quality Online Programs
https://www.inacol.org/resource/inacol-national-standards-for-quality-online-programs/

ISTE Standards for Students
https://www.iste.org/standards/for-students

ISTE Standards for Educators
https://www.iste.org/standards/for-educators

ISTE Standards for Administrators
https://www.iste.org/standards/for-administrators