

Parent Guide to Online Learning



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Table of Contents

Why Online Learning	1
Definitions	2
First Things First	3
Making the Decision	4
Support	5
Other Considerations	5
Before You Decide	5
Before Enrolling	6
Statewide Catalog of Online Courses	6
Advice for Parents	7
Final Suggestions	7
Resources	8
FAQ for Section 21f of the State School Aid Act.....	8
Online Learner Readiness Rubric.....	11
Is Online Learning Right for Me?	12

Introduction

This guide has been prepared for parents, guardians, counselors, and others who want to help students decide whether online courses are a good option for them.

In the pages that follow, you will find information about:

- ✓ Online learning opportunities,
- ✓ Characteristics of a successful online learner, and
- ✓ How to prepare for learning online.

In 2006, the Michigan legislature put into place a policy that Michigan students have an online learning experience as a high school graduation requirement. In 2013, the State School Aid Act established that Michigan public school students in fifth through 12th grade (with the consent of parent or legal guardian) may enroll in up to two online courses during an academic session. The act also requires schools to cover the costs of the online courses. See the FAQ in the Resources section for more information.

Why Online Learning

Students take online courses for a variety of reasons. They may be full time online students, taking all their courses over the Internet, or they may be part time online students, that is, supplementing the courses they take at their school with online courses – including during summer. Many students use online courses for credit recovery when they have failed a class that is required for their program or graduation. Others take courses that their schools cannot or do not offer. Many students take Advanced Placement (AP) courses because there are not enough students in their school to offer a face-to-face AP class. Some use online courses for elective credit and personal enrichment.

Today's learning environments are changing, and national experts have published the following 10 attributes to describe Next Generation Learning models. The State Virtual School Leadership Alliance has identified how online learning can be used to support the 10 attributes. From the student's point of view, online learning is attractive because it is:

1. **Personalized** to my needs and learning goals. *When students select their courses, they take greater ownership.*
2. **Flexible** so that I can try different ways to learn. *Online learning allows scheduling to accommodate health, athletic, job and family circumstances.*
3. **Interactive and engaging** to draw me in. *Students meet people outside their community in a safe environment, and multimedia used in online learning provides different ways of learning.*
4. **Relevant** to the life I'd like to lead. *Students gain more experience using the 21st century technology tools used in college and in the workplace.*
5. **Paced by my own progress** measured against goals I understand. *Students can move faster or slower through assignments and track their own progress toward their goals.*
6. **Constantly informed** by different ways of demonstrating and measuring my progress. *Educational technology can measure and share student progress quickly.*
7. **Collaborative** with faculty, peers, and others, unlimited by proximity. *Students can access learning materials and resources – including local, state, and national experts – using online communication tools.*
8. **Responsive and supportive** when I need extra help. *Communicating outside the typical school day is supported by the online learning culture. Many students – and teachers – report they spend more time interacting online than in the face-to-face classroom.*
9. **Challenging but achievable**, with opportunities to become an expert in an area of interest. *Online learning reinforces lifelong learning skills and promotes information literacy and communication skills as well as thinking and problem-solving skills.*
10. **Available** to me as much as it is to every other student. *Online learning can direct the talents of some of the most skilled educators to the most underserved populations. A zip code does not have to determine learning options any more.*

Under the new legislation in Michigan, a district may deny student and parent requests to enroll in an online course if one or more of the following are true:

- ❑ The student has previously gained the credits provided from the completion of the online course;
- ❑ The online course is not capable of generating academic credit;
- ❑ The online course is inconsistent with the remaining graduation requirements or career interests of the student;
- ❑ The student does not possess the prerequisite knowledge and skills to be successful in the online course or has demonstrated failure in previous online coursework in the same subject; and
- ❑ The online course is of insufficient quality or rigor. If a district denies a student enrollment because the online course is of insufficient quality or rigor, the district shall make a reasonable effort to assist the student to find an alternative online course in the same or similar subject that is of acceptable rigor and quality.

If the student's request to take a course online is denied, the students and parents may appeal the decision by writing to the superintendent of the intermediate school district in which the student's resident district is located. See the FAQ in the Resources section for more information.



Now that you know why many students like learning online, you will find answers to some of your other questions in the sections that follow. This brief list of terms may be helpful as you investigate online learning.

Definitions

Online Course:

An online course is defined in the State School Aid Act as a course of study that can generate a credit or a grade and is provided in an interactive Internet-connected learning environment. The students are separated from their teachers by time or location or both. The teacher, who holds a valid Michigan teaching certificate, is responsible for determining appropriate instructional methods for each student, diagnosing learning needs, assessing student learning, prescribing intervention strategies, reporting outcomes, and evaluating the effects of instruction and support strategies.

Mentor:

An onsite mentor monitors and supports the students as they work through an online course. Mentors may also document some aspects of participation. Some mentors are paraprofessionals. In some cases, the mentor must have a Michigan teaching certificate and be employed by the school district.

Learning Management System (LMS):

The LMS houses the online course. Through the LMS, students access courses and related documents and activities; assignments are exchanged between student, online instructor and often the mentor; and communication among students and 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, or *Michigan Virtual School*[®] or another third party entity, including colleges, universities, and private companies.

Credit Recovery:

Credit recovery is the opportunity for a student to take a class online that he/she may have failed in a face-to-face setting.

If you have wondered about the impact online learning has had on education, consider the statistics a speaker from the International Association for K-12 Online Learning shared at the *Michigan Virtual School 2013 Collab of the Minds*:

- ❑ 50% of employers use e-learning for training
- ❑ 100% of Singapore's secondary schools use online learning & all teachers are trained to teach online
- ❑ 30% growth of online enrollments annually (50,000 in 2000 and over 2,000,000 in 2011)
- ❑ 19% of students said they took online courses to get more attention from teachers
- ❑ 35% of students said they took online courses to get more help

First Things First

The most important question you have to answer is whether your student is well suited to an online learning environment.

Profile of a Successful Student

Instructors with years of online teaching experience agree that students who have a successful, satisfying experience learning online share several critical characteristics:

Good Time Management:

Can your student create and maintain a study schedule throughout the semester without the face-to-face interaction with a teacher?

Effective Communication:

Can your student ask for help, make contact with other students and the instructor online, and describe any problems she/he has with learning materials using email, texting, and/or the telephone?

Independent Study Habits:

Can your student study and complete assignments without direct supervision and maintain the self-discipline to stick to a schedule?

Self-Motivation:

Does your student have a strong desire to learn skills, acquire knowledge and fulfill assignments in online courses because of an educational goal? Can she/he maintain focus on that goal?

Academic Readiness:

Does your student have the basic reading, writing, math and computer literacy skills to succeed in the class?

Technologically Prepared:

Does your student know 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., doc, xls, pdf, jpg)? (from Michigan Educational Technology Standards for Students 2009).

Counselors and teachers often use the *MVU Online Readiness Rubric* on page 11 to help students understand what is required of a successful online learner. If you identify areas in the rubric where your student is lacking, you can determine what needs to be addressed to best support them in those areas.

See *Is Online Learning Right for Me?* on page 12 for more guidance.

The Stanford Research Institute's publication *Supporting K-12 Students in Online Learning: A Review of Online Algebra 1 Courses* examined the accessibility of online learning for students, especially those who were at risk of failure. The report cautions that students who have failed a face-to-face class may have challenges that will affect their success in an online course, too. For example, many students do not realize that they will have to be even more accountable for their time, performance, and productivity in an online course.



Making the Decision

As a parent, your role in helping your student decide if this is the most effective way for him/her to learn is extremely important. According to the State School Aid Act, you must give your permission for your student to take online classes. Before you sign off, you need to have determined if your student is well suited to online learning. Using the rubric and the skills mentioned in the previous section as a starting point for the conversation is the first thing to do. Once you decide your student is likely to be successful, you have additional issues to consider.

Technology

- ✓ What are the technical requirements for the courses your student wants/needs to take?
- ✓ Can you provide the technology your student needs or will the school district?
- ✓ Are there well-defined steps for getting tech support?

Learning Environment

- ✓ Does the school or provider offer an orientation for parents, students, and mentor?
- ✓ What kind of feedback and support does the instructor provide?
- ✓ What kind of assistance does the mentor provide?

Considering the Course

- ✓ Does the course meet academic requirements?
- ✓ Has the course been approved for credit by the school of record?
- ✓ Are there prerequisites for online courses? Has your student met the prerequisites?
- ✓ Can students take courses without being enrolled in a local school?
- ✓ Does the course meet NCAA Eligibility Requirements for potential Division I and II student athletes?
- ✓ How rigid are the course assignment due dates?
- ✓ Are the test dates flexible or rigid?
- ✓ What is the time commitment (daily and length of term)?
- ✓ Does the course have e-texts or are textbooks required? If textbooks are required, who pays for them?
- ✓ How do students receive their final grades?
- ✓ When can a student drop the course if he/she finds it too difficult or encounters challenges?



Support

It is important to know what kind of support the student will receive from his or her home district or the nonresident district or provider offering the online course. Mentors in particular are critical to student success in online learning. Be sure to know who the mentor assigned to your student's course is and how to contact him or her. It is also important to know what kind of support the parent or guardian is expected to provide. If your student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or is eligible for special needs support or special education services, contact the home school for further information.

Questions to ask about the role your local or host school plays:

- ✓ What is the responsibility of the school?
- ✓ What is the responsibility of the parent?
- ✓ Does an instructor, a mentor, or a paraprofessional aide provide face-to-face support at your student's local resident district or does the provider?
- ✓ How do you get support for IEP compliance?
- ✓ What kinds of resources are available to students and parents?
- ✓ Does the local resident district or the nonresident district provide access to technology and Internet connectivity?

Other Considerations

- ✓ Accreditation – Has the online course provider earned accreditation from a recognized regional or national accrediting body?
- ✓ Credit – Will successful completion of the course generate credit?
- ✓ Teaching standards – What requirements, guidelines, or additional information does the provider share in the statewide catalog?
- ✓ Data – What kind of data does the provider have to share about course completion?

Covering the Cost of Online Learning

New legislation requires districts to use its foundation allowance or per pupil funds to pay for expenses associated with the online course or courses and to cover the cost of the online course.

Taking All Courses Online

Students in Michigan may attend a full-time online cyber school or may participate in a seat-time waiver program approved by the Michigan Department of Education to allow them to take all their coursework online. In these circumstances, the students' school is required to provide them with a computer and Internet access.

Before You Decide

- Ask questions.
- Consider the time factor.
- Participate in webinars offered by the provider.
- Let the student choose the specific online course whenever possible.

Before Enrolling

Once you decide your student is well prepared to take a course online, your student understands what will be required to be successful, and you find the appropriate course, review the following checklist to be sure you're ready.

Checklist

- The student has access to the technology needed on a regular basis to work on assignments.
- The student has a place to complete work.
- The student has the basic computer skills needed to navigate the course and complete and submit assignments.
- The student has support for her or his IEP.
- The course fits in the student's academic plan.
- The student knows the course grade will become part of the academic record.
- The student understands that online courses often take as much or more time than face-to-face courses.
- The student has sufficient time in his/her schedule to complete assignments.
- The school offers a mentor or another adult to support the student's online learning as needed.
- The student knows who the mentor is and how to contact him/her.
- The student needs the credits.
- The student knows the start and end dates of the course.
- The student is willing and able to ask for help from the online instructor via email, text, phone, or in person and respond to the instructor using the same methods.
- You and the student know how to contact the help desk to resolve technical issues.

Statewide Catalog of Online Courses

In October 2013, a statewide catalog of online courses was made available to the public. The catalog, maintained by the *Michigan Virtual University*, contains the syllabi for online courses offered by any Michigan district and the *Michigan Virtual School*. Students and their parents will be able to review online course syllabi in the statewide catalog during the fall so that enrollment requests for online courses can be made for the second semester beginning in January 2014. The catalog contains links to the sites for information about or access to enrollment and registration for the courses.

Each syllabus in the statewide catalog includes information that will help you decide which online courses are the best fit for your student. In the syllabus you will find how the course is structured – the state academic standards addressed, the prerequisites, the content outline, learning outcomes and objectives, and required assessments. You can see the expectations for how much instructor contact and student-instructor communication to expect as well as the academic support available to the student. The syllabus includes the name of the institution or organization providing the online content and the name of the institution or organization providing the online instructor, too. The price of the online course, along with enrollment periods and drop policies are clearly noted. The syllabus also contains the results of the online course quality review conducted using the guidelines and model review process published by the *Michigan Virtual University*. See the FAQ in the Resources section for more information.

Advice for Parents



Advice for parents once your student is enrolled, before class starts, and until the course is completed.

- ✓ Set up a study space, including the technology required
- ✓ Be prepared for technical issues that may come up
- ✓ Review the syllabus with your student
- ✓ Define expectations
- ✓ Agree on incentives and consequences
- ✓ See that your student establishes a routine
- ✓ Help your student maintain a regular study schedule
- ✓ Monitor your student's progress weekly using your access to the Learning Management System

Final Suggestions

If you decide your student is not quite ready for online learning, you can prepare him or her for a successful experience in a subsequent semester.

- ✓ Build online fluencies: Help your student become familiar with organizing Word documents (setting up files and folders), and saving documents in different formats.
- ✓ Investigate provider websites for webinars and resources directed at parents and students: When you discover those together, you can generate questions for your school and the provider. Talk about what your student is ready for and what areas might need some work.
- ✓ Use an online orientation tool available through some schools and providers: This is another way for you to discover what to expect and talk through opportunities and concerns before your student commits to an online course.
- ✓ Talk with the person at your student's school who is most familiar with online learning – your school's mentor, curriculum specialist, or counselor – and ask what materials or suggestions they have to help you make the decision.

In 2009, the Michigan Department of Education published the Michigan Educational Technology Standards for students and established the goal for all K-12 students to achieve technology literacy or "the ability to responsibly use appropriate technology to communicate, solve problems, and access, manage, integrate, evaluate, and create information to improve learning in all subject areas and to acquire lifelong knowledge and skills in the 21st century." Online learning is critical to students achieving that goal.

Resources

FAQ for Section 21f of the State School Aid Act

Developed by the Michigan Department of Education
and Michigan Virtual University
August 29, 2013

Section 21f expands access to digital learning options for students in Michigan. This FAQ document offers basic answers to frequently asked questions. The FAQ for Section 21f of the State School Aid Act are updated from time to time. Use this URL to find the most recent version: http://media.mivu.org/institute/pdf/21f_FAQs.pdf.

Below are a few of the FAQ that directly affect parents and students.

Who is eligible to participate in the new digital learning initiative approved by the Legislature and the Governor in 2013?

Answer: Students enrolled in a public local district or public school academy in any of grades 5 to 12 are eligible to enroll in an online course. However, students enrolled in a school of excellence that is a full-time cyber school are not eligible to enroll in online courses as described in Section 21f of the State School Aid Act. Separate provisions for cyber schools are contained in the revised School Code.

How is an online course defined?

Answer: Section 21f defines an online course as a "...course of study that is capable of generating a credit or a grade, that is provided in an interactive internet-connected learning environment, in which pupils are separated from their teachers by time or location or both, and in which a teacher who holds a valid Michigan teaching certificate is responsible for determining appropriate instructional methods for each pupil, diagnosing learning needs, assessing pupil learning, prescribing intervention strategies, reporting outcomes, and evaluating the effects of instruction and support strategies."

Under Section 21f, how many online courses may an eligible student enroll in at one time?

Answer: With the consent of the student's parent or legal guardian, a student may enroll in up to two online courses as requested by the pupil during an academic term, semester or trimester. Consent of the parent or legal guardian is not required if the student is at least age 18 or is an emancipated minor.

Can a district deny a student request to enroll in an online course?

Answer: Yes. There are five approved specific reasons for denial, including: 1) the student has previously gained the credits provided from the completion of the online course; 2) the online course is not capable of generating academic credit; 3) the online course is inconsistent with the remaining graduation requirements or career interests of the student; 4) the student does not possess the prerequisite knowledge and skills to be successful in the online course or has demonstrated failure in previous online coursework in the same subject; and 5) the online course is of insufficient quality or rigor. If a district denies a student enrollment because the online course is of insufficient quality or rigor, the district shall make a reasonable effort to assist the student to find an alternative online course in the same or similar subject that is of acceptable rigor and quality.

Is there an appeal process if a district denies a student's request to enroll in an online course?

Answer: Yes, a student and his or her parents may appeal the denial by submitting a letter to the superintendent of the intermediate school district (ISD) in which the student's educating district is located. A response to the appeal must be issued within 5 days after it is received.

What online courses may a student select from when making enrollment decisions?

Answer: Students may select courses from the online course catalog published by the educating district, or they may select courses from the statewide catalog of online courses that contains the courses found in the educating district catalog in addition to courses published by other district course providers statewide, including *Michigan Virtual School* courses.

Are districts required to pay the costs of online course enrollments for their students?

Answer: Yes. Section 21f requires districts to use their foundation allowance or per pupil funds calculated in the State School Aid Act to pay for the expenses associated with the online course(s).

What kind of access to technology does a district need to provide students enrolled in online courses?

Answer: A student enrolled in an online course must be provided the same rights and access to technology in his or her educating district's school facilities as all other pupils enrolled in the district. The educating district is the district that counted the pupil in membership during the Fall or Spring of the current school year.

When will the statewide catalog of online course syllabi be available?

Answer: The *Michigan Virtual University* expects the statewide catalog to be available to schools, students and the general public beginning in October 2013. Students and their parents will be able to review online course syllabi in the statewide catalog during the fall so that enrollment requests in online courses can be made for the second semester beginning in January 2014.

Can enrollments in online courses generate an increase in a district's full-time equivalent count for students?

Answer: No, under Section 21f, the enrollment of a student in one or more online courses cannot result in a pupil being counted as more than 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) pupil.

Are districts required to grant credit for successful online course completions?

Answer: Yes, districts must grant appropriate academic credit for successful online course completions and must count that credit toward completion of graduation and subject area requirements. In addition, a student's record and transcript must identify the online course title as it appears in the online course syllabus.

Will each online course title that appears in a district catalog or in the statewide catalog be required to have a course syllabus?

Answer: Yes, each syllabus will be required to list the following items: 1) the state academic standards addressed in the online course; 2) the online course content outline; 3) the online course required assessments; 4) the online course prerequisites; 5) expectations for actual instructor contact time with the online learning pupil and other pupil-to-instructor communications; 6) academic support available to the online learning pupil; 7) the online course learning outcomes and objectives; 8) the name of the institution or organization providing the online content; 9) the name of the institution or organization providing the online instructor; 10) the course titles assigned by the district and the course titles and course codes from the National Center for the Education Statistics (NCES) School Codes for the Exchange of Data (SCED); 11) the number of eligible nonresident pupils that will be accepted by the district in the online course; 12) the results of the online course quality review using the guidelines and model review process published by the *Michigan Virtual University*; 13) price of the online course; 14) and enrollment periods for the course, including drop policies and the timeline for random draw selections if demand for a course exceeds capacity.

What happens if the enrollment demand for an online course(s) in the statewide catalog exceeds the district's capacity to provide the online course(s)?

Answer: If the number of nonresident applicants exceeds the district's capacity to provide the online course(s), the district must use a random draw system, subject to the need to abide by state and national antidiscrimination laws and court orders. An open enrollment period will be identified for each online course syllabus that appears in the statewide catalog. This information will help districts make a determination in a timely fashion to accept/process enrollments or utilize a random draw system if demand for a particular course exceeds capacity.

When offering online courses, are districts required to provide enrollment opportunities for nonresident students?

Answer: No, districts may limit or refuse enrollments to nonresident students.

Will the statewide catalog of online courses include performance data?

Answer: Yes, beginning with the 2014-15 school year, the catalog will include: 1) the number of pupils enrolled in each online course in the previous school year; 2) the number of pupils who successfully completed each online course in the previous school year; 3) and the completion rate for each online course.

Can districts partner with other public and private organizations to support their efforts in offering online courses to resident and nonresident students?

Answer: Yes, districts can use locally developed online learning solutions and/or contract with third party providers for content, delivery and support services.

Will the Michigan Department of Education or Michigan Virtual University approve or reject online courses before they are included in the statewide catalog?

Answer: No, neither the Michigan Department of Education nor the *Michigan Virtual University* has the authority in legislation to approve or reject courses included in the statewide catalog.

Once a student selects an online course and the district approves it, will the statewide catalog offer enrollment and registration services?

Answer: No, but the statewide catalog will provide a link to the site that explains and/or manages the enrollment and registration process.

Can students enroll in more than two online courses in a given academic term during the 2013-14 school year?

Answer: Section 21f limits students to two online courses per academic term, semester, or trimester. For a student to enroll in more than two courses, the school has the option of applying for a seat time waiver from the Department, see section 5-O-B of the Pupil Accounting Manual; or if the student is taking the online courses on-site with a certified teacher present, there is no limit on the number of online courses in which the student can enroll up to 1.0 FTE, see section 5-O-A of the Pupil Accounting Manual.

Nonpublic students can currently take non-core courses (band, music, art, etc.) at their local public school in a face-to-face setting, and the district is able to claim a portion of the FTE count for each pupil. Can this arrangement continue for non-core courses in an online setting under Section 21f?

Answer: Yes

Are students in grades K-4 eligible to enroll in online courses given the restrictions placed on grade eligibility in Section 21f?

Answer: Students in grades K-4 may be given the option by their district to enroll in online courses. See section 5-O-A of the Pupil Accounting Manual.

Section 21f(8) requires districts to use its foundation allowance or per pupil funds to “pay for expenses associated with the online course or courses” and to cover the “cost of the online course.” What is the difference between online course cost and associated expenses?

Answer: The cost of an online course is tied to the direct expenses associated with developing it or paying for it through enrollment/ tuition fees, including required course materials such as learning kits or textbooks. Other types of associated expenses include indirect costs such as facilities, computers, network connections and local mentor support services.

Is a district allowed to deny a student enrollment in an online course if the cost of the online course exceeds 1/12th or 1/18th of their foundation allowance?

Answer: Yes, the district may deny a student enrollment request in an online course if the cost of the online course exceeds 1/12th or 1/18th of the district’s foundation allowance.

If the cost of an online course exceeds 1/12th or 1/18th of a district’s foundation allowance or per pupil funding, can the district pass the additional cost of the course on to the student’s family?

Answer: No

Online Learner Readiness Rubric

Student Readiness	Technology Skills	Work & Study Habits	Learning Style	Technology / Connectivity	Time Management	Interest/ Motivation	Ready / Writing Skills	Support Services
Less Ready	Student has little, if any, experience using a computer or the internet, and has minimal desire to develop more skills in this area	Student often needs reminders to complete routine assignments, often turns homework in late and is not able to spend 5-10 hours per week on each online course	Student is not a self-directed learner and often requires real-time feedback from teachers regarding basic directions and follow-up support	Student does not have consistent access to a computer and a reliable connection to the internet from home or from school	Student does not manage his or her time effectively in doing research, basic studies and preparing for tests or quizzes	Student has little or no interest in the content area of the online course offering and has a negative or unrealistic attitude toward online learning	Student is reading below grade level and has experienced difficulty with routine writing assignments	In general, parents and school personnel do not actively support online learning and are unable or unwilling to provide support assistance
	Student has limited experience using a computer and the internet, and has expressed a strong interest in developing more skills in this area	Student sometimes needs reminder and assistance in completing routine assignments and has pledged to spend 5-10 hours per week on each online course enrollment	Student beginning to demonstrate a behavior of self-directed learning and sometimes requires real-time feedback from teachers regarding basic directions and follow up support	Student has limited access to a computer with low-speed service to the internet from school or from home	Student is beginning to demonstrate effective time management skills in doing research, basic studies and preparing for tests or quizzes	Student has an interest in the content area of the online course offering, but has expressed concerns about enrolling in an online course or has an unrealistic attitude toward online learning	Student is reading at grade level and has demonstrated limited proficiency with writing assignments	Student support system is limited, parents and school personnel are somewhat supportive of enrollment in online courses
More Ready	Student has strong computer skills and detailed experience using a word processor, email application and web browser	Student rarely needs reminders or assistance in completing routine assignments and has demonstrated good independent study habits	In general, the student is self-directed and does not require real-time feedback from teachers regarding basic directions and follow-up support	Student has consistent access to a computer with moderate-speed service to the internet from home, and from school	Student has demonstrated effective time management skills in doing research, basic studies and preparing for tests or quizzes	Student has an interest in the content area of the online course offering, and has a positive and realistic attitude toward online learning	Student is reading at or above grade level and has demonstrated success with variety of writing assignments	Student has open access to school-based mentoring/counseling service and parental support
	Student has excellent computer skills and significant experience using a word processor, email application and web browser, and is comfortable downloading information from the internet and using other technology tools and applications	Student does not need reminders or assistance in completing routine assignments, usually finishes homework ahead of time and has successfully completed an independent study experience or taken an online course	Student is a self-directed learner and demonstrates a high level of comfort and skill in learning new material without requiring real-time feedback from teachers regarding basic directions and deals well with ambiguity	Student has daily access to a computer with high-speed service to the internet at home and at a convenient location in the school building before, during and after regular school hours	Student has demonstrated outstanding time management skills while participating in a variety of clubs, student organizations, sports and work activities	Student has a strong interest in the content area of the online course offering, is highly motivated to enroll in an online course and has a positive and realistic attitude toward online learning	Student is reading above grade level, has strong reading comprehension skills and has demonstrated success with complex writing assignments	Student has regularly scheduled access to school-based mentoring/counseling services, parental support is strong and district has adopted policies and identified best practices to support students as online learners

Note: This rubric was not designed to be used as a tool to determine eligibility for enrollment in online courses, but instead to help identify specific areas where students may need additional support to better ensure success.

Is Online Learning Right For Me?

From Idaho Digital Learning
<http://idahodigitalllearning.org/Parents/ResourcesforParents.aspx>
retrieved January 28, 2013, at 4:30 p.m.

Is online learning right for me?

Online learning offers great flexibility for students of all skill sets, but it's important to know if it's the right learning style for you. These questions will help you make that determination.

Are you self-directed and motivated?

- ✓ Most of online learning happens on your schedule.
- ✓ You'll need to be self-directed and motivated to complete activities and initiate the communication required to be successful.
- ✓ You'll be responsible for creating the structure to finish each course.

Are your technical skills adequate?

- ✓ You need to be comfortable with Internet browsing and searching, email, sending and reading attachments, word processing, and occasionally downloading and installing software plug-ins (a normally simple, but sometimes intimidating task).

Do you have strong reading/writing skills?

- ✓ The ability to read and comprehend subject matter without it being a chore is critical to your success.
- ✓ In most cases writing is the primary method of communication in online classes, so you should be at ease expressing your thoughts, sharing ideas, and asking questions through writing.

Will you ask questions when you need to?

- ✓ If you typically don't hesitate to seek help you'll do fine.
- ✓ Since you'll be in an online environment it's important to let your instructor and classmates know when you need assistance.
- ✓ Remember they won't be able to see your expressions of doubt, confusion, or other body language to indicate when things aren't going well.

Will you miss the social interaction?

- ✓ Interaction with instructors and classmates in online learning is often an integral part of the learning experience.
- ✓ Absent is the in-person contact — being able to see facial expressions, hear reactions, and speak.
- ✓ Campus life may be different or non-existent.

Do you have the discipline to study regularly?

- ✓ Like a traditional school you'll need to set aside adequate time for study.
- ✓ You may discover you need to be online frequently to complete assignments or communicate with classmates and instructors.
- ✓ Plan to spend at least as much time working on assignments and studying as you would with a traditional course, and you'll be setting your own pace in many instances.

Michigan Virtual University[®] is a private, nonprofit Michigan corporation established in 1998. *MVU*[®] is governed by an independent board of directors.

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MVU Mission and Vision Statements

Mission: *MVU's* goal is to serve as a catalyst for change by providing quality Internet-based programs that strengthen teaching and learning for K-12 education.

Vision: The long-term view of success for *MVU* is to provide leadership by expanding, improving and innovating opportunities for K-12 students and educators.



www.mivs.org



www.learnport.org

