

Online Courses: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What is an online course?

A new addition to the State School Aid Act defines an online course as a "...course of study that is capable of generating a credit or a grade, that is provided by 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."

How many online courses can a student enroll in?

Per the law and with the consent of the student's parent or legal guardian, students are allowed to enroll in up to two courses per semester. The total number of online and traditional classes may not exceed six per semester. Please note: students taking online courses are waiving courses on the school campus. These courses are "instead of" not "in addition to" the regular six classes per day.

What are the requirements to enroll in an RCS online course?

In order to enroll in an online course, students must meet the following requirements:

1. The student must possess the pre-requisite knowledge and skills to be successful in an online environment.
2. The online course must be consistent with the remaining graduation requirements and career interests of the student.
3. The student has been accepted into the program by completing the necessary application process and has successfully passed the online success program assessment. The assessment is located on the district website under Curriculum and Instruction.
4. A parent or guardian must provide written consent to allow a minor student to take an online course, unless the student is of majority age or an emancipated minor.

What subjects can be taken online?

Students can study any subject that they would in the normal "brick and mortar" setting along with some other options that may not be available in the traditional setting. Online courses include general core and elective offerings. All online courses must be approved by the School District, as the School District retains the right to determine if the online course is of sufficient quality or rigor.

Who teaches online courses?

According to the new law, online courses must be taught by Michigan certified teachers, but the teacher might be in a district far away or working for Michigan Virtual School. Students may also be supported by mentor teachers.

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How much time do students spend on the online course per week?

We expect that students will spend a minimum of 5 hours per course per week. Depending on the student's learning style and the specific course, students may progress through lessons at different rates (more slowly or quickly).

Does the school provide a computer and internet access?

For current RCS students, computer and internet access may be available through the student's home school, depending on space and equipment availability. The online learning student shall have the same rights and access to technology as all other students enrolled in the School District. It is recommended that students electing online courses have home computer and internet access.

What does it cost to take an online course?

There is no cost to the family for an online course. There is a limit that the district can pay for an online course that is determined by the yearly foundation allowance.

How do online courses impact college acceptance and NCAA?

Students should check with the college that they are interested in to see how online courses are accepted. Some of the courses in the state catalog are NCAA approved for those who plan to participate in collegiate athletics, but many online courses do not gain NCAA approval.

How does a student enroll in the program?

Students should complete the application available in the counseling office at the high school or middle school they attend. They will also need to complete the online self-assessment to determine their readiness for online learning.

What if a student elects to take an online course but doesn't finish it or wishes to drop it?

Once students are enrolled in online courses, they will be expected to finish the courses. Those who are unable to finish the courses successfully by the end of the semester will not receive credit and will receive a letter grade of E for the course. Students will not have an option to drop online courses and change to a traditional class once the semester has started.

During which class period will the online course be scheduled?

The particular hour of online courses, like all courses, will be determined by the needs of the master schedule and staffing availability and might be during any of the six class periods. Students who remain in the school building during their online courses will report to a predetermined classroom.

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Is a student required to remain on campus during a scheduled online course?

RCS reserves the right to require an online student to remain in a designated space on campus. This would be reviewed on a case by case basis, with attention given to the particular time of the scheduled course, the age of the student, the availability of equipment, and the student's attendance in other courses. It is important to note that there will be no transportation provided outside of the normal schedule of the beginning and end of the day.

What happens if the School District denies a student enrollment in an online course or request an appeal process?

If a student is denied enrollment in an online course, the student may appeal the denial by submitting a letter to the superintendent of the intermediate district. The appeal letter shall include the reason provided by Rochester Community Schools for not enrolling the student and the reason why the student is claiming that the enrollment should be approved. The intermediate district superintendent or designee shall respond to the appeal with 5 days after it is received.