

Legislative Analysis



ONLINE DRIVER TRAINING INSTRUCTION

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<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 5845 as introduced
Sponsor: Rep. Triston Cole
Committee: Government Operations
Complete to 7-10-20

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

SUMMARY:

House Bill 5845 would amend the Driver Education Provider and Instructor Act to allow **online instruction** in driver education courses and to incorporate online instruction as an alternative to classroom instruction in the curriculum requirements for teen driver training. The bill would also allow for online instruction for those learning to become driver education instructors.

Online instruction or **online course** would mean that part of a driver education course provided electronically or online that enables a student to learn through varied instructional methods, under the direct guidance of a certified driver education instructor.

Under the act, teen driver training is divided into a segment 1 curriculum and a segment 2 curriculum. The entire course (segment 1 and segment 2 combined) must provide each student with at least 30 hours of classroom instruction and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel instruction. The segment 1 curriculum must include 24 hours of classroom instruction and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel instruction. The act includes other requirements for teen driver training, among other things requiring specific content to be included (e.g., bicycle laws and awareness), requiring a course to last at least three weeks, limiting classroom instruction to no more than two hours per day, and generally capping at 36 the number of students that can be in a classroom when instruction is given.

With some exceptions described below, the bill would add online instruction as an alternative to classroom instruction under the act. For example, the teen driver training course would have to include at least 30 hours of classroom or online instruction and 6 hours of behind-the-wheel instruction. Online instruction would also be subject to curriculum content requirements, the three-week course minimum, the two-hour daily limit on instruction, and the general limit of 36 students when instruction is given.

Exemption as to integrated instruction

The curriculum for teen driver training currently requires classroom instruction to be **integrated**, which is defined to mean that classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction must be scheduled to include a mix of classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction throughout the duration of the driver education course. In addition, the schedule 1 curriculum specifies that a student must complete three or more hours of behind-the-wheel instruction before classroom instruction ends.

The above provisions would not apply to online instruction under the bill, though they would continue to apply to classroom instruction. (Although a provision of the bill says that online instruction must be integrated, the bill would specifically limit both the definition of “integrated” and the schedule 1 requirement described above to classroom instruction only.)

The bill would, however, add online instruction to other current requirements concerning segment 1 behind-the-wheel instruction, as follows:

- A student must have received at least four hours of classroom or online instruction before beginning to receive behind-the-wheel instruction.
- A student must complete any remaining required behind-the-wheel instruction no later than three weeks after the last classroom or online instruction has been completed.

Other exemptions for online providers

Currently, before holding a class, a driver education provider must file with the Secretary of State a projected driver education course schedule report containing the following:

- The name of the driver education school.
- The dates and times of the class.
- The classroom location.
- The names of the instructors.
- Any other information the Secretary of State requires.

Under the bill, this provision, and a requirement to file an updated report for any changes to information provided above, would not apply to a provider of online instruction. Other reporting requirements would apply, although providers offering only online instruction would not have to list classroom locations in a year-end report that also contains such information as the name of the driver education school, a list of instructors who taught during the year, and the number of students who passed and failed each type of instruction given.

The bill would also exempt providers that offer only online instruction from provisions of the act that deal with physical classroom locations (e.g., fire code compliance).

Online instruction of driver training instructors

Finally, the bill would amend the definition of *practicum*, for purposes of the act, to include online as well as classroom instruction, which would allow a student in an approved driver education instructor preparation program to receive that portion of his or her education online.

MCL 256.623 et seq.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The bill would have no fiscal impact on the state or local units of government.

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