Financial Literacy Instruction Exemption

Model Policy and Guidelines

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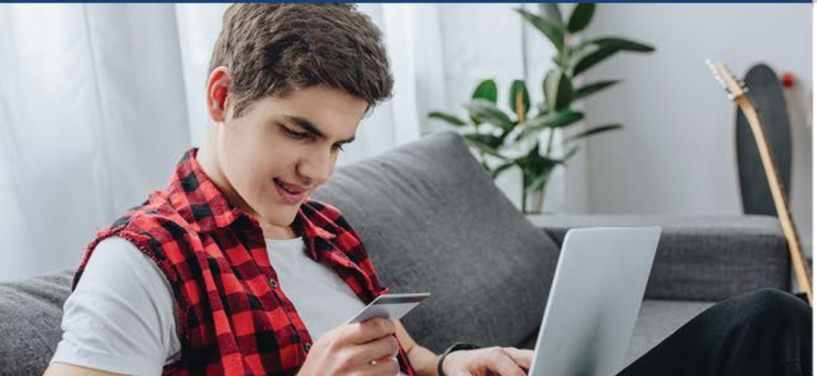

Department of Education & Workforce

Financial Literacy Instruction Exemption

MODEL POLICY

Purpose

To expand high-quality, real-world financial learning opportunities for students while maintaining consistent standards and safeguards, the Board of Education of **[insert name of district/school]** or the governing authority of **[insert name of community school, STEM school, or chartered nonpublic school]** establishes this policy permitting a student to be exempted from the financial literacy instruction graduation requirement through successful completion of an approved financial literacy program provided by a qualified credit union or bank.

Instruction Exemption Process

School districts, STEM schools, community schools, and chartered nonpublic schools shall determine the local instruction exemption process, which can include, but need not be limited to:

- A student instruction exemption request form
- School administrator review of submitted requests
- Board of education or governing authority approval of instruction exemption requests
- Parent/guardian communication of the instruction exemption policy, process, and approval

Financial Literacy Program Requirements

Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 3313.603(O) requires the financial literacy program to meet or exceed Ohio's Learning Standards and Model Curriculum for Financial Literacy and that student participation must be the equivalent of at least one-half unit of instruction.

ORC 3301.603(C)(9)(b) states the study and instruction of financial literacy shall align with Ohio's Learning Standards and Model Curriculum for Financial Literacy. School districts, STEM schools, community schools, and chartered nonpublic schools should complete an evaluation of the Financial Literacy Program materials and experiences to determine the program's alignment with the financial literacy standards and model curriculum.

ORC 3313.603(A)(2) states "one-half unit" means a minimum of 60 hours of course instruction. School districts, STEM schools, community schools, and chartered nonpublic schools may establish program participation requirements to meet the minimum 60 hours of instruction. Schools and districts may include multiple components as part of the financial literacy program participation.

School districts, STEM schools, community schools, and chartered nonpublic schools may consider the following components to include in their local policies to determine student requirements to be exempted from the instruction requirement:

- **Eligibility and Enrollment.** Students meet local criteria and are enrolled in an approved financial literacy program after parent/guardian consent is on file.
- **Minimum Instructional Time**. Completion of program hours is equivalent to the financial literacy instruction requirement (or locally defined minimum hours).
- **Attendance and Conduct**. Student satisfies attendance thresholds and follows district conduct policies while participating in the financial literacy program.

- **Verification and Recordkeeping**. The bank or credit union financial literacy program partner provides completion or student achievement data on the financial literacy learning standards, which the school district, STEM school, community school, or chartered nonpublic school verifies to determine whether the student has met all requirements for the instruction exemption.
- **Program Scope and Standards Alignment**. There is clear mapping of program lessons, activities, and assessments to Ohio's Learning Standards and Model Curriculum for Financial Literacy and description of program components (for example, student-run credit union branch operations, instructional activities, or training.).
  - Under ORC 1733.04, credit unions may open a student-run branch with permission of the school superintendent and upon agreement of the board of education or governing authority.
- **Membership Requirements.** ORC 1733.04 outlines the eligibility and length of the student membership in a credit union; schools and districts may adopt similar policies as part of the bank partner agreement for the financial literacy program partner to communicate and confirm membership requirements.

Financial Literacy Instruction Exemption

GUIDELINES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Schools and districts can review the guidelines and considerations before developing, implementing, and monitoring a local financial literacy instruction exemption policy. The guidelines and considerations included are grounded in the adult implementation components from Ohio's Integrated Multi-Tiered System of Supports: *Shared Leadership*, *Professional Capacity*, and *Communication and Collaboration*.

Shared Leadership

Guidelines

- Engage a cross-functional leadership team to oversee policy development, implementation, and monitoring.
- Establish clear roles and responsibilities for the exemption process, including program review, student eligibility determination, and communication expectations.
- Use a shared decision-making process to evaluate potential financial literacy program partners and ensure alignment with Ohio's Learning Standards and Model Curriculum for Financial Literacy and local strategic goals.
- Integrate the exemption into the existing local integrated multi-tiered system of supports or district leadership structures to ensure consistent implementation and monitoring.
- Develop and maintain a continuous improvement cycle where leaders regularly review program data, implementation challenges, and policy effectiveness.
- Ensure leaders collectively determine procedures for verifying program quality, instructional hour equivalency, and required documentation.

Considerations

- How will the district maintain consistent policy implementation across multiple schools or grades?
- What structures will help the district or school's leadership team sustain implementation and monitoring?
- What processes will guide leadership team response if data indicate concerns with program quality, participation, or student support needs?

Professional Capacity

Guidelines

- Align the financial literacy partner program to Ohio's Learning Standards and Model Curriculum for Financial Literacy.
- Establish roles, responsibilities, training supports, and communication protocols with the financial literacy program partner.
- Establish clear local participation requirements and document how multiple components meet the exemption criteria.
- Create robust verification, data-sharing, and recordkeeping processes to support monitoring completion, program alignment, student participation, and student outcomes.
- Build relationships with families and caregivers by communicating the policy, process, and learning expectations clearly.

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- Provide tiered attendance and engagement support for participants when data indicates risk that could impact program completion or learning goals.

Considerations

- How will district or school staff verify and document that the financial literacy partner's program is aligned to Ohio's Learning Standards and Model Curriculum for Financial Literacy? What rubrics or review tools will be used, and who is trained to apply them?
- How will the district or school define acceptable combinations of classroom instruction, student branch operations, and financial literacy program partner sessions to count toward required hours?
- Which staff need training and how will professional learning be scheduled and reinforced?
- How will bidirectional communication between leadership, staff, and the financial literacy program partner be maintained?
- How will the district or school engage families and caregivers to ensure informed consent, ongoing updates, and participation?
- How will staff consider student characteristics when selecting supports so all students can participate and succeed?
- Based on the local processes, what tiered supports will be activated when data show risk of student non-completion or limited learning impact?
- Who oversees local exemption request reviews, approvals, and family communications?

Communication and Collaboration

Guidelines

- Publish a clear, step-by-step exemption process for staff and families to access.
- Establish shared expectations with financial literacy program partner via a memorandum of understanding (MOU).
- Use common, strength-based messaging to families and students. Explain the program's benefits and how the program meets or exceeds state Ohio's Learning Standards and Model Curriculum for Financial Literacy.
- Convene the cross-functional leadership team on a regular cadence (for example, biweekly or monthly) to coordinate outreach, troubleshoot barriers, and review data.
- Use proactive outreach and tiered student supports for attendance or engagement barriers.

Considerations

- Do the district or school's communications plainly describe the steps to request and receive an exemption from financial literacy instruction?
- How will the district or school ensure multilingual, accessible formats so every family can engage?
- What strengths (student interests, pathway goals, prior work or volunteer experiences) can the district or school highlight to encourage participation?
- Do the financial literacy program partner's program activities align to Ohio's Learning Standards and Model Curriculum for Financial Literacy and has that been communicated?
- Do the district or school's agreements with the financial literacy program partner specify roles for outreach and data exchange for verification and recordkeeping?
- If a student branch of a credit union or bank is included in program requirements, has the district or school communicated superintendent and board of education permissions and membership requirements in family-friendly terms?

- How will student data be securely transferred from the financial literacy program partner to the school? Who reviews and verifies the data?
- How does the school or district communicate instruction exemption decisions and next steps to students and their families?
- What events and opportunities will the district or school use to gather and act on feedback from students, families, and staff?