



Statewide Online Education Program (SOEP) Course Enrollment Guidance Document: Q&A for Parents and Students

Can a school require a student to drop an in-person course or reduce their schedule to take an SOEP course?

Public school funding is capped at a full-time enrollment load. If a student requests an SOEP course in excess of a full schedule, the school has the right to reduce the student's school-year schedule so the total credit load stays within that cap. The credit load does not include release time.

Students may exceed full-time enrollment without reducing their regular schedule if they intend to graduate early and have an Early Graduation Plan established. This plan acts as a funding mechanism, allowing the district to generate additional membership days to fund the extra credits.

It is important to note that the student is not required to graduate early if their goals change. Students or parents interested in this option should contact their school counselor.

Does release-time count toward a student's full-time credit cap?

No. It takes up a *scheduled period* but does not count toward *earned credits*.

For example, if a school has an 8.0 full-time enrollment cap, a student with 7.0 credits and 1.0 seminary credit maintains a full schedule but only earns 7.0 credits. Since the student is 1.0 credit under the full-time enrollment cap, they may add up to an additional 1.0 SOEP credit.

If a student has a full schedule and requests an SOEP course that's already on their schedule, can the school reject it?

If a student requests an online course that duplicates a course they are enrolled in at their school, it must be treated as a request to drop the duplicate in-person course and replace it with the online course before the school's deadline for dropping and adding courses. The

student will be limited by the school's scheduled drop date applicable to the semester or quarter in which the course that must be dropped.

If a student has a full schedule and wants to drop an in-person course to make room for an SOEP course, is this allowed?

If a student requests an online course aligned with their graduation plan and already has a full schedule, the request must be treated as a request to drop an in-person course and replace it with an online course. The student must inform the counselor of which in-person course they wish to drop. The student will be limited by the school's scheduled drop date applicable to the semester or quarter in which the course that must be dropped.

Can a school reject a course request if a student has a full schedule and the student does not wish to drop any in-person courses?

Yes. A student's total credit load cannot exceed full-time enrollment unless the student has an Early Graduation Plan. The credit load does not include release time. If a student with a full schedule does not wish to drop an in-person course and does not have an Early Graduation Plan in place, the school may reject the course request.

Is a student required to take online courses exclusively through their local school district's online program, or can they choose to enroll in an SOEP course?

Students may take online courses through the SOEP and select any Online Provider that best meets their needs. While local school districts may offer and promote their own online programs, students are not required to enroll exclusively with their district and cannot be restricted from choosing an SOEP course or Online Provider.

Can a student enroll in an online course at any time during a calendar year?

Statute states that a student *should* enroll during the school's period for course registrations, but it is not required. If a course is aligned with the student's plan for college and career readiness, the following options apply:

- An under-enrolled student may add a course at any time during the school year (including a student whose schedule is considered full but includes release time)

- If the student is not under-enrolled, the student may alter their schedule by dropping a traditional classroom course and adding an online course consistent with:
 - Schedule alteration procedures adopted by the school
 - The school's scheduled drop date applicable to the semester or quarter in which the course must be dropped
- If a student seeks to alter an existing schedule by adding an SOEP course to replace an **identical in-person course**:
 - The school must consider the course request a simultaneous request to drop any identical in-person course, resulting in an automatic course substitution by the school
 - The student will be limited by the school's scheduled drop date applicable to the semester or quarter in which the course must be dropped

Can a school restrict SOEP enrollment to a limited registration window?

While law allows a student to enroll in an online course at any time during a calendar year, if the student has a full schedule and must drop a traditional course to make room for the SOEP course, the student is limited by the school's scheduled drop date applicable to the semester or quarter in which the course must be dropped.

Can a course request submitted during periods when counselors are on break be denied?

Students may submit a course request at any time during the year, if their total credit load does not exceed full-time enrollment. The credit load does not include release time.

Verification of alignment between an online course with a student's plan for college and career readiness does not require a meeting with the student, and the student cannot be required to meet with the counselor. A school must submit an acceptance or rejection of a course request to the state board within 24 business hours of the receipt of a course request, and is therefore responsible for making arrangements to review course requests over the summer months.