

HERMITAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

VIRTUAL LEARNING OPERATING PROCEDURES,

2021-2022, FOR GRADES 9 - 12

Hermitage School District (HSD) will offer a virtual learning option to students in grades 9-12. This opportunity provides students a robust, flexible learning experience. Teachers will be provided through a contract with Virtual Arkansas, a digital learning provider that HSD has used for the last 7 years. Enrollment in this program is limited to 10 students. HSD will provide a learning facilitator that will assist the principal in monitoring student success.

The purpose of this document is to provide more information to parents about the HSD Virtual Learning option. Attached is also a document from Virtual Arkansas that provides information about virtual learning, including definitions and expectations. This document is intended to supplement and clarify and exists in conjunction with the K-12 Student/Parent Handbook and all applicable Board Policies.

ORIENTATION/LEARNING ABOUT COMMUNICATION

HSD will provide a mandatory Orientation held via Zoom for parents and students enrolled in Virtual Learning prior to the first day of school. This time will be used to make sure students know how to access Canvas, school district email, how to communicate when they need help, how to seek help when struggling with learning or attendance, how to request help with technology, etc. and will allow time for parents and students to ask questions and seek further information.

The School Nurse, Social Worker, Counselor, Student Services Coordinator, and those over special programs (ELL, GT, etc.) will be available to Virtual students. The HSD Virtual Facilitator will, once again, bridge the gap between HSD staff and students. District email will be utilized for communication, in addition to face-to-face visits when students are on-site for assessments.

The HSD Virtual Learning facilitator will be the communication link between the school, the student, the parents, and Virtual Arkansas.

HSD will provide tutorials for parents on use of provided technologies and the provided learning management platform. These tutorials will be linked to the HSD website, www.hermitageschools.org. The district will communicate with families through the school messaging system, the Hermitage School District APP, the Hermitage School District website, and the Hermitage Schools Information Page on Facebook. The main

point of contact between students, parents, and the district for communication and student services will be the HSD Virtual Learning Facilitator.

EQUITABLE ACCESS

HSD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in any policies, procedures, practices, or educational opportunities, including admissions, educational services, financial aid and employment. HSD students shall not be excluded from participation in, denied benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity within the District on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

HSD provides all remote learners equitable access to virtual instruction. HSD will provide the following to ensure equitable opportunity:

- Federal and state funds to provide equitable access to education,
- Support services for Special Education, EOSL/ESL, Migrant, 504 and G/T,
- Access to technology and devices, (All students will be issued a Chromebook, be provided hotspot locations for connectivity, and will be provided WiFi devices for connectivity, although the district can not ensure connectivity due to trees, cabling, and cell service at student's homes.)
- Access to the Virtual Arkansas and Canvas platforms for digital learning,
- Access to assistance in solving any technology issue that the student may encounter, and
- Support services for student success. (Mental health, nutrition, language, health, counseling, social worker, etc.)

Students will apply for participation in Virtual Learning. The application will be found on the district webpage under the tab for American Rescue Plan Act information. Those meeting the minimum requirements will be eligible to become a Virtual Learner through these offerings from HSD and Virtual Arkansas.

The K-12 Counselor, Principal, and Student Services Coordinator will review the Student Success Plans, student registration information, and state requirements for graduation prior to determining appropriate courses to place in each student's schedule.

HSD will provide each student with a Chromebook to access their work on Virtual Arkansas at the beginning of the school year. HSD will also provide a WiFi hotspot if students do not have another internet option readily available. Additionally, WiFi hotspots are found on the High School campus for student use 24/7.

HSD employs a full-time technology coordinator who will be available to help students as needed with technology issues. This coordinator is available each school day between 7:30 AM - 3:30 PM. Additionally, HSD office staff and principals may be able to assist and can be reached at the HSD main phone line at (870) 463-2246. Email addresses will be provided to Virtual Learning students at the beginning of the school year in the Guidance Document.

LENGTH OF COMMITMENT

Students are expected to make a semester-long commitment to Virtual Learning.

ADMISSION TO VIRTUAL LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

HSD will be selective when allowing students to participate in Virtual Learning, as we have found that student learners must have certain skills to be successful in this type of environment, based upon our use of Virtual Arkansas in our high school for the past 7 years. The minimum requirements that students must meet to participate in Virtual Learning include:

- (1) Student did not have below a 70% in any course during the previous school year (quarter or semester), and
- (2) Student was not referred to the court system through a FINS filing or other action due to school attendance or performance issues, and
- (3) Student did not refuse to sit for or participate in mandated assessments, either from the district or the state during the previous school year.

Additionally, a team of teachers and administrators will review applications to ensure that students exhibit a majority of the following characteristics, which exemplify a successful virtual learner:

- Being able to manage their time,
- Being able to communicate their needs, problem-solve, work with others online, and use email and other communication platforms proficiently,
- Being able to study and complete assignments independently,
- Being able to motivate themselves to acquire knowledge and skills and fulfill those tasks assigned to them,
- Being able to succeed in class because of a solid foundation in reading, writing, math, and computer literacy skills, and
- Being able to proficiently use technology, including connecting to the Internet, creating documents, using technology tools to assist with learning, and identifying appropriate resources for learning.

ATTENDANCE

A student in this virtual learning environment who is not physically present on campus on a daily basis will be marked absent if they are not engaged in learning.

Engagement is defined as a student who logs in weekly/daily to the learning platform used by VA and submits assignments and completes assessments according to the specified due dates. Adjustments may be made to individual students based upon their IEP, 504, LPAC, or other programmatic plans.

Students are required to attend all Zoom sessions each week for every content area, and may request additional one:one Zoom sessions as needed.

Students in Virtual Learning will be considered absent if assignments in the Canvas platform are not completed within the week they are assigned. Students are allowed 3 absences per 9-week period. When a student reaches the 4th absence in a 9-week period, Virtual Learning approval will be revoked and the student must immediately return to on-site learning.

Occasionally, extenuating circumstances may require longer periods of time to complete assignments or take assessments. These emergency situations will need to be coordinated with the building principal for **PRIOR APPROVAL** to ensure that their attendance is not negatively impacted. The building principal may be reached by phone at the high school at (870) 463-2235 or (870) 463-2246 or via email at mistie.mcghee@hermitageschools.org.

The daily schedules for students will include 6 hours of learning; however, it may not take students the entire allotted time to successfully engage with the learning, as students will be learning at their own pace and place. Virtual Learning students will attend scheduled synchronous learning, while at other times they will work independently and asynchronously on their own established time frame and schedule.

At the High School level, students are required to attend all Zoom sessions each week for every content area (2/week), and may request additional one:one Zoom sessions as needed.

AMI days are days when the school or district needs to pivot to remote learning, attendance will be determined by the approved AMI plan.

ASSIGNMENTS

Students will engage in their digital coursework through the CANVAS Learning Management System (LMS). All learning will take place online.

The learning management system will be layered with a supplemental software called Genius. Genius is a registration, progress monitoring, and reporting tool which provides a daily snapshot of each student's progress, attendance, and engagement level. Students are assigned a color code each day that identifies them as 1) Green (present, on pace, on target, engaged), 2) Yellow (has fallen below the threshold in attendance, pace, target, or engagement), 3) Red (has fallen below the lower threshold in attendance, pace, target, or engagement). Virtual Staff (Teacher, Paraprofessionals, Coordinator) will have access to these reports and use them to provide praise, encouragement, support, and resources.

HSD students in grades 9-12 will be using Virtual Arkansas for its delivery of instruction for our 100% virtual students. Virtual Arkansas provides a fully certified Arkansas teacher of record while we provide the facilitator. A trained, classified facilitator will be utilized by the school district.

Virtual Arkansas provides access to over 100 courses in grades 9-12 which are designed and written by subject matter experts (SME's) and who are Arkansas Certified teachers. Virtual Arkansas courses and content are designed and developed using the Arkansas State Standards, Quality Matters standards, and the National Standards of Quality of Online Courses as their foundation. This process includes an internal review of the courses by Quality Matters certified online course reviewers. Courses are designed to be fully ready for student interaction and teachers have all the content needed to effectively provide support and instruction to students.

Students will be utilizing Zoom video conferencing software to participate in synchronous learning sessions with their teacher. The Zoom software is downloaded to the district provided device. The Virtual Arkansas teacher will utilize Zoom to facilitate synchronous sessions with students during scheduled Zoom sessions during the week. ZOOM provides a suite of teaching and learning features which include recording, polling, break-out rooms, whiteboard with collaborative and annotation tools, chat, translations, screen sharing, hand raising, reaction emoticons, and remote control option. The remote control option is where the Virtual Teacher is given permission to take control of the user's computer screen to provide navigation and technical support. The Zoom link and Zoom schedule is placed in a common location within each course and communicated with students and virtual facilitators.

Virtual Arkansas provides this information on students expectations for Zoom meetings:

1. The environment from which the student attends the Zoom session should be

appropriate and conducive to learning. Please be aware of the following expectations regarding the Zoom environment:

- a. During live Zoom sessions, the background should be appropriate and not distracting. There should not be any visible offensive material.
 - b. Background noise should be minimal or non-existent during Zoom sessions.
 - c. Students should not eat or drink while in a Zoom session.
 - d. Other individuals not enrolled in the class should not be present during the Zoom session.
 - e. Pets should not be visible during a Zoom session.
2. The student should be dressed appropriately, according to the local school handbook, just as if the student was attending class on-campus.

The teacher may remove a student regardless of where the student is located during the live Zoom session if that teacher feels the student is not dressed appropriately, displaying offensive behavior, or if distractions are considered inappropriate and interfering with other students who are in attendance.

If a student is removed from a live session, the teacher will document the incident immediately and send that documentation to their remote facilitator. The remote facilitator will then contact an administrator or school official and provide the documentation of the incident.

HSD will also make students and parents aware of opportunities for additional support provided by the state for learning loss. This information will be posted on our website under the American Rescue Plan Act tab at the top of the homepage.

ASSESSMENTS

All virtual students will return to campus on scheduled times to take assessments, whether class, local, interim, state-mandated, or other. Expectations, dates, and schedules will be communicated with students via email.

All graded assessments worth 100 points or more will be taken on the Hermitage High School campus. Students will coordinate a date and time with their Virtual Arkansas facilitator. They will sign in and sign out through the high school office, where they will leave their phone if they brought it with them. They will report to the Virtual Arkansas classroom to take their assessments with the Virtual Arkansas facilitator present. Virtual Arkansas requires trained proctors for major assessments. HSD's plan for students to take proctored assessments stipulates that HSD will administer all assessments (including state assessments) on the Hermitage High School campus. Students and parents will be notified of the dates and times for state testing through multiple means

including the website, emails, phone calls, and the district messaging system. The HSD Virtual Learning Facilitator will supervise students taking school assessments, with the Principal providing additional support as needed. The District Testing Coordinator and Principal will work together to follow the DESE requirements for the administration of state-mandated assessments, including scheduling, staff supervision, and student accommodations.

Virtual Arkansas courses have periodic formative assessments, checks for understanding, and pre-tests to determine students' mastery of learning throughout the modules of a course that are aligned to the summative module assessments.

GRADING

Students will follow the grading practices and procedures found in the K-12 HSD Student/Parent Handbook and in the signed agreement for virtual learning.

In addition to the Virtual Learning teacher, HSD will employ a Virtual Learning facilitator that will monitor student learning progress. Those student grades that fall below a "C" average will require intervention from the facilitator, in consultation with the principal, to raise the grade. This intervention could be: attending additional synchronous learning opportunities, daily check-ins with the facilitator regarding work completion for the class, or on-site tutoring. At the end of the semester, any student receiving a "D" or "F" in any Virtual Learning course will be required to return to on-site learning for the remainder of the year.

Grades will be monitored at least 8 times per year at 4 to 5 week intervals by building administration. Parent contact will be made if a student has a failing grade at any checkpoint. During this parent contact, a plan will be established to improve the student's achievement. At this point, the student will be monitored on a weekly basis until a passing grade is achieved. In the event that a student fails one or more virtual courses during a semester, they will be required to return to on-site instruction.

Each week, Virtual Arkansas teachers send a grade report to the student and parent/guardian, and initiate further contact with students demonstrating difficulties with course content.

DISCIPLINE

Students involved in virtual learning are required to follow all school district policies while on campus or engaged in learning in VA. It is the expectation that virtual students thoroughly understand all school district policies concerning acceptable use of devices and networks.

HSD uses an educational safety software program, Go Guardian, which helps school staff track student use of and interaction upon technology. This software helps school staff monitor appropriate and inappropriate use of the Internet by users. Administration receives a daily report of usage, as well as an alert if an inappropriate or unauthorized site has been accessed or attempted to access. This software is helpful in HSD making sure our students are as safe as possible when on technology issued from the district.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Special Education - The IEP team will recommend if virtual learning is appropriate for a SPED student.

Special Education programs delivered in a virtual learning environment will follow all IDEA/Arkansas Rules and Regulations for Special Education. Information discussed during meetings will be documented and placed in the student's file. All modifications/accommodations will be provided according to students' IEP. During virtual learning, students who have been identified as needing special education services will be served through Zoom or other communication platforms. Based on progress monitoring data, students needing Special Education services may be required to meet face-to-face with district special education certified staff.

Virtual Teachers use curriculum and instructional strategies that include the following evidence-based practices, including Universal Design for Learning, which is designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities:

1. Provide explicit instruction,
2. Model learning strategies,
3. Make instruction accessible, and
4. Provide tools to support learning, provide appropriate feedback, and capitalize on technology.

The digital curriculum and learning management system provide accommodations for Special Education students and families. These accommodations include addressing multiple learning preferences, accommodations for assessments, video captions/transcripts, color and contrast considerations, read-aloud and translation tools, multiple means of representation of key concepts (verbal, concrete manipulative, numerical, graphical, and symbolic.)

For Special Education students with language challenges, Virtual Teachers can enable Canvas' embedded ReadSpeaker tool, a robust language-support, feature. This tool allows students to hear on-screen text read aloud. Students and families will be

supported in using the tools during asynchronous learning through the initial course orientation and the Virtual Teacher will facilitate the usage of the tools, as needed, during synchronous learning.

The Principal and Special Education Supervisor will ensure that the HSD Special Education teacher has a daily period, or more than one if needed, for the purpose of providing direct support for those students in Virtual Learning with an IEP, as needed to meet this requirement. Zoom will be used as a communication tool for the virtual delivery of direct support for students.

504 - The 504 team will recommend if virtual learning is appropriate for the 504 student.

English Language Learner - The LPAC team will recommend if virtual learning is appropriate for the ELL student. HSD will ensure that all requirements of the District English Learner plan are met for on-site and remote learners, including ELPA21 screening and summative assessment provided by the district. Communication with families will be in a language, whether written or verbal, and manner that families will understand and will be provided via the HSD Interpreter.

All ELL accommodations are determined by the districts' Language Proficiency and Assessment Committee (LPAC) and will be shared with the virtual platform providers who will ensure accommodations are provided so that English Learners have access to the core curriculum via providing integrated supports. The district will regularly communicate with the virtual platform provider regarding the ELL students' progress and make any necessary adjustments to needed accommodations and supports.

For students choosing HSD 9-12 Virtual Learning, the District ELL Coordinator will communicate with students and the HSD facilitator, as well as Virtual Arkansas teachers, to monitor progress of identified students, to see how they're doing, as well as stay connected with their parents and families. Zoom will be the primary communication tool, but phone calls or face-to-face meetings could occur, especially if interpretation is needed.

Virtual Arkansas provides an accessibility tool called ReadSpeaker to support ESOL/ESL. The student selects the ReadSpeaker tool in the language that the student needs the content provided to them. Virtual Arkansas provides the needed accommodations/modifications per the individual LEP uploaded into the SIS by partnering schools. Accommodations will be uploaded to the SIS by the remote facilitator. The district ESOL/ESL coordinator may be accessed through the remote facilitator to assist the student in any needed support. The district will provide a bilingual para to assist in any needed communication that may need to take place

between the parent of the ESOL/ESL student and the teacher and/or remote facilitator.

Migrant - Students who are ESOL/ESL and are also enrolled in the migrant program will also have additional support from the Migrant Coordinator. This coordinator provides resources and support to families of migrant students by ensuring that their educational, personal, nutritional, and other needs are met. (Examples include providing school supplies, clothing, technology, tutoring, interpretation services, connecting with state and local resources, etc.) The Migrant Coordinator will connect with students at least monthly but more often if needed via Zoom or face-to-face either at their homes or on-site to help facilitate student success in Virtual Learning.

Gifted and Talented - Students will have the opportunity to participate in accelerated, Pre-AP, or AP courses taught by highly trained teachers. All requirements from the Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards will be met for virtual students.

Speech and OT/PT - Students will be scheduled a specific time for therapy based on their needs. The HSD Speech Pathologist will provide services to students as needed to meet the requirements of the student's IEP. This direct support will be provided via Zoom. OT and PT services will be provided on-site to students and will be provided, if possible, on days when students come onto campus to take necessary school and state mandated assessments.

Dyslexia - HSD has a district evidence-based plan containing programs that are approved to support students that have been identified with characteristics of dyslexia. Dyslexia screening and services, as approved by DESE and following the Dyslexia Resource Guide from DESE, will be provided to all virtual students through synchronous methods either in person or by video communication with the proper interventionists. Virtual Learning students will be required to be onsite at the Hermitage High School campus for screening and progress monitoring. Dyslexia Interventionists will coordinate with the HSD Virtual Learning Facilitator, Principal, student, and parents to schedule and communicate plans for screening and progress monitoring.

Virtual Arkansas provides accessibility tools to support students with dyslexia including ReadSpeaker that will read any text in the course to students. Virtual Arkansas will provide the needed accommodations/modifications per the individual 504 plan uploaded into the SIS by partnering school.

If a student is in Virtual Learning and receives direct services, the student will join class daily through a synchronous digital platform. If needed to meet educational needs, HSD

teachers may work with parents and administration to deliver in person instruction during a specified period of time.

HSD requires weekly check-ins with students for social/emotional support by a member of the school's Behavior and Attendance Team (either the counselor, social worker, dean of students, or principal). These check-ins may be in person or by video communication.

HSD will also make students and parents aware of opportunities for additional support provided by the state for learning loss. This information will be posted on our website under the American Rescue Plan Act tab at the top of the homepage.

The Child Nutrition department at HSD will provide meals to students that meet all mandatory regulations for healthy meals. Specific dates/times for meal pickup will be provided at the beginning of the school year.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students enrolled in Virtual Learning may still participate in athletics and extracurricular activities, such as band, choir, athletics, quiz bowl, etc.

Students must attend any extracurricular classes, practices, and activities in person.

Parents are responsible for providing transportation for students to and from these activities if they occur during the school day. If the district does not provide transportation to the event, activity, practice occurring after school, transportation is the responsibility of the parent. Students must ride with the teams or groups to events or competitions if district transportation is provided, and the same expectations and procedures will be followed for virtual learners and for on-site learners.

Virtual Learning students will be encouraged to participate in some type of supervised physical activity daily. The Child Nutrition department at HSD will provide meals to students that meet all mandatory regulations for health meals. Virtual Learning students will be encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities offered by HSD.

IS MY STUDENT SUITED FOR VIRTUAL LEARNING???

Research has identified several characteristics of learners that will likely experience success in this type of learning environment. These characteristics include:

- Being able to manage their time,
- Being able to communicate their needs, problem-solve, work with others online, and use email and other communication platforms proficiently,

- Being able to study and complete assignments independently,
- Being able to motivate themselves to acquire knowledge and skills and fulfill those tasks assigned to them,
- Being able to succeed in class because of a solid foundation in reading, writing, math, and computer literacy skills, and
- Being able to proficiently use technology, including connecting to the Internet, creating documents, using technology tools to assist with learning, and identifying appropriate resources for learning.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications are found at www.hermitageschools.org under the section in RED labeled American Rescue Plan Act/Ready for Learning.

Applications are due to the district by noon on Friday, May 14, 2021. Capacity for Virtual Learning for HSD students in grades 9 - 12 is limited to 10.

To ensure that students are successful in Virtual Learning and are able to remain on-track to graduate or advance to the next grade level, applications will be reviewed to determine whether virtual learning is the best environment for students interested in this option.

Entrance criteria to be considered for admission to Virtual Learning will include attendance, GPA, student achievement and Rtl data. Additional data will be considered as needed to assess students prior to making a decision.

Remember: Virtual learners are required to take class, interim, school, and state-mandated assessments on-site. Students who have not participated in on-site assessments in the previous year (2020-2021) will not be eligible for participation in Virtual Learning in the 2021-2022 school year.