5.11—DIGITAL LEARNING COURSES

**Definitions**

For the purposes of this policy:

“Blended Learning” is education in which instruction and content are delivered through supervised instruction in a classroom and online delivery of instruction with some element of student control over time, place, path, or pace.

“Digital Learning” means a digital technology or internet-based educational delivery model that does not rely exclusively on compressed interactive video (CIV). Digital learning includes online and blended learning.

“Instructional Materials” means:

1. Traditional books, textbooks, and trade books in printed and bound form;
2. Activity-oriented programs that may include:
   1. Manipulatives;
   2. Hand-held calculators;
   3. Other hands-on materials; and
3. Technology-based materials that require the use of electronic equipment in order to be used in the learning process.

“Online Learning” is education in which instruction and content are delivered primarily over the Internet. The term does not include print-based correspondence education, broadcast television or radio, videocassettes, compact disks and stand-alone educational software programs that do not have a significant Internet-based instructional component.

“Public School Student Accessing Courses at a Distance” means a student who is scheduled for a full course load through the District and attends all classes virtually.

**Digital Course Offerings**

The District shall offer one or more digital learning course(s) through one or more District approved provider(s) as either a primary or supplementary method of instruction. The courses may be in a blended learning, online-based, or other technology-based format and shall be tailored to meet the needs of each student.

All digitally offered courses shall meet or exceed the State Board of Education's curriculum standards and requirements and be capable of being assessed and measured through standardized or local assessments. Additionally, the District shall ensure there is sufficient infrastructure to handle and facilitate a quality digital learning environment.

As an approved digital learning provider, the District shall annually determine what District created digital learning courses it will provide to our students.**1** The District may also choose to provide digital learning courses by contracting with outside providers of such courses, who have been pre-approved by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The School Board shall determine the provider method or combination of methods for the District. The Superintendent shall ensure that all digital learning courses provided to District students, regardless of the source of the course, have been approved by DESE.

District created digital courses and any digital courses the district purchases from outside providers shall adhere to the guidelines for the use of digitally transmitted copyrighted materials set forth in Policy 5.8—USE OF COPYRIGHTED MATERIALS as well as applicable statutory requirements.

The District shall require all outside providers to incorporate Policy 5.8 as a condition of the service contract. Failure of the outside provider to abide by Policy 5.8 shall constitute a breach of contract and the outside provider shall be responsible for any costs resulting from such breach.

A student may elect to take any or all of his/her scheduled courses digitally. The student’s attendance in the student’s digital course(s) shall be determined in accordance with Policy 4.7—ABSENCES.

The District is responsible for providing all instructional materials for each student who enrolls in a District approved digital learning course.**3**

Regardless of any other provisions of this policy, the District may restrict a student's access to digital courses when the student's building principal determines the student’s participation in such a course would not be academically appropriate based on the student's past performance in digital courses. Furthermore, the student's building principal may revoke a student's eligibility to continue taking a digital learning course if the student's performance during the semester indicates the student is not succeeding in the course.**4**

Notes: **1** The district is NOT required to provide its own digital learning courses, but doing so affords the most oversight of what content such courses contain and how the courses are taught. Note that should the district choose to offer digital courses to non-district students, the district will have to go through the same provider approval process as is required for all "outside" providers.

**2** 7.04 of DESE Rules Governing Distance and Digital Learning allows a student to take all courses virtually. Attendance in a synchronous digital course must be tracked in the same manner as for students attending an in-person course. Students attending an asynchronous digital corse should have their attendance tracked in a manner that best works with your digital course platform. It is possible for a student who is assigned a period to complete the asynchronous digital course who fails to be physically present may be considered truant but may not be absent for the digital course if they meet the attendance requirements for the asynchronous attendance method.

Example: A ninth (9th) grade student elects to take one (1) course digitally. The other courses the student takes are scheduled for first (1st), second (2nd), fourth (4th), fifth (5th), and sixth (6th) periods and the student has a study hall during seventh (7th) period. Because the student is too young to check out for third (3rd) period, the student is assigned third (3rd) period to work on the asynchronous digital course. If the student goes to the gym one day during third (3rd) period instead of the classroom where the student is supposed to be, the student would be truant but would not be absent so long as the student met the requirements to not be treated absent for the asynchronous digital course.

**3** This sentence is based on the statutory definition of "instructional materials". The statute further provides that the instructional materials shall be provided at no cost to students for all subjects taught.

**4** While digital learning offers great promise for engaging students, it also requires maturity and study skills that will not work for some students. The intention of the paragraph is to leave the initial digital enrollment open to previously poor and/or disengaged students who might thrive in a digital format, and yet still give the principal the authority to intervene when it's in the student's best interest.

Cross References: 4.7—ABSENCES

4.45—SMART CORE CURRICULUM AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

5.8—USE OF COPYRIGHTED MATERIALS

Legal References: A.C.A. § 6-16-1401 et seq.

A.C.A. § 6-18-213

A.C.A. § 6-18-222

A.C.A. § 6-28-109

DESE RULES GOVERNING DISTANCE AND DIGITAL LEARNING

Date Adopted:

Last Revised: