

Pierce City R-VI School District



Online Course Handbook

Table of Contents

Introduction

Checklist

What is MoCAP? What is Launch?

Why Consider Online Learning?

Profile of a Successful Online Student

Making the Decision

Enrollment Procedures

Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty

Progress Monitoring

State Testing

Graduation Requirements/Early Graduation

Senior Information

A+ Program

IEP/504 Students

School Athletics and Activities

Technology

Final Advice to Parents

Online Learning Agreement

Pierce City R-VI Board Policy

Introduction

The Online Course Parent/Student Handbook is a vital part of our program. Though the handbook does not contain every specific rule or regulation concerning the program, it does have all major policies and general information to help students and their parents better understand this unique program. Please read the handbook carefully.

This guide has been prepared for parents, guardians, counselors and others who want to help students first decide whether online courses are a good option for them and, if so, how to proceed. In the pages that follow, you will find information about:

- ❖ the characteristics of a successful online learner,
- ❖ how to enroll in online courses and,
- ❖ the impact coursework may have on academics and activities.

Senate Bill 603 At a Glance

In the spring of 2018, SB 603 was passed, thereby expanding the online learning opportunities for students in Missouri. Highlights of this legislation are below.

- The school district must adopt a policy that creates a process for students to enroll in virtual courses and may include consulting with a school counselor.
- The school district must pay for eligible K-12 students to take virtual courses as long as the student: one, resides in the district; two, is currently enrolled in the district and, three, was enrolled full-time in a public school the previous semester. **Exceptions for homeschool students who reside in the district is referenced below in the 'homeschool student' section of this document.
- School districts are not required to pay for courses beyond full-time enrollment. Therefore, if a student is already enrolled in seven courses in a semester during the regular year (or two courses during the summer school session), the district will not be required to pay for additional courses.
- School districts are able to determine a student's eligibility to enroll in an online course and can refuse enrollment based on 'the best educational interest of the child'. Should the parent disagree with the district's determination, an appeal may be made to the local school board.

Checklist

Pierce City R-VI School District
Virtual School Checklist
2020-2021

****School Board policy dictates that students wishing to enroll in an online school complete a series of tasks before the request can be reviewed. This is not a process that can be completed in one day, or with one signature. The process includes a component where the best educational interests of the student are considered by all stakeholders. It is recommended that parents print out a copy of this form, and check off each step as it is completed.**

_____ Parent/Guardian obtains a request to enroll from the building office

_____ Meeting with building principal and/or school counselor

_____ Virtual Schooling Application filled out and returned to office

_____ Meeting with building principal and/or school counselor to announce acceptance or denial of student request

_____ If approved, student is enrolled in courses through the virtual school preferred by the district

What is MoCAP? What is Launch?

Missouri Course Access and Virtual School Program (MOCAP) was established in 2007 as the state's online school. It was previously known as Missouri Virtual Instruction Program (MOVIP). Currently, MOCAP offers courses for 9th through 12th grade and plans to expand to grades K-12. Students can take courses from any Internet-connected computer, available 24-hours a day, seven days a week. MOCAP's mission is to offer Missouri students equal access to a wide range of high quality courses, and interactive online learning that is neither time nor place dependent.

Local school districts and charter schools may use their own preferred online provider. The Pierce City School District's preferred provider is Launch. Launch is operated and overseen by the Springfield, MO School District and currently offers over 120 courses. Courses are designed by Missouri teachers and aligned to the state standards. A formal review process is built into all course development to ensure high quality and rigor. Students wishing to take advantage of online learning opportunities will do so through Launch. All information/procedures that follow in this document are in reference to Launch.

If a student wishes to pursue an online class offering through other MoCAP options outside of Launch, he/she will need to contact the counselor/admin to begin the appeal process. More specifics on that process are at the end of this document.

Current course offerings through Launch can be found at: <https://fueledbylaunch.com/courses/>

Why Consider Online Learning?

Students take online courses for a variety of reasons. For some students, it expands the range of courses and opportunities, particularly if a student cannot access a face-to-face course due to scheduling conflicts. For others, it allows students to take courses not offered at the local level. Other students may use online course opportunities for credit recovery or as a viable homebound option. And, still others may simply prefer the online learning format.

From a student's point of view, online learning may be attractive because it is:

- ❖ Personalized to individual needs and learning goals.
- ❖ Flexible so a student can try different ways to learn.
- ❖ Interactive and engaging because students will be meeting people from other school districts in a safe, monitored environment.
- ❖ Paced by individual progress so students can move as fast or as slow as needed in order to attain learning goals.
- ❖ Collaborative with faculty, peers and others.
- ❖ Responsive and supportive when a student needs extra help or time to learn.
- ❖ Available to all students 24 hours a day.

Profile of a Successful Online Student

The most important question to answer is whether or not the student is well suited to be in an online learning environment. Parents and students should be aware that the demands of online courses are equal to or exceed those of traditional 'face to face' courses. Online instruction places much more responsibility on the student. A student should plan to spend at least one hour a day, five days a week, on each course. In other words, at least five hours per week on each course. This is similar to the amount of time a student would spend in a course at the local "brick and mortar" school. Instructors with online teaching experience agree that students who are successful at online learning have the following critical characteristics:

❖ **Good Time Management**

Can the student create and maintain a study schedule throughout the semester without the face-to-face interaction with a teacher?

❖ **Effective Communication**

Can the student ask for help, make contact with other students and/or instructors online and describe any problem he/she is having with the learning materials using email?

❖ **Independent Study Habits**

Can the student study and complete assignments without direct supervision and maintain the self discipline necessary to stick to a schedule?

❖ **Self-Motivation**

Does the student have a strong desire to learn skills, acquire knowledge and fulfill assignments in online courses because of their educational goals?

❖ **Academic Readiness**

Does the student have the basic reading, writing, math and computer literacy skills to succeed in an online course?

❖ **Technologically Prepared**

Does the student know how to open, create and/or save a document, use various technology tools and identify file formats (e.g., doc, xls, pdf, jpg)?

Making the Decision

In this process, a crucial role of the parent is to help the student decide if online learning is the most effective way for him/her to learn. Using the profile in the previous section is a starting point for making this determination. Once a parent decides if a student is likely to be successful, there are other questions to consider.

Technology

- What are the technical requirements for the courses the student wants/needs to take?
- Can the parent/guardian provide internet access that the student needs?
- How technologically savvy are the parents/students?

Learning Environment

- Is there a quiet area in the home in which the student can work on the online course or does the student have easy access to a facility that provides this form of environment (such as the public library)?
- Will there be a regular, designated time of day in which the student will work on the course(s)?
- Is the student willing and able to ask for help when needed?

Considering the Course

- Does the course meet academic/graduation requirements?
- Has the course been approved for credit by the school?
- Are there prerequisites for the online courses? Has the student met these requirements?
- Does the course meet NCAA Eligibility Requirements for potential Division I and II student athletes?
- How rigid are the course assignment/test dates?
- What is the time commitment (daily and length of term)?
- How do students/parents receive grade updates and the final grades?
- When can a student drop the course if he/she finds it too difficult?

Enrollment Procedures

In order to enroll in an online course under the provisions of Senate Bill 603, students must be a resident of the Pierce City School District and be willing to enroll in the district.

Students enrolling in Virtual Learning are required to commit to no less than one academic semester for 6th-12th graders or one academic quarter for Kindergarten through 5th graders.

Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty

Using someone else's work and claiming it as your own, even if it is unintentional, is plagiarism. It is important that students cite sources and use quotation marks appropriately to avoid

plagiarism. Launch has a specific plagiarism policy and list of consequences. These same consequences can be invoked for cheating and/or forging/falsifying documents.

- 1st offense: Student will be allowed to redo assignments for full credit and a formal warning will be issued.
- 2nd offense: Student will be allowed to redo the assignment for half credit and a second formal warning will be issued.
- 3rd offense: Student will receive a zero for the assignment and be referred to the Launch principal for possible additional consequences.

Progress Monitoring

- Parents are given parent observer accounts to monitor progress of their students.
- District employees (when given permission) can monitor student progress using Dropout Detective.

State Testing

All MOCAP and/or Launch students are required to participate in the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) and End of Course (EOC) testing when appropriate. MAP and EOC tests measure students' progress toward mastery of the Show-Me Standards, which are the educational standards in Missouri. All testing is conducted at the local school site in which the student resides.

- **MAP:** All students in grades three through eight in Missouri will take the MAP test in communication arts and math. Students in grades five and eight will also take the MAP test in science.
- **EOC:** End-of-Course assessments are taken when a student has received instruction on the course-level expectations for an assessment, regardless of grade level (but typically in high school). EOC tests are required in the subject areas of algebra I, biology, English II and Government.

Graduation Requirements

To earn a Pierce City School District diploma, students need to successfully complete the 26 credit requirements defined in the Student Handbook on page 5. Students and parents need to work closely with the school counselor to make sure they are on track to graduate.

Early Graduation

Students who wish to graduate early will be required to meet with a guidance counselor and submit written notification to the principal. The guidance counselor will notify the student's parents or guardians of the student's decision if the student is a dependent. The student will

receive a diploma if the student has met the Pierce City R-VI School District's graduation requirements. The student who chooses early graduation will be allowed to participate in the spring graduation ceremonies but will be considered an alumnus for all other activities.

Class Rank

All online course grades through Launch will be calculated into a student's class rank equivalent to a course taken face-to-face at PCHS. For example, an AP course taken through Launch will receive the same weight as an AP course taken face-to-face as long as the student takes the AP exam in May.

Senior Information

The senior year is a busy time for students and families and there are a host of deadlines involved in end of the year activities and graduation. Daily announcements are made at school and regular grade level newsletters are shared with families. It is the responsibility of the student and his/her parent/guardian to keep up-to-date on senior deadlines and expectations. Specific questions can be sent to the High School Office.

A+ Program

Students who are enrolled in the A+ program and take virtual courses will have their attendance recorded as 95%, thereby allowing them to meet the A+ program attendance requirements. Students enrolled in face-to-face coursework will have the attendance recorded based on actual seat time. Regardless of whether a student is enrolled in virtual or face-to-face coursework, all A+ program expectations apply. These included:

- Being a U.S. citizen or permanent resident;
- Entering into a written agreement with RPHS expressing the desire to be a part of the A+ program;
- Graduate with a 2.5 (or above) unweighted grade point average;
- Attend an A+ designated school for 3 years prior to graduation (being enrolled in RPHS and taking Launch virtual classes would apply in this situation);
- Have a 95% attendance record for grades 9-12;
- Perform at least 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring (must be approved by A+ coordinator prior to engaging in the activity);
- Maintain good citizenship; and
- Achieve a score of proficient or advanced on the Algebra I end of course (EOC) exam or higher level DESE approved end of course (EOC) exam in mathematics.

IEP/504 Students

Launch instructors are trained in accommodating students' needs. The school's process coordinator will email your student's IEP or 504 to Launch so that it can be distributed to the student's teachers. Accommodations will be made accordingly.

School Athletics and Activities

Parents are strongly encouraged to review the [MSHSAA handbook](#) for further clarification regarding eligibility. For specific questions, please contact the Pierce City Athletic Director with any questions.

Technology

Any full-time students will be issued a chromebook through the district. The chromebook will meet the technology requirements for any online course taken through Launch. The district, however, will not provide internet access; this is the responsibility of the parents/guardians. All Launch courses are hosted by Canvas, an Interactive Learning Management System.

Students are provided with HELP Desk Support through Launch, available from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., 7 days a week. There are three ways to access help:

1. Send an email to support@fueledbylaunch.com (typical response is within 30 minutes)
2. Use your Canvas inbox to send a message to HELP.
3. Call the Launch office at 417-523-0417. The office is only open from 7:30-4:00 Monday through Friday.

Final Advice for Parents

Throughout the student's enrollment in the online course, it is best practice to do the following:

- Set up a study space, including technology required.
- Be prepared for any technical issues that may come up.
- Review the syllabus with your student.
- Define expectations for when and where your student will work on the course.
- Reinforce that online courses are as important as face-to-face courses and do become a part of the educational record.
- See that your student establishes a routine for working on his/her online course.
- Help your student maintain a regular study schedule.
- Monitor your student's progress.

Pierce City R-VI School District Online Learning Agreement

Please complete the information below as a part of the enrollment process.

Student Name (First, Middle, Last): _____

Birthdate(mm/dd/yyyy): _____ GradeLevel: _____

Student Email: _____

Does student have an IEP (circle one)? Yes No

Does student have a 504 (circle one)? Yes No

Parent/Guardian Name (First, Last): _____

Parent/Guardian Phone Number: (_____) _____ - _____

Parent/Guardian Email: _____

Parent/Guardian Address: _____

We have received and reviewed the Online Course Parent/Student Handbook and understand that it is our responsibility to follow all expectations set forth within the Handbook

Student Signature

Date

Student Name (Printed)

Parent Signature

Date

Parent Name (Printed)

For School Use Only

Date Approved:

Approved By: