Westview School District
Virtual Learning Handbook

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Introduction

This guide has been prepared for parents, guardians, counselors, and others who want to help students first decide whether virtual 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 virtual learner,
- how to enroll in virtual 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 virtual 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-8 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 are 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 a virtual 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.

What is MOCAP?

Missouri Course Access and Virtual School Program (MOCAP) was established in 2007 as the state's virtual learning school. It was previously known as Missouri Virtual Instruction Program (MoVIP). Currently, MOCAP offers courses for grades K-8. 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 virtual learning that is neither time nor place dependent.

Local school districts and charter schools may use their own preferred virtual learning provider. The Westview 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 virtual 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 a virtual class offering through other MOCAP options outside of Westview Virtual, he/she will need to contact the counselor/admin to discuss the enrollment process. More specifics on that process are at the end of this document.

Why Consider Virtual Learning?

Students take virtual 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 virtual course opportunities for credit recovery or as a viable homebound option. And, still others may simply prefer the virtual learning format.

From a student's point of view, virtual 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.
- ❖ Relevant to the virtual/online life many students lead.
- ❖ 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 Virtual Learning Student

The most important question to answer is whether or not the student is well suited to be in a virtual learning environment. Parents and students should be aware that the demands of virtual courses are equal to or exceed those of traditional 'face to face' courses. Virtual 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 virtual teaching experience agree that students who are successful at virtual 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 virtual courses because of their educational goals?

- ❖ **Academic Readiness**

  Does the student have the basic reading, writing, math and computer literacy skills to succeed in a virtual learning 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)?

The Stanford Research Institute examined the accessibility of virtual learning for students, especially those who were at risk of failure. Their report cautions that students who have failed face-to-face classes may have challenges that will affect their success in a virtual learning course as well. Many students do not realize that they will have to be even more accountable for their time, performance and productivity in a virtual learning class.

Making the Decision

In this process, a crucial role of the parent is to help the student decide if virtual 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 virtual 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 requirements?
➔ Are there prerequisites for the virtual courses? Has the student met these requirements?
➔ Does the course meet the 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 a virtual course, students must be a resident of the Westview School District and be enrolled in the district. They must enroll within the first 5 days of the semester or when they enter the district.

Upon determining that virtual learning may be a viable option for a student, parents should contact the school counselor to pursue possible enrollment. A meeting will be scheduled with the student's counselor and/or administrator and student eligibility will be determined. The school district may deny a student/parent request to enroll in a virtual course at district cost if one or more of the following is true:

➔ The student has previously gained the credits provided from the completion of the virtual course.
➔ The virtual course is not capable of generating academic credit.
➔ The virtual course is inconsistent with the remaining graduation requirements of the student.
➔ The student has not completed the prerequisite coursework for the requested virtual course.
➔ The student has failed a previous virtual course(s).
➔ The course enrollment request does not occur within the same timelines established by Launch and/or the school district.

The list above is provided to parents/guardians as a guide, but other factors could exist which result in denial of virtual learning school enrollment. Should a student meet the eligibility expectations and the course requests are aligned to graduation requirements, he/she will be enrolled in the Launch courses agreed upon.

[Virtual Course Enrollment Form](#)

**If a family works directly with Launch and not through our district counselor to enroll in a Launch class the family will be responsible for the cost of the course(s) in which they

enroll their student(s). In addition, Westview School District may not accept the credit from these courses.

Homeschool Students

If a student who resides in the Westview School District was homeschooled the prior semester and wishes to take virtual courses at the district's expense, there are allowances for this. The following criteria must be met:
- ➔ The student resides in the district (and provides proof of residency)
- ➔ The student must enroll in Launch courses only
- ➔ The student must meet all of Launch's expectations (regarding prerequisites, etc.)
- ➔ The student may only enroll in a total of six units a semester during the school year or two courses during the summer semester (but may enroll in less than six)

Homebound Students

Virtual Education can be used for Homebound purposes for grades 7-12 after a team determines virtual is the best educational decision for the student. The team will use the same determination criteria as listed above.

Academic Information

Launch offers various types of virtual coursework. All coursework is aligned to the Missouri State Standards. Content is reviewed annually to ensure updated resources as well as access to high-quality digital resources.

- ❖ **Traditional Virtual Learning**
    - ➢ Designed for students earning first-time credits
    - ➢ Students earn a letter grade and percentage
    - ➢ Starts and stops with the traditional calendar; has set due dates
    - ➢ Transfer grades are accepted after the first 20 days of school
    - ➢ NCAA and MSHSAA approved
    - ➢ Course can be taken over a quarter or semester
    - ➢ Requires a proctored final exam conducted via web conferencing
    - ➢ Curriculum built in a project-based learning format to include individual and group work delivered via individual assignments, culminating events, group discussions, etc

No-Show Procedure

Students will be dropped from courses if they fail to log in for 5 consecutive days and could be referred to the Newton County Juvenile Courts for truancy per Westview School District attendance policy.

In an effort to maintain accurate attendance records for virtual courses, the following no-show procedure will be implemented for all students participating in launch. Students are considered a "no-show" if they do not log into their course for the specified times outlined in the policy. Student login is monitored by the Launch office weekly.

- A student is considered a "no-show" if he or she has not logged into and participated in their course prior to the stated course drop date. Students will be dropped with zero days of attendance reported with counselor or liaison being notified at least 2 school days prior.
- After the drop date, a student can be dropped and is considered a "no-show" if he or she has not logged into and participated in his or her course for 19 consecutive calendar days. The last date of attendance will be reported as his or her last date of login and participation. Counselors or district liaisons will receive notice of potential drop at calendar day 5 of no consecutive login and participation. If the student's last date of attendance is after the stated course drop date, the student will receive an F for the course in addition to being dropped.
- At 5 days the student-parent will be notified and the parents will have to make a plan with the counselor on attendance.
- At 10 days the students will have to come to the school

Progress Monitoring

Parents are given parent observer accounts to monitor the progress of their students. The student must complete the first two assignments within 15 days or will be dropped from the virtual class.

For students enrolled in Launch; District employees can monitor student progress using Dropout Detective and notify parents when the student is not making progress.

State Testing

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

- **MAP Grade-Level:** 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.

- **MAP 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 I, English II, and Government

IEP/504 Students

If a student has an IEP or 504, that team must meet to decide if Launch is the best educational decision for the student. 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.

MOCAP Appeal Process

If the principal or designee determines that it is not in a student's best educational interest to take a virtual course, the student and the parents/guardians will be notified in writing, provided an explanation for the decision and informed that the student or parents/guardians may appeal the decision to the Board. However, if the student is receiving special education services, the student's IEP team will make the final decision regarding student enrollment in a virtual course in accordance with federal law, and the decision must be appealed through the special education process rather than through the Board.

Virtual Course Determination Letter

If the student or parent/guardian appeals to the Board, the principal or designee will provide the Board written reasons for denying the student's enrollment, and the student or parent/guardian will provide written reasons the student should be allowed to take the course. Both documents will be retained by the Board and will be incorporated into the minutes. In addition, the student, parents/guardians and the principal or designee will be allowed to present their arguments at a Board meeting.

The appeal to the Board shall be held in closed session. The Board will consider the information presented and release a written decision within 30 calendar days of the meeting. The student or parents/guardians may appeal the decision to DESE. The appeal to DESE must be filed within seven days of the Board's final decision.

School Athletics and Activities

Students that desire eligibility to participate in activities or sports at a Westview school must meet the requirements set forth in Section 2 of the MSHSAA Handbook, entitled *Student Essential By-Laws*. A student who enrolls in virtual classes through the Westview Virtual learning or Launch program may meet eligibility requirements outlined in By-Law 2.3.2 through meeting ALL of the following:

1. The student is an enrolled student of the public middle of residence, as defined in By-Law 3.10, and is taking a minimum of <u>two credit-bearing</u>, <u>seat-time classes</u> for a minimum of 1.0 units of credit at the school, **and**
2. The middle/high school administration confirms after a full academic review that the student is further enrolled in courses taken outside of the school which bring the student up to the academic credit requirements outlined in By-Law 2.3.2 (80%). A minimum of three units of credit per semester (6 classes) must be completed to be eligible. For example, a student could take multiple virtual classes in one semester, but must then take 2 classes (1 credit) in the same semester on the high school campus to be eligible.
3. All classes/assignments must be completed by the high school's close of the semester, as per By-Law 2.3.11, in order for those classes/credits to be considered toward activity eligibility.
4. To be eligible in the following semester, students must earn a minimum of 3 full credits the semester prior.

Parents are strongly encouraged to review the [MSHSAA handbook](#) for further clarification regarding eligibility. For specific questions, please contact the Westview Counselor at 417-776-2425

Technology

Any full-time students grade 3-12, will be issued a Chromebook through the school district. 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 currently used at the high school. Students are provided with HELP Desk Support through Launch, available from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., 7 days a week.

Final Advice for Parents

Throughout the student's enrollment in the virtual courses, 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.
- ➔ Agree on incentives and consequences.
- ➔ Reinforce that virtual 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 virtual course.
- ➔ Help your student maintain a regular study schedule.
- ➔ Monitor your student's progress.

Contacts

The first point of contact for these opportunities will be your student's school counselor.

Westview School

Ashley Carpenter   www.acarpenter@wc6.org   417.776.2425

Westview School District
Virtual Learning Agreement

Student Name: _____   Grade Level:_____

School: _____   Counselor: _____

The Virtual Learning 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.

We have received and reviewed the Virtual Learning Parent/Student Handbook and understand that it is our responsibility to follow all of the expectations set forth within the handbook.

Please list the virtual courses in which the student wishes to enroll:

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____

_____   _____
Student Signature   Date

_____
Student Name (Printed)

_____   _____
Parent Signature   Date

_____
Parent Name (Printed)

Online Learner Readiness Rubric

Name _____   Developed by **MICHIGAN VIRTUAL**

Student Readiness	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	Comments
Technology Skills	Student has little, if any, experience using a computer or the Internet, and has minimal desire to develop more skills in this area.	Student has limited experience using a computer and the Internet, and has expressed a strong interest in developing more skills in this area.	Student has strong computer skills and more than adequate experience using a word processor, email application and web browser.	Student has excellent computer skills and significant experience using a word processor, email application and web browser, and is comfortable downloading information from the Internet and using other technology tools and applications.	Comments:
Work & Study Habits	Student often needs reminders to complete routine assignments, often turns homework in late and is not able to spend 5-10 hours per week on each online course.	Student sometimes needs reminders and assistance in completing routine assignments and has pledged to spend 5-10 hours per week on each online course enrollment.	Student rarely needs reminders or assistance in completing routine assignments and has demonstrated good independent study habits.	Student does not need reminders or assistance in completing routine assignments, usually finishes homework ahead of time and has successfully completed an independent study experience or taken an online course.	Comments:
Learning Style	Student is not a self-directed learner and often requires real-time feedback from teachers regarding basic directions and follow-up support.	Student beginning to demonstrate a behavior of self-directed learning and sometimes requires real-time feedback from teachers regarding basic directions and follow up support.	In general, the student is self-directed and does not require real-time feedback from teachers regarding basic directions and follow-up support.	Student is a self-directed learner and demonstrates a high level of comfort and skill in learning new material without requiring real-time feedback from teachers before, during and after regular school hours, and deals well with ambiguity.	Comments:
Technology/ Connectivity	Student does not have consistent access to a computer and a reliable connection to the Internet at home or at school.	Student has limited access to a computer with low-speed Internet service at school or at home.	Student has consistent access to a computer with moderate-speed Internet service at home or at school.	Student has daily access to a computer with high-speed Internet service at home and at a convenient location in the school building.	Comments:
Time Management	Student does not manage his or her time effectively in doing research, basic studies and preparing for tests or quizzes.	Student is beginning to demonstrate effective time management skills in doing research, basic studies and preparing for tests or quizzes.	Student has demonstrated effective time management skills in doing research, basic studies and preparing for tests or quizzes.	Student has demonstrated outstanding time management skills while participating in a variety of clubs, student organizations, sports and work activities.	Comments:
Interest/ Motivation	Student has little or no interest in the content area of the online course offering and has a negative or unrealistic attitude toward online learning.	Student has expressed concerns about enrolling in an online course or has an unrealistic attitude toward online learning.	Student has an interest in the content area of the online course offering, and has a positive and realistic attitude toward online learning.	Student has a strong interest in the content area of the online course offering, is highly motivated to enroll in an online course and has a positive and realistic attitude toward online learning.	Comments:
Reading/Writing Skills	Student is reading below grade level and has experienced difficulty with routine online writing assignments.	Student is reading at grade level and has demonstrated limited proficiency with writing assignments.	Student is reading at or above grade level and has demonstrated success with a variety of writing assignments.	Student is reading above grade level, has strong reading comprehension skills and has demonstrated success with complex writing assignments.	Comments:
Support Services	In general, parents and school personnel do not actively support online learning and are unable or unwilling to provide support assistance.	Student support system is limited, parents and school personnel are somewhat supportive of enrollment in online courses.	Student has open access to school-based mentoring/counseling service and parental support.	Student has regularly scheduled access to school-based mentoring/counseling services, parental support is strong and district has adopted policies and identified best practices to support students as online learners.	Comments:

Note: This rubric was not designed to be used as a tool to determine eligibility for enrollment in online courses, but instead to be used as a resource to help identify specific areas where students may need additional support to better ensure success.