Act 1240 Digital Learning Waiver Request

Status: **Reviewed**

🏛 Prairie Grove School District (7206000)

School Year 2022-2023

Applications will be reviewed in the order received. Incomplete applications will be returned to the district.

A notification letter will be sent to the superintendent at the email address listed above upon approval by the Arkansas State Board of Education.

NOTE: The approved application must then be posted on the district website - State Required Information.

District:

LEA #:	7206000
Superintendent:	Reba Holmes
Email:	reba.holmes@pgtigers.org
Phone:	(479) 846-4242
Duration Requested (not to exceed three years):	3 Years (School year 2022-2023 to 2024-2025)

The proposed waiver(s) will apply to the following schools:

| LEA(s)	Grades/Courses	Interaction	Delivery	Platforms
7206038 - Prairie Grove Middle School	5 and 6	Synchronous	Virtual (Online) / Remote (Distance)	LMS CMS
7206038 - Prairie Grove Middle School 7206035 - Prairie Grove Elementary School	GRADES K-6	Asynchronous	Virtual (Online) / Remote (Distance)	LMS CMS
7206040 - Prairie Grove Junior High School	7 & 8	Synchronous	Virtual (Online) / Remote (Distance)	LMS CMS

Waivers

Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
Attendance			6-18-213(a)(2)	

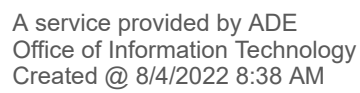| Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
				The Prairie Grove School District is requesting this waiver and will do the following. A student in the virtual learning environment who is not physically present on campus will be marked present if the student maintains engagement in the learning. Attendance in virtual learning courses shall be determined by the online attendance and time the student is working on the coursework as monitored by the teacher of record to ensure the student progresses toward standard mastery and credit attainment for the course. Engagement requirements: A student logs in weekly to the learning platform and submits assignments according to specified due dates. The adjustment may be made to meet an individual student based on their IEP, 504, or LPAC plan. For extenuating circumstances that require longer periods of time to complete assignments.
				The building administrator and Virtual Program Coordinator will work with the student and family to create a student success plan.
				If the district determines all students will be learning remotely based on the AMI plan, attendance will be determined by the District's AMI plan. Attendance policy 4.7 B: Attendance in virtual learning courses shall be determined by the online attendance and time the student is working on the coursework as monitored by the teacher of record to ensure the student progresses toward standard mastery and credit attainment for the course.
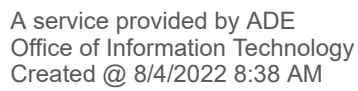
Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
Class Size Number of students:	1-A.5	DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load	6-17-812(a)(2)	

Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
				The Prairie Grove School District is requesting this waiver for large group instruction for grades K-8. The DESE Rules Governing Distance and Digital Learning, Sec. 6.07, state that distance learning courses, as defined in rule are considered "large group instruction" courses for the purposes of the Standards for Accreditation. Classes with 100% virtual enrollment may exceed class size maximums due to the fact that technology-based approaches are the primary instructional delivery and teachers are providing instruction through technology-based approaches utilizing an LMS with digital content and allowing for some degree of self-paced or flexible access. Teachers of record who are dedicated to teaching virtually or have a virtual class will adhere to DESE's rules regarding large group instruction. Teachers in grades K-6 who teach 100% virtual students can have class sizes that are equal to double the max class size of a face-to-face classroom. During the 2020-2021 school year, class sizes did not exceed a 62% increase; therefore, the 100% increase allowable will only be used in rare cases, and teachers will be provided additional support to monitor and provide student support through the district Virtual Team (Program Coordinator, Team Leaders) and campus instructional aides. Course-specific teachers in grades 5-8 who teach a mix of virtual and onsite classes, can have an overall teaching load equivalent to 10 additional students per digital period assigned. For example, if a 7th-grade teacher has a virtual-only period, there may be 40 students assigned on that roster for that class period.

Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.

Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
Teaching Load Number of students: Teacher of Record provides virtual instruction to only students who are remote. Please note that 100% virtual (online) or remote (distance) classes are considered large group instruction courses as per DESE Rules for Distance and Digital Learning and teaching load would not apply as per DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load.	1-A.5	DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load	6-17-812	

Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
				The Prairie Grove School District requests this waiver in order to offer a solely or primarily virtual option utilizing an LMS with digital content that provides for some degree of self-paced or flexible access, allowing for increased class size and teaching load maximums for grades K-8. Teachers in grades K-6 who teach 100% virtual students can have an overall teaching load not to exceed 45 students. Teachers in grades 7 & 8 who teach a mix of virtual and onsite classes would have a teaching load of no more than 180 students. This would equal one class period of 30 virtual students or 30 virtual students spread out over the number of classes a teacher has during the school day.

LEA INSIGHTS

Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
Six Hour Instructional Day (Waiver applies to virtual/remote students only)	1-A.4.2		6-16-102; 6-10-126	

Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
				The Prairie Grove School District is requesting this waiver and will do the following. Students in a virtual setting where learning is synchronous and/or asynchronous will learn in their own time, place, and pace. This may mean that the 6-hour school day may not be needed to master the course standards. The district will not be required to provide a school day that averages six (6) hours per day or thirty (30) hours per week for 100% virtual learners due to the fact that technology-based approaches are the primary instructional delivery with flexibility in time, place, and pace. District coursework requires an average of 45 minutes per course/core content area per day (60 hours for 0.5 credit). Students taking 7 courses will spend a maximum of 6 hours per day working in the online platform.

Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
Clock Hours	1-A.2			The Prairie Grove School District is requesting this waiver and will do the following. Students in a virtual setting where learning is synchronous and/or asynchronous will learn at their own time, place, and pace. This may mean that 60 hours of seat time or clock hours per ½ credit may not be needed to master the course standards.

Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
Recess (Waiver applies to virtual/remote students only)	1-A.4.3	DESE Rules Governing Nutrition and Physical Activity Standards and Body Mass Index, Section 7.11	6-6-102(a)(5)	The district would like to waive the requirement to provide forty (40) minutes of recess for students engaged in virtual learning. Students will be given assignments that support physical activity while in a virtual learning environments. Students and parents will be encouraged to take breaks during the lessons in order to allow for physical activity during the "school day".

Digital Model

Please complete the following application with responses describing the school and district digital programming.

Interaction / Delivery

What are the ways teachers and students will interact with digital content (Synchronous or Asynchronous)? Please describe instructional expectations and participation for students.

The schools of the Prairie Grove School District (PGSD) will address this issue in the following ways:

Depending on the number of students (six students or less Part A, more than six students Part B) who opt to have their instruction done virtually in grades K-6, the following plans are submitted:

PGSD - Part A - For grades K-6, the PGSD will PARTNER WITH THE ARKANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOLS RESOURCE CENTER TO assign students virtual instruction. In this Part, students will, for the large part, have control over their pace and location of learning management systems (LMS) access.
THESE K-6 STUDENTS WILL UTILIZE EITHER RED COMET OR LINCOLN LEARNING FOR THEIR VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION Virtual teacher(s) will utilize the Florida Virtual (FLVS) curriculum in order to facilitate asynchronous lessons.

The district will ensure that all requirements of the Science of Reading are met for virtual learners. The K-2 grade band will be a daily synchronous instructional model to align with the SOR.

Prairie Grove Elementary and Middle Schools will supply a teacher liaison to be in regular and frequent contact with the progress of Prairie Grove students in K-4 and 5 & 6.

Virtual Teachers will utilize a variety of teaching strategies and tools. Some may mirror strategies within our building classroom. Others may be specific to an effective virtual classroom. Virtual Teachers will utilize research-based strategies during instruction:
Whole group
Small group
One-on-one
Hands-on projects
Cooperative learning
Collaborative projects
Independent projects
Choice of assignments
Activities that encourage student's voice
Daily and weekly progress monitoring
Science of reading
Point-in-time intervention
Enrichment opportunities
Math quest
Grasping phenomenal science
Virtual office hours for support
Educational games
Interactive online quizzes

All of the components of the Science of Reading will be delivered through an approved program for grades K-6. The phonological awareness will be

approved program for grades K-6. The phonological awareness will be delivered by using David Kilpatrick's "Equip for Reading Success" and additional supplemental materials such as 95% Group phonological awareness. The phonics component will be delivered through Orton-Gillingham-based strategies through the use of Phonics First and/or Phonetic Connections. The Flyleaf portal will be accessed free for decodable text to assist with the automaticity of phonics subskills. The vocabulary and comprehension will be achieved through word choice and questions for science and social studies lessons. If curriculum is needed to be purchased, Benchmark Workshop will be considered for vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. For other fluency, Newsela and Readworks could be available if needed for grade-level text.

Students that continue to struggle with reading skills will be required to attend daily, synchronous instruction through the use of Science of Reading appropriate instruction and curriculum.

Prairie Grove Junior High (PGJH) -- grades 7 & 8 -- PGJH will use virtual asynchronous instruction with off-site students receiving their instruction from Lincoln Learning and other online resources. Furthermore, virtual students will have the opportunity to meet daily or weekly online with a junior high teacher specific to the student's courses in order to receive individual instruction if needed. The frequency of those interactions will be determined by the student's teachers and based on each student's progress and achievement.

What delivery approach will the school or district utilize to meet the needs of both teachers and students (i.e., virtual (online) / remote (distance) or blended (hybrid)? Please explain.

The schools of the Prairie Grove School District (PGSD) will address this issue in the following ways:

Part A for PGSD in grades K-6: The PGSD will utilize online virtual (remote) learning through the Red Comet and/or Lincoln Learning by partnering with the APSRC.   The program will provide instruction using a dual model of both synchronous and asynchronous online learning. Students will engage in digital coursework through DESE-approved digital provider Red Comet or Lincoln Learning learning management systems (LMS).   All students will have the opportunity to participate in live Zoom sessions for synchronous learning with the teacher. All learning and instruction will be virtual.

Prairie Grove Junior High (PGJH) -- grades 7 & 8 will provide virtual instruction for core classes using Lincoln Learning and Buzz as their curriculum provider and LMS. Electives will be provided but limited to those that are included in Lincoln Learning. In the event that certain electives, band, choir, athletics, cannot be adequately provided virtually, students will have the option of coming back to campus to participate in those electives during the school day.

Will teachers be dedicated to primarily remote instruction or serving in a dual role, teaching both remote and in-person learners?
Â *If teachers will serve in a dual role, describe whether it will be simultaneously, meaning remote and in-person at the same time with course/schedule specific considerations.

Part A for PGSD in grades K-6 - will use the RED COMET AND/OR LINCOLN LEARNING for delivery of instruction for students that are 100% virtual.

Prairie Grove Junior High (PGJH) -- grades 7 & 8- Teachers of core and elective classes will have virtual students and on-site students assigned to them. Those that are virtual will use Lincoln Learning as their curriculum provider and Buzz for their LMS. Their assigned teacher will monitor their progress and be available at prescribed times during the day to provide additional instructional support as needed. On-site students will be provided with traditional instruction with the ability to use additional online resources in Lincoln Learning to give additional practice as prescribed by their teacher in a hybrid model. On-site and virtual classes will be asynchronous.

Describe the expectation for teacher instruction, interaction, and frequency with virtual students.

LEA INSIGHTS

In partnership with RED COMET and Lincoln Learning, the PGSD will utilize the EITHER GROUPS VIRTUAL LEARNING CATALOGUE VIA THE ARKANSAS PUBLIC SCHOOL RESOURCE CENTER (APSRC). Both the APSRC and the PGSD will, at a minimum, follow the guidelines and policies set by the state of Arkansas in regards to teacher planning time (40 minutes per day) or 200 minutes per week. Likewise, both programs will provide instructional and digital content support for point-in-time support for the teacher, along with content support from specialists and other educators at host schools.
RED COMET and Lincoln Learning will utilize a curriculum developed by experts within the Florida Virtual School FLVS/Buzz (K-6) learning management systems (LMS) which are aligned to Arkansas state standards.

The district will ensure that all requirements of the Science of Reading are met for virtual learners. The K-2 grade band will be a daily synchronous instructional model to align with the Science of Reading.
All of the components of the Science of Reading will be delivered through an approved program for grades
K-8. The phonological awareness will be delivered by using David Kilpatrick's "Equip for Reading Success" and additional supplemental materials such as 95% Group phonological awareness. The phonics component will be delivered through Orton-Gillingham-based strategies through the use of Phonics First and/or Phonetic Connections. The Flyleaf portal will be accessed free for decodable text to assist with the automaticity of phonics subskills. The vocabulary and comprehension will be achieved through word choice and questions for science and social studies lessons. If curriculum is needed to be purchased, Benchmark Workshop will be considered for vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency.

For other fluency, Newsela and Readworks could be available if needed for grade-level text.

If utilizing district waivers for **class size**, what supports will the district put in place to support the teacher and students? How will the district monitor and determine if the supports are adequate for teachers who exceed class size in digital learning settings?

The use of Lincoln Learning/Buzz or Edgenuity is one of the most basic supports that allows the teachers of virtual students to exceed class size limitations.   The LMS and CMS reduce the workload in preparing lessons, grading assignments, and creating and evaluating assessments.

The Prairie Grove School District will provide necessary instructional supplies and materials to all students. This includes student-issued Chromebooks, chargers, and any additional instructional supplies necessary for effective instruction and student success. The district will provide a mobile hotspot, if necessary, to eliminate barriers for families without access to Wi-Fi or who are experiencing unstable Wi-Fi connectivity. The district will provide time weekly for teachers to work collaboratively in grade-level, and content-area professional learning communities (PLC). PLC activities include aligning curriculum, planning instruction, assessing student performance, and creating interventions and/or enrichment based on results.

A minimum of 200 minutes per week will be provided for teachers to plan differentiated instruction. Teachers will be able to modify the online content and develop personalized lessons to better support the students they serve.

If utilizing district waivers for **teaching load**, what supports will the district put in place to support the teacher and students? How will the district monitor and determine if the supports are adequate for teachers who exceed teaching loads in digital learning settings?

Stakeholder feedback will be collected two times each year, through teacher, student, and parent surveys.
Informal monthly check-in meetings will be conducted with teachers and support staff who work with our special populations (SPED/ESOL/GT) to determine if the current (at that time) teaching load is conducive for the teacher to address student needs in a reasonable amount of time and fashion.

District leadership facilitates monthly PLCs for counselors, special education teachers, gifted and talented teachers, reading interventionists, special education teachers, and ESL teachers. These staff members provide additional support to teachers and students who teach and learn in the virtual setting. Virtual teachers will also receive additional support through the PLC process by having a weekly meeting with their colleagues. The district will monitor the effectiveness of supports by observing the PLC process, analyzing assessment results (MAP and Aspire Testing), and survey data.

Technology / Platforms

Identify the learning management system/content management system that schools and districts will use? (Canvas, Buzz, Google Classroom, etc.)

Part A for PGSD in grades K-6 - FOR LINCOLN LEARNING, BUZZ OR RED COMET

Part B for grades 5 &6 @ PGMS and PGJH will principally use Google Classroom as their LMS with Lincoln Learning and iReady and teacher-created content as the principal CMSs. However, Edgenuity will also be considered for both roles

Describe the digital content that will be available to students, including any digital curriculum and supports that are available to teachers. If the district is using a content management system (CMS), please specify grades levels and subjects that the CMS will address.

Part A for PGSD in grades K-6 -The Courseware curriculum FOR RED COMET OR LINCOLN LEARNING is aligned to the Arkansas State Standards, Common Core, and the Next Generation Science Standards. Courses consist of direct-instruction videos, rigorous assignments, performance tasks, and assessments to engage all students.

Grades 7 & 8 will supplement their digital instruction using, but not limited to, Edgenuity CMS and LMS which are aligned to the Arkansas State Standards, Common Core, and the Next Generation Science Standards. Courses consist of direct-instruction videos, rigorous assignments, performance tasks, and assessments to engage all students.

What video communication software is required for any remote student? Please describe the video communication software the teacher will use to facilitate live conferences between two or more participants.

PGSD students in grades K-6 - ZOOM OR PROPRIETARY VIDEO SOFTWARE WILL BE USED BY EITHER LINCOLN OR RED COMET. The Zoom software/app is downloaded to the district-provided device and checked out to each 100% virtual student by the district.

Grades 7 & 8 - All students in the PGSD will utilize video communication software from Google Meet and Zoom as needed. Furthermore, teachers will have Screencastify as a resource as well as Open Broadcasting System's Screen Capture.

Describe the technology access (device and connectivity) that will be provided to each digital learning student to ensure each student receives a free public education.

The PGSD has implemented a plan to purchase Chromebooks for all its students. This plan will be fully implemented by the beginning of the 2021-22 school year. Students are surveyed for internet availability in their homes. Any student without internet capability is given the option to apply for a "hotspot" device to access the internet via a cell phone signal. This service will be provided free of charge to students during the 2021-22 school year.

Student Supports

Describe the manner and frequency the district or school will use to monitor the wellness and safety (food security, physical, mental health, etc.) of students in a total remote setting. (This may be in-person, video communication, etc.). Identify supports available to assist students within the district.

PGMS will require its virtual students to log in at least one time per week during each student's class done synchronously. This minimum requirement is based on student achievement and progress. If a PGMS student is not achieving at a satisfactory level or progressing at a reasonable pace through the curriculum, more log-in time may be required. As students participate in this manner teachers will be looking for signs of students struggling academically or personally. When academic challenges arise, teachers will communicate with students, and their parents, about increasing the number of small group virtual instruction sessions until the matter is resolved. If the matter is not resolved Teachers will also be looking for signs of poor social-emotional wellness in student performance and environment. Any virtual student seen struggling in their social-emotional learning will be referred to a school counselor.

For their part, school counselors will reach out to parents, families, and students to make them aware of counseling services, food security programs, and additional supports within this scope. At PGHS, every virtual student will be assigned a virtual advisor. Virtual students will be required to check-in with their virtual advisor weekly.

Additionally, the PGSD has a backpack program to assist those students who have food security issues. The PGSD also has licensed school counselors to have conversations with students who are struggling emotionally while at school or participating in virtual instruction. This includes the ability to refer students to more intensive mental health providers in the area.

Finally, the PGSD is able to supply students with internet accessibility, free of charge, using "hotspot" wifi devices that connect to cell phone signals.

Describe the manner and frequency the district or school will use to monitor the academic and student engagement in a virtual setting. Describe the additional supports available for students struggling with engagement.

Teachers assigned to students in a virtual setting will check the progress of the virtual student daily. Signs of lack of timely progress with online lessons and unmet deadlines for completion of projects and assignments will trigger response action by the teacher. This response action will initially be email or phone calls to parents to make them aware of the lack of activity or engagement by the student. However, if these concerns continue, a consultation with the parents of the virtually instructed students will be asked to conduct at a more formal conference either in person or via streaming video. At this point, parents will be made aware of the lack of progress and engagement by the student and the student will be required to attend intervention sessions online at regularly scheduled times during the week.

If a student starts to show poor achievement or lack of progress, initial communication with a student's parent will be done by the SCHOOL THE STUDENT IS ENROLLED IN either by phone, email, in-person or video conference. SPECIFICALLY, IF A PGSD VIRTUAL STUDENT HAS A 504 PLAN OR IEP, THEN TEACHERS THAT SPECIALIZE THOSE AREAS WILL BE IN CONTACT WITH THE STUDENT'S PARENTS ELECTRONICALL OR IN-PERSON.

Describe the Academic Response to Intervention plan for remote (virtual) students, including additional supports and personnel.

Regardless of the format by which a student participates in virtual instruction, PGSD's Academic Response to Intervention will play a vital role toward student success. The primary ways that PGSD monitor and determine a student's need for intervention will be making progress and having success with student activities and assessments throughout the year and participation, or attendance, within the virtual format. Before a student is accepted in PGSD's virtual program, these expectations will be presented to both the student and their parents. Along with the understanding that when a student's achievement starts to regress PGSD staff will contact the student and parents to make them aware of intervention sessions during the school day so the student can get additional support from the PGSD virtual liaison or a classroom teacher that specializes in the subject area that the student is struggling in. Failure to participate in these sessions may cause the student to withdraw from the virtual program and be required to attend classes in person.

Digital accommodations include but are not limited to digital copies of notes, text to speech embedded in the learning platform, internet browser text reader, extended time on assignments, flexible assignments, and adaptive intervention resources through Buzz (K-6) learning management system (LMS)

School/district student services committees may determine additional accommodations based on individual student needs. These accommodations will be reflected on students' IEPs, 504 Plans, or LPACs and supported by a liaison teacher (grades K-6) or virtual teacher (7 & 8). Furthermore, teachers of virtual students will have scheduled times during the day to be available, through streaming video, to assist students with questions about digital instruction or assignments for completion. Student attendance to these support times will be voluntary as long as the student is staying up-to-date with the pace of the virtual instruction and meeting deadlines for completed assignments. However, once those expectations are not met, due to primarily poor attendance and/or declining grades and deadlines met, attendance to sessions will become mandatory after consulting with the student's parents.

PGSD will require its virtual K-8 students to log in daily during each student's class. As students participate in this manner teachers will be looking for signs of students struggling academically or personally. When academic challenges arise, teachers will communicate with students, and their parents, about increasing the number of small group virtual instruction sessions until the matter is resolved. Teachers will also be looking for signs of poor social-emotional wellness in student performance and environment. Any virtual student seen struggling in their SEL will be referred to a school counselor.

Counselors will reach out to parents, families, and students to make them aware of counseling services, food security programs, and additional supports within this scope.

Describe the district or school's formative
assessment plan to support student learning.

Grades K-6 - Virtual Program has 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. There are varied methods of assessment utilized both through the asynchronous course with open-ended discussions/assessments, choice response activities, multiple-choice, and hybrid assessments (open-ended and multiple choice). The teacher will also use weekly live Zoom to do informal formative checks to ensure clarity for students on asynchronous learning tasks. Any student that chose to have instruction off-site will be invited to return to school on the days of testing to participate in formative assessment. If that is not possible, then building principals (or their designees) will find opportunities for off-site students to participate in formative assessment in locations away from school with appropriate supervision and proctoring. K-6 students will also participate in iReady formative assessments and ELA formative assessments from Lexia.

Grade 7 & 8 teachers will use formative assessments throughout the year using iReady assessment Fall, Winter, Spring, and state-mandated tests. Virtual students will come to campus to take all state-mandated formative assessments, as indicated in their Virtual School Application/Online Readiness Rubric.
Students will complete mastery assessments at the end of each unit to demonstrate their mastery of concepts. Virtual students may also complete projects and activities that demonstrate their proficiency with concepts. Virtual students may engage in virtual meetings with teachers where teachers can engage in conversations with students and assess their understanding of concepts. Virtual students will be encouraged to take state-supported tests such as iReady and Lexia formative assessments which will assess student understanding of concepts from core subjects and assist teachers in customizing remediation Parts for individual students. Any student that chose to have instruction off-site will be invited to return to school on the days of testing to participate in formative assessment.

If that is not possible, then building principals (or their designees) will find opportunities for off-site students to participate in formative assessment in locations away from school with appropriate supervision and proctoring.   If necessary, communication with the parent, either electronically or in person will be conducted to see if a change of environment needs to be done and return the virtual student back to in-person instruction.

Describe how dyslexia screening and services
will be provided to digital learning students.

PGSD students in grades K-6 -   Dyslexia screening is provided virtually by the dyslexia interventionist at the student's home school or by district staff. Digital learning students identified with characteristics that could be associated with dyslexia are grouped with other students from their home school who have similar assessment results.

Digital students receive a daily ZOOM invitation from the digital teacher to participate in their group's intervention session at the designated time. These sessions will be required attendance by virtual students with dyslexia or showing characteristics of dyslexia unless the parent informs the building staff that the child is sick and/or a legitimate absence.

PGSD students in grades 7 & 8 - Beginning of year testing will be conducted on all PGSD on-site and virtual students. Each student who needs monitoring based on that data will receive progress monitoring.   Level 1 dyslexia screenings will be conducted virtually using google meet or zoom. In order to assure reliability and validity of assessments, referrals for Level II assessment will require face-to-face assessment. The student will meet with the examiner onsite for these assessments.   If that is not possible, then building principals (or their designees) will find opportunities for off-site students to participate in formative assessment in locations away from school with appropriate supervision and proctoring.

Dyslexia reading intervention will be provided for all virtual students identified with characteristics of dyslexia. Intervention can be provided onsite or via virtual face-to-face sessions depending on parent preference. Students will be required to meet with dyslexia interventionists either onsite face-to-face or online for face-to-face virtual sessions each week. The amount of direct face-to-face/ virtual face-to-face weekly sessions will be determined to follow program fidelity by the 504 committee. Virtual teachers will follow all 504 accommodations for each student with dyslexia.

Regardless of which plan a student participates in, the PGSD will ensure that Arkansas dyslexia law requirements will be met for virtual learners.

Describe how Gifted and Talented supports and services will be provided to digital learning students.

All GT standards will be followed when designing programming for identified gifted students. The policies of the partnering school district will be followed for virtual students. All virtual students will complete the district's universal screener on-site and/or remotely on the same timeline as on-site students and within district/school policies.

Whole-group enrichment will be provided by a licensed gifted-and-talented (GT) teacher to all virtual K-2 students by the district/school. The GT Identification process will have documentation of student responses and will be collected and maintained by the district/school GT teacher.

This documentation will be used in conjunction with multiple pieces of objective and subjective data for GT identification.

Identified gifted students in Grades 3-6 will receive asynchronous and synchronous instruction from a licensed GT teacher. These services will be in place of, and not in addition to, the general education curriculum. GT staff will review ongoing testing data in order to look for additional referrals for GT identification.

The GT department will accept referrals for virtual students in the same manner as students attending school onsite. All testing will be conducted onsite. Results from placement conferences will be mailed home and parents may request a meeting to review test data. Meetings may occur in-person or via Zoom. PGMS virtual gifted & talented students will receive their 150 minutes a week of service through the usage of weekly google meet sessions and asynchronous projects and lessons.

Grades 7 & 8 virtual GT students will be offered virtual honors courses that will provide their required 150 minutes a week of service. Therefore, 7th and 8th grade virtual GT students will need to be enrolled in at least one virtual honors course in order to receive GT services. If this enrollment is not done by the student, a meeting will be set up between the parent(s) of the child and the GT Coordinator to discuss the viability of the student remaining in the GT program. Students can also opt to come back on campus to participate in GT and honors classes if approved by the child's parents and building principal. Documentation of differentiation will be provided for each of our virtual honors courses and will be kept on file with the district's GT Coordinator.

Describe how English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL / ESL) supports and services will be provided to digital learning students.

Grades K - 8 - the ESOL district/school teacher will work with students to increase their language skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The district/school will provide direct services to the virtual students based on their individual LPAC decisions.

Professional development will be provided to the virtual teacher to support the language development and academic needs of English language learners. In addition, support is provided for the parents to be fully engaged in their child's education by providing them with training, information, and translation services through the district/school.

K-6 Virtual program provides accessibility tools to support ESOL/ESL and will provide the needed accommodations/modifications per the individual LEP uploaded into the SIS by partnering schools.
The PGSD English Language Development program will continue for virtual ESL students through zoom and Google meets as a pull-out when needed.
Virtual ESL students will be given a zoom time that they are expected to log on and participate. If an ESOL-trained classroom teacher is available, English Language Development program may be through the embedded model through the classroom teacher.
Access to the Core Content Program will be embedded through the classroom teacher.
Virtual instructors will receive an LPAC for virtual ESL students. -- English Language Development program will continue for virtual ESL students through zoom and Google meets as a pull-out when needed. Virtual ESL students will be given a zoom time that they are expected to log on and participate.
If an ESOL-trained classroom teacher is available, English Language Development program may be through the embedded model through the classroom teacher.
Access to the Core Content Program will be embedded through the classroom teacher.
Virtual instructors will receive an LPAC for virtual ESL students. ESOL Coordinator will meet with virtual teachers to develop plans and review accommodations so students are able to meet classroom expectations successfully.
Regardless of which plan the student participates in, the PGSD will ensure that all requirements of the PGSD English Learner plan are met for on-site and remote learners

Describe how all Special Education services and supports will be provided to digital learning students, including the process for special education evaluations and conferences.

In order to ensure that all PGSD students receiving special education services are provided a Free and Appropriate Public Education within the least restrictive environment, each student's IEP team will convene and discuss services and supports in a virtual setting. Special education will be provided based on rules and regulations.   At the same time, parents, teachers, counselors, or administration can continue to request evaluations of students for special education services. This referral process for virtual students will involve observations of the student in question while they are participating in streaming video during intervention sessions for specific classes or subjects.   If, after screening and observations, a student is determined to qualify for special education services, a parent conference will be held to make the parents aware of their child's situation and start the process of developing an IEP if so desired.

Students who are already identified as eligible for special education services will still have their regularly scheduled conference with parents and teachers. These will be done either on-site face-to-face with school staff or through the use of streaming audio/video technology.

Based on the individual needs of the student, the team will determine the need for specialized instruction and accommodations necessary for the student to make progress on goals and objectives and in the general curriculum.   Depending on the individual needs of the student as determined by the IEP team, the virtual setting may be determined to be inappropriate for some students. The district will continue to follow all due process requirements for ensuring a free and appropriate public education.

At the beginning of the school year, special needs student's Special Education teacher will meet with ththe student and parent to determine the amount of time needed to address the weekly instructional needs of the student based upon the students' IEP. This time can be done all at once or in segments throughout the week as agreed upon in the most recent IEP review meeting. Extra consideration will be given to allow special education virtual students adequate time to complete school assignments and projects.
Regardless of which plan the student participates in, the PGSD will ensure that all requirements of the PGSD English Learner plan are met for on-site and remote learners

Describe common and frequently used digital accommodations that the district or school has provided to general education teachers to assist students in digital learning classes.

Digital accommodations include but are not limited to: digital copies of notes, text to speech embedded in the learning platform, internet browser text reader, extended time on assignments, flexible assignments, and adaptive intervention resources through and Lincoln Learnings Buzz LMS. School/district student services committees may determine additional accommodations based on individual student needs. These accommodations will be reflected on students' IEP, 504 Plan, or LPAC and supported by the K-8 virtual teacher.

Teacher Supports

Describe district and school supports to provide on-going digital content and instructional supports for teachers.

A district-wide digital instruction team has been created to address issues with the PGSD's ongoing work to get quality educational services to all students in our district. This committee, with representatives from all schools in the district, meets every other week to discuss progress and challenges being faced by both digital students and the teachers who support them. As concerns and challenges are brought forth, the district and school communicate to find the best plan to address those challenges. Teachers are surveyed regularly to communicate the progress of the plan and to hear any issues that need to be addressed.

Identify the daily or weekly amount of time teachers will need to develop and plan for instruction based on options selected and digital supports provided. How will the district support teachers with digital content and planning?

The PGSD will, at a minimum, follow the guidelines and policies set by the state of Arkansas in regards to teacher planning time (40 minutes per day) or 200 minutes per week. Likewise, both programs will provide instructional and digital content support for point-in-time support for the teacher, along with content support from specialists and other educators at host schools.

Red Comet and Lincoln Learning will utilize curriculum developed by experts within their learning management systems (LMS) which are aligned to Arkansas state standards.

Other resources will also be considered including training from Team Digital and APSRC.

District Supports

Describe how the district will ensure equitable access to opportunities for success for digital learner's needs (poverty, homelessness, migrant, foster care, and military connected students) A link (URL) to the district equity plan may be acceptable if it meets this criteria.

The local school/district will provide all appropriate testing and support services for qualifying students. Red Comet and/or Lincoln Learning and all PGSD virtual teachers will provide the appropriate testing data, classroom instructional services (as outlined by the appropriate documentation, ie, the IEP), and accommodations as necessary. Equitable services and opportunities for success, including poverty, homelessness, migrant, foster care, and military-connected students will be supported by THE PGSD

https://www.pgtigers.org/page/equity-statement

All students are expected to test (statewide summative assessments) onsite as per DESE guidance. Provide an overview of how the district may communicate to parents and test digital learning students at a district site.	PGSD virtual students will be required to do statewide summative and school/district required testing (NWEA MAP, Istation, etc..) at the building/district site. These tests will be conducted and monitored by the school/district personnel. Students in the PGSD will be made aware of the importance and necessity to participate in state summative assessments in the following ways: Direct communication with online teachers and student support staff. Announcements sent via traditional mail, email, and social media will inform parents of the importance for their child to participate in state testing and on what dates the testing will be done. These announcements will also state how PGSD schools will create an environment of safe conditions if health concerns are still prevalent. Phone calls and additional announcements geared toward off-site students will be done a week before the grade-specific testing dates as a reminder for parents.
Provide a detailed explanation of how the district will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the digital option(s) and the fidelity of implementation as described within this application.	The PGSD will analyze student data such as common formative assessments, LMS work, and school/district specific assessments used for formative and summative purposes in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the program. Teachers and staff from the PGSD will participate in an evaluation of the effectiveness of the digital option offered to virtual students. Each school in the PGSD will create a committee of teachers and parents to monitor the overall effectiveness of the digital program. A meeting will be held in January as well as May to determine if the program is achieving the goals of the district. Data will include, but not limited to, student achievement, attendance, student participation, the number of required interventions, and teacher-required planning.
Describe how the teacher(s) will engage families into the digital learning process. (District may link the District Engagement Plan if digital learning is included. The plan must address how the district will support parents/students with digital tools and resources)	

Based on experiences from the 2020-21 school year, the PGSD will ask all parents/guardians of students who wish to receive their instruction digitally for 2021-22 to complete an application and have a short interview with the principal of the school. During this interview, both the parents and students will receive information about the school's expectations for the digital learner in order to help them have success.   This will include the attendance policy for digital learners, the behavior policy for digital learners, and the grading policy for digital learners. Parents and students will be made aware of resources available to them from the school, and outside the school, to assist both parties for student success. Examples of successful routines or schedules that need to be done to keep up with instruction online will also be provided. The PGSD will also provide assistance for technology issues by making its technology staff available to parents and students through a phone number and online request form. Finally, the student and parents will be provided with a list of resources (Khan Academy, Project Gutenberg, Readworks, and National Geographic for Kids to name a few) that can assist a student who may be struggling.

Starting in June 2021, the PGSD will send out communications through automated phone calls, letters using traditional mail, and social media giving directions to parents who wish to have their child have school instruction done through digital means for the 1st semester of the 21-22 school year.
When these invitations are accepted, building principals, or their designees, will set up times for students and parents to meet with the building principals, or their designees, to discuss the expectations, rules, and routines of digital learning. There will also be a discussion of what the school's response will be if the student does not have success in a digital, off-site instructional environment. Furthermore, it will strongly be requested that the student have some documented medical reason for not wishing to return to on-site instruction.

Parents and students will sign an understanding of the expectations and requirements for digital instruction in order to document the discussion. This procedure will be revisited at the end of the 1st semester to see if continuing off-site digital instruction is best for the student going into the 2nd semester.

Parent/Teacher Conferences will be held as usual for off-site digital students either in person or by video streaming.

Stakeholder feedback for this plan is described on the document with the following link:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/12UdsCmX_bUZL07LHsSLWaE1ZATJl HML5WYDKIlXEx3Y/edit?usp=sharing

Provide the URL to evidence of the local school board's approval of the waiver request(s).	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QMIcVeLqC8oKLNHvRBoSMXtw_ZX9qnjB/vi
Provide a URL to evidence of stakeholder feedback regarding the waiver request(s) and the district communication plan regarding digital learning program(s).	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1W4z8U7MizvvaiyE9MiGWL6MuBbPDGozl/vie

Policies

Please provide a link (URL) to the attendance policy for digital learning students.	https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1OWBvNM7tjtNJJdmiQHUy5ZZ-sVEE
Please provide a link (URL) to the discipline policy for digital learning students.	https://docs.google.com/document/d/17BAODqSyZHbyz6aMx3d0RW1C0Kbr
Please provide a link (URL) to the grading policy for digital learning students.	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Wd470IuO1yyR61OzdNWneKZJ8TbZt

︿ Back to Top