Act 1240 Waiver Request
School Year 2021-2022
Alternative Methods of Instruction (AMI)
and/or Application for Digital Learning Program(s)

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 below 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:	**Fort Smith Public Schools**
LEA #:	**6601000**
Superintendent:	**Dr. Terry Morawski**
Email:	**tmorawsk@fortsmithschools.org**
Phone:	**479-785-2501**
Duration Requested (not to exceed five years)	**5 years**

Directions for Digital Learning Application: Select options that best meet the needs of the students in the district and complete the requirements.

Schools	Grades/Courses	Interaction	Delivery	Platforms
FSPS Elementary & Middle/JH Schools: (Elem) Ballman, Barling, Beard, Bonneville, Carnall, Cavanaugh, Cook, Euper Lane, Fairview, Howard, Morrison, Orr, Pike, Spradling, Sunnymede, Sutton, Tilles, Trusty, Woods (JH/MS) Chaffin, Darby, Kimmons, Ramsey, Belle Point	**K-8 Math,** English/Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Art, Music, PE **6-8:** Career Courses, EdTech/Stem **8th Grade HS Courses:** Algebra 1, PE, Physical Science, Spanish, Health, Keystone	Asynchronous Synchronous **Asynchronous & Synchronous**	**Virtual(online) / Remote (distance)** Blended (hybrid)	**LMS** CMS

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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)	Given the nature & intent of a self-paced learning environment, and given the perpetual availability of the online curriculum, FSPS will need the flexibility to adjust our yearly calendar and daily schedule to accommodate the needs of our learning community and to ensure we are providing the best educational experience possible for virtual students. FSPS requests a waiver to report attendance
Class Size	1-A.5	DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load	6-17-812 (a)(2)	In an online setting teachers may successfully work with a larger number of students. FSPS proposes the following alternatives for traditionally non-large format classes in the virtual format: K-2: not to exceed 50:1 3-5: not to exceed 75:1 6-8: not to exceed 200:1
Teaching Load 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	
Six Hour Instructional Day Waiver applies to virtual/remote students only	1-A.4.2		6-16-102; 6-16-126	Given the nature & intent of a self-paced learning environment, and given the perpetual availability of the online curriculum, FSPS will need the flexibility to adjust our yearly calendar and daily

				schedule to accommodate the needs of our learning community and to ensure we are providing the best educational experience possible for virtual students. As such, FSPS requests a waiver of the uniform calendar requirement, as well as the requirement that the planned instructional time in each school day shall not average less than six (6) hours per day or thirty (30) hours per week.
Clock Hours	1-A.2			FSPS also seeks to waive the requirement that a unit of credit must meet a minimum of 120 clock hours. Only leveraging these waivers can FSPS create a personalized learning environment wherein students can truly learn at their own pace. While it is true that some students will be able to learn at an accelerated pace and/or completely asynchronously, in other circumstances students will be afforded the opportunity to spend more time addressing learning gaps and/or engaging in synchronous learning options..
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	6-16-102(a)(5)	FSPS understands the importance of Physical Activity and Nutrition. The district remains committed to providing K-5 students with the opportunities through the virtual Health & PE course. This waiver supports the flexibility needed by the virtual option to meet its academic goals.

Charter holding the waivers above: Arkansas Virtual Academy

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

What are the ways teachers and students will interact with digital content? (Synchronous or Asynchronous) Please describe instructional expectations and participation for students.	Asynchronous: Self-paced through the Pearson Connexus platform. The expectation for students is satisfactory

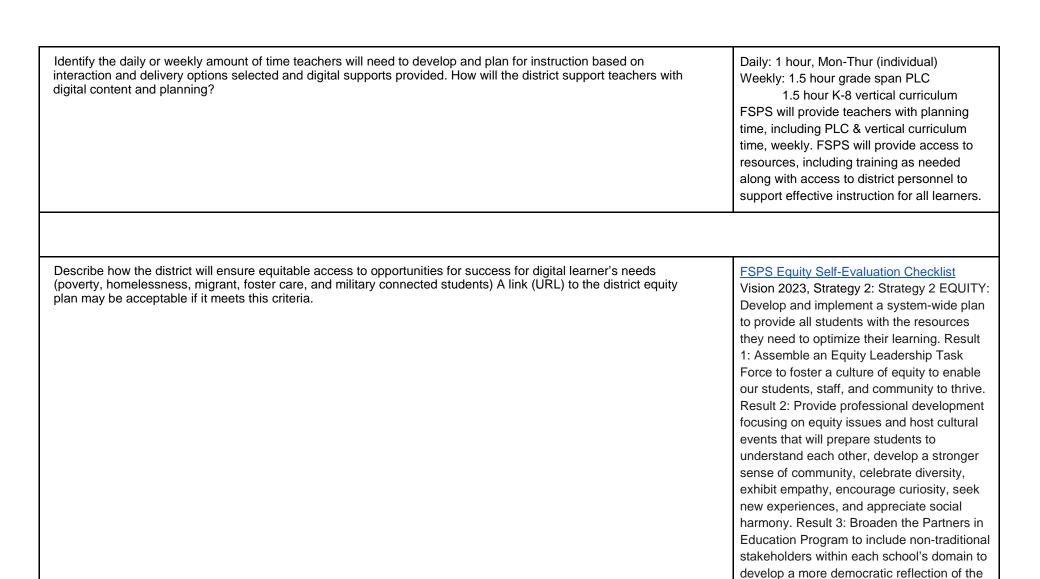|	
	completion (70%/"C" average) on weekly activities or defined minimum amounts of time spent in the platform based on grade level: K-2: 20 hours per week 3-5: 25 hours per week 6-8: 30 hours per week K-8: Synchronous: K-8 Teachers will hold Live Lessons, small groups & inter via video-conference and be available for virtual office hours. Video recordings will be posted for asynchronous access to teacher instruction and tutorials. Student participation in some synchronous activities will be required while others will be optional but highly encouraged.
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 district will utilize a Virtual/Remote delivery approach. Content and activities, including other digital programs, will be available and accessed through the Pearson Connexus platform. Teachers will interact with students synchronously utilizing video-conferencing and will post videos for students to access asynchronously.
Will teachers be dedicated to primarily remote instruction or serving in a dual role, teaching both remote and in-person learners. * If teachers will serve in a dual role, describe whether it will be simultaneously, meaning remote and in-person	Core teachers will be dedicated primarily to remote instruction. Elective/specialty teachers will be either be assigned to virtual as itinerants or contracted as part-time and will be primarily remote instruction outside of traditional school hours. Some high school credit courses will be available for 8th grade students and will be primarily self-paced through Pearson Connexus with part-time contracted teachers of record.

at the same time with course/schedule specific considerations.	

Describe the expectation for teacher instruction, interaction, and frequency with digital learning students.	Core teachers will conduct Live Lessons, including whole group & small group, in each content area 2-4 days per week as well as hold Office Hours 4 days per week. All part-time elective/specialty teachers will post videos and be available 2-4 times per week for Office Hours.
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 district will have a dedicated administrator for the virtual option to support teachers. The district will also utilize district resources (interventionists, SPED, ELL, etc) to support teachers and students.
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.	N/A
Identify the learning management system/content management system that schools and districts will use? (Canvas, Buzz, Google Classroom, etc.)	Pearson Connexus (Buzz)
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.	Pearson Connexus, an approved AR digital provider. Teachers will also integrate district/state approved digital resources & tools.
What video communication software is required for any digital learning student? Please describe the video communication software the teacher will use to facilitate live conferences between two or more participants.	Zoom and/or Google Meet.
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.	Each student will have a district-issued chromebook. Students who do not have reliable internet may apply for a district-provided hotspot. Wi-Fi is also available on each campus in posted areas.

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 digital learning setting. (This may be in-person, video communication, etc.). Identify supports available to assist students within the district.	Students will continue to have access to grab and go meals at their local campuses. Teachers will receive training in what signs to watch for to ensure the wellness and safety of students. The district homeless coordinator, student services department and social workers will provide support to assist students and families.
Describe the manner and frequency the district or school will use to monitor the academic and student engagement in a digital learning setting. Describe the additional supports available for students struggling with engagement.	Teachers will monitor grades and attendance on a weekly basis. Coordinators & administrators will also monitor student progress, both academic & engagement, and assist in contacting students & families to identify barriers and solutions. District personnel will be available to contact students and families via email, phone, video-conference and home visits to promote engagement.
Describe the Academic Response to Intervention plan for digital learning students, including additional supports and personnel.	Teachers will monitor progress and provide small group interventions each week. District personnel, including Dyslexia Interventionists, Title I Instructional Specialists, Special Education teachers and ELL teachers, will provide interventions as needed. Teachers and administrators will review progress and engagement every 4 ½ weeks and conference with students and families who are struggling to make a plan for success and discuss solutions and alternatives.
Describe the district or school's formative assessment plan to support student learning.	The Istation can be used as a formative assessment for K-6th grade students. Students are able to access the assessment each month. Since it is our K-2 state assessment, parents will need to participate in a test security meeting and return a signed document before the September assessment is administered. The 2nd Istation state testing window is during the month of January.

	ACT Aspire Periodics may be taken remotely once parents participate in a security testing meeting and return a signed document.
Describe how dyslexia screening and services will be provided to digital learning students.	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 to participate in their group's intervention session at the designated time.
Describe how Gifted and Talented supports and services will be provided to digital learning students.	Students will have the option to participate in on-campus Gifted and Talented classes and/or enroll in accelerated G/T courses within the digital platform.
Describe how English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL /ESL) supports and services will be provided to	Licensed teachers and trained paraprofessionals—under the supervision of teachers—work with students to increase their language skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Professional development is provided for teachers and paras 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 Cafecitos and Family Literacy.

digital learning students.	
Describe how all Special Education services and supports will be provided to digital learning students, including the process for special education evaluations and conferences.	Special Education services and supports for digital learning students are provided through TeachTown and Unique Learning Systems for students in a self-contained type

	setting. Resource students Zoom with SPED teachers to receive their academic services. Occupational therapy, physical therapy, and speech language therapy are done via Zoom unless the student and parent feel comfortable coming to school for these services. Evaluations are scheduled with the parent to bring their child to our office for testing. Conferences are still being held via Zoom. Special Education teachers will work with General Education teachers to provide accommodations for inclusion students. The Virtual Option will include a full-time Special Education teacher to provide services, coordinate activities and liaison between virtual teachers, campus personnel, families & students.
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.	District provided Chromebooks have the following built-in accessibility options: Select to Speak, Dictation, High Contrast Mode, Full Screen Magnifier, Docked Magnifier, and Chromevox for the visually impaired. All of the Google Apps have their own accessibility features built in as well. Training has been provided to teachers for these features and are incorporated into lessons at the beginning of the year.
Describe district and school supports to provide on-going digital content and instructional supports for teachers.	FSPS has a robust instructional support system and demonstrated dedication to integrating technology in the classroom. The district has purchased a variety of digital tools & content which are available to all FSPS teachers. The virtual option teachers will have access to not only to the digital resources but to the district Technology Integration Specialists and the district Instructional Specialists.

Identify the daily or weekly amount of time teachers will need to develop and plan for instruction based on interaction and delivery options selected and digital supports provided. How will the district support teachers with digital content and planning?	Daily: 1 hour, Mon-Thur (individual) Weekly: 1.5 hour grade span PLC 1.5 hour K-8 vertical curriculum FSPS will provide teachers with planning time, including PLC & vertical curriculum time, weekly. FSPS will provide access to resources, including training as needed along with access to district personnel to support effective instruction for all learners.
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.	[FSPS Equity Self-Evaluation Checklist](#) Vision 2023, Strategy 2: Strategy 2 EQUITY: Develop and implement a system-wide plan to provide all students with the resources they need to optimize their learning. Result 1: Assemble an Equity Leadership Task Force to foster a culture of equity to enable our students, staff, and community to thrive. Result 2: Provide professional development focusing on equity issues and host cultural events that will prepare students to understand each other, develop a stronger sense of community, celebrate diversity, exhibit empathy, encourage curiosity, seek new experiences, and appreciate social harmony. Result 3: Broaden the Partners in Education Program to include non-traditional stakeholders within each school's domain to develop a more democratic reflection of the community it serves. Result 4: Expand the Pre-K Program to include every elementary school to support the foundational needs and to correct disparity in basic skill sets. Result 5: Determine the feasibility of grade-level reconfiguration and attendance zone adjustments, particularly in elementary, to promote equity in teacher collaboration to ensure increased student learning. Result 6: Implement the Professional Learning Community (PLC) Process district-wide to ensure guaranteed, viable curriculum for

	higher level of student learning and guaranteed, focused teacher collaboration. Result 7: Ensure that technology across the district fosters the conditions in which all students have access to all available learning opportunities. Result 8: Assign a district grant writer to seek funding toward increased equity initiatives in the district.
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.	K-8: Each LEA has a Site Testing Coordinator. The STCs will work with the virtual option to coordinate testing, both virtually and on-site. Options for assessments that must be administered onsite as well as those may be administered either onsite or virtually may include during the regular school day, after school hours and on weekends. Depending on which state assessment, students can be grouped by various grade levels. This means a plan could be made to choose locations and days to group students.Once the district agrees on a plan, information will be shared through various ways: letters, social media, phone calls, etc.
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.	Program directors will monitor implementation using direct observation, indirect observation, data analysis of student progress, testing data, content review, collaborative curriculum review and/or stakeholder feedback. A Virtual Focus Group including representatives from various stakeholder groups (parents, students, virtual & traditional teachers, virtual and traditional administrators, other district personnel, etc.) will meet quarterly to review effectiveness and make recommendations to be shared with district leadership.
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)	Virtual option staff will work with local LEA s to engage families into the digital learning process 2020-21 PARENT AND FAMILY

Provide a URL to evidence of the local school board's approval of the waiver request(s).	
Provide a URL to evidence of stakeholder feedback regarding the waiver request(s) and the district communication plan regarding digital learning program(s).	A Ready to Learn Committee was established to create guidance in the creation of a Family and Community Engagement Support Plan. The committee is made up of parents, community leaders, teachers and administrators. The DESE-approved Back to School Ready to Learn Plan is a living document that is on the district website and it has been communicated on the district's social media platforms. The digital learning program(s) are posted on the FSPS website and are promoted through social media, text, email, phone calls, newsletters and other district communication venues.
Please provide a link (URL) to the attendance policy for digital learning students.	General District Policies apply to all students, both on-site and virtual. Chronic absences, truancy, or misbehavior will be reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency. Secondary students not attending school may have their drivers' license revoked by the Department of Finance and Administration. A copy of the FSPS Student Policy is available here. (pp 18-20)
Please provide a link (URL) to the discipline policy for digital learning students.	General District Policies apply to all students, both on-site and virtual. Students are expected to act in a manner conducive to good order of the

	school and within the bounds of school board policy and state law. A copy of the FSPS Student Policy is available here. (pp 32-46)
Please provide a link (URL) to the grading policy for digital learning students.	General District Policies apply to all students, both on-site and virtual. A copy of the FSPS Student Handbook is available from your school principal or you can view and download an English version by selecting here. A Spanish version can be viewed and downloaded by selecting here. (p 25)