



# Act 1240 Digital Learning Waiver Request

Status: **Submitted to ADE DESE**

 Gentry School District (0403000)

School Year 2021-2022

**!** New Digital Learning Waiver requests can not be created after May 1st. Existing drafts and revisions will continue to be reviewed.

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 #:** 0403000

**Superintendent:** Terrie Metz

**Email:** tmetz@gentrypioneers.com

**Phone:** (479) 736-2253

**Duration Requested (not to exceed five years):** 3 Years  
(School year 2021-2022 to 2024-2025)

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

LEA(s)	Grades/Courses	Interaction	Delivery	Platforms
0403703 - Gentry High School Conversion Charter	9-12, all subject areas including core and electives	Asynchronous Synchronous	Virtual (Online) / Remote (Distance)	LMS CMS
0403015 - Gentry Middle School	Grades 7 and 8, all subject areas including core and electives	Asynchronous 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)	N/A The district is hiring a paraprofessional who will be responsible for monitoring attendance daily of all students enrolled in Virtual Arkansas. He/she will contact students and/or parents daily and will work collaboratively with the Virtual Arkansas teachers to accomplish this.
<b>Class Size</b> Number of students:	1-A.5	DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load	6-17-812(a)(2)	<p>The district is not applying for this waiver. We are not requesting additional waivers for the teaching load.</p> <p>The Virtual Teacher 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.</p>



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.
<b>Teaching Load</b> 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	<p>The district is not applying for this waiver. We are not requesting additional waivers for the teaching load.</p> <p>Virtual Teachers provide 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.</p>
<b>Six Hour Instructional Day</b> (Waiver applies to virtual/remote students only)	1-A.4.2		6-16-102; 6-16-126	<p>The district is not applying for this waiver. Virtual students will be required to set up a daily schedule with their support team that will include a six hour instructional day. The support team includes the Virtual Paraprofessional, school counselor, and Virtual Arkansas staff. Students are expected to follow this schedule that will be monitored daily by the Virtual Paraprofessional.</p>



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			N/A Virtual students will be required to set up a daily schedule with their support team that will include work in each class daily that will equal 120 clock hours at a minimum. The support team includes Virtual Paraprofessional, school counselor, and Virtual Arkansas staff. Students are expected to follow this schedule that will be monitored daily by the Virtual Paraprofessional. Seat time will be met and documented with the students' daily schedule that will equal at least 120 clock hours for each course.
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 is not applying for this waiver. N/A for grades 7-12. Virtual Arkansas does provide PE and Health as an offering for 7-12 grade students.

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.

We are not offering virtual school to our K-2 students. This plan is only for students in grades 7-12.

Virtual Arkansas is a “high touch” virtual learning experience that harnesses the benefit of synchronous or “live” instruction married with aligned asynchronous courses. This allows for students and instructors to develop relationships, address needed “just-in-time” instruction, and flexibility with learning. At the High School level, students are provided the opportunity to attend two Zoom sessions per week, per content area, and request additional one:one Zoom sessions as needed. While Zoom sessions are not required by Virtual Arkansas, they are highly encouraged as empirical data has shown students who attend Zoom are shown to be more successful than students who do not attend Zoom. For this reason, Gentry School District students will be required to attend one zoom session per week per course. Students/teachers are also able to communicate 24/7 via the CANVAS LMS messaging or the SIS email system that is monitored by Virtual Arkansas. Virtual Arkansas Teachers and the Gentry School District Virtual Arkansas Facilitator are expected to reply to students within 24 hours of a student communication during the school week. Students are expected to read and interact with messages in their courses on a daily basis during the school week.

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.

Gentry School District will utilize online virtual remote learning through Virtual Arkansas for grades 7-12. Virtual remote learning will not be offered in grade K-6. Virtual Arkansas utilizes a synchronous and asynchronous approach or true blended model to online learning. Students will engage in their digital coursework through the CANVAS Learning Management System (LMS). Students will have opportunities to engage in synchronous learning through live scheduled Zoom meetings with their teacher. All learning will take place online.



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.

Gentry School District will be using Virtual Arkansas for its delivery of instruction for our 100% virtual students. Virtual Arkansas provides a fully certified Arkansas teacher of record while we provide the facilitator. Gentry High School will employ a paraprofessional to facilitate the program on-site. Virtual Arkansas provides training and support for facilitators via the Facilitator Coordinator. This model is a true blended model with synchronous targeted instruction partnered with asynchronous course content and activities. Gentry School District is in the process of hiring a paraprofessional who serves as a full time (1 FTE) facilitator for the Virtual Arkansas program. This is a new position, and their duties will include but is not limited to proctoring tests, coordinating special services, monitoring student progress, communication and serve as the liaison for students and families, and other duties as related to the needs of students and the Virtual Arkansas program. In the event that there is an issue between Virtual Arkansas teachers and Gentry School District students, the facilitator will notify the building principal. Appropriate action will be taken from there based on the issue at hand.

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

For students utilizing Virtual Arkansas courses, teachers employed by Virtual Arkansas will actively monitor their courses, provide synchronous sessions and maintain regular communication via the LMS and SIS messaging systems. Each week teachers send a grade report to the student and parent/guardian, and initiate further contact with students demonstrating difficulties with course content. Students are highly encouraged to attend all Zoom sessions and required to attend at least one zoom session per week per subject. This will be monitored by the Gentry School District paraprofessional hired for this purpose. Teachers are continuously provided PD and support for providing engaging and relevant synchronous instruction.



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?

We are not requesting additional waivers for class size. The Virtual Teacher 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.

Virtual Arkansas partners with schools to ensure student success. In cases where districts are using Virtual Arkansas, teacher training and support is solely the responsibility of Virtual Arkansas. Partnership with the schools regarding providing a facilitator and communication back and forth pertaining to students is an ongoing part of the support expected in this model (synchronous/asynchronous) of instruction.

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?

We are not requesting additional waivers for teacher load. The Virtual Teacher 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.

Virtual Arkansas partners with schools to ensure student success. In cases where districts are using Virtual Arkansas, teacher training and support is solely the responsibility of Virtual Arkansas. Partnership with the schools regarding providing a facilitator and communication back and forth pertaining to students is an ongoing part of the support expected in this model (synchronous/asynchronous) of instruction.

## Technology / Platforms

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

The Canvas Learning Management System (LMS) will be utilized through Virtual Arkansas. This LMS is supplemented with the Student Information System (SIS) Genius. Genius is a registration, progress monitoring, and reporting tool which provides a daily snapshot of each student's progress, attendance, and engagement level.

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.

Virtual Arkansas provides access to 139 courses in grades 7-12 which are designed and written by subject matter experts (SME's) and who are Arkansas Certified teachers. Virtual Arkansas courses and content are designed and developed using the Arkansas State Standards, Quality Matters standards, and the National Standards of Quality of Online Courses as their foundation. This process includes an internal review of the courses by Quality Matters certified online course reviewers. Courses are designed to be fully ready for student interaction and teachers have all the content needed to effectively provide support and instruction to students.

The digital content will be available to students within a platform that provides creation, publication, and student progress tracking capabilities. Students will have access to age-appropriate, engaging lessons, and tools that support learning, including text to speech, audio and translation, text and picture dictionaries, and more. Digital content combines direct-instruction videos featuring expert, virtual teachers with rigorous assignments, performance tasks, and assessments to engage students and ensure subject-area mastery. The digital content features self-paced learning, which allows students to spend more time on what they need and less on the content they've already mastered. If a student needs additional support to master a learning goal, the digital instruction is designed to provide point-in-time resources and support. The digital content gives Virtual Teachers the resources they need to close learning gaps, plan lessons, execute goals, measure success, and intervene to help students grow. Virtual teachers receive initial and ongoing training on the digital content which includes, navigating the digital content, customizing courses and assessments, troubleshooting, adding activities, planning instruction, and designing interventions. Virtual facilitators receive initial and ongoing training to support the students assigned to them. Virtual teachers and virtual facilitators will have ongoing support from the Virtual Arkansas Facilitator Coordinator, Virtual Arkansas Specialists and Administration, Arch Ford Education Service Cooperative, Southeast Education Service Cooperative, and Dawson Education Service Cooperative Content Specialists, and Virtual Campus Coordinator.





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.

Students will be utilizing Zoom video conferencing software to participate in synchronous learning sessions with their teacher. The Zoom software is downloaded to the district provided device. The Virtual Arkansas teacher will utilize Zoom to facilitate synchronous sessions with students during scheduled Zoom sessions during the week. ZOOM provides a suite of teaching and learning features which include recording, polling, break-out rooms, whiteboard with collaborative and annotation tools, chat, translations, screen sharing, hand raising, reaction emoticons, and remote control option. The remote control option is where the Virtual Teacher is given permission to take control of the user's computer screen to provide navigation and technical support. The Zoom link and Zoom schedule is placed in a common location within each course and communicated with students and virtual facilitators. Gentry School District will support the device and software used for participation in Virtual Arkansas classes.

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.

Gentry School District will provide students with a district-issued chromebook and charger. The chromebooks issued are equipped with a camera and sound. Head sets with microphones will also be provided for participation in Zoom meetings and interactive lessons. Families in need of connectivity support have access to check out a mobile hotspot. Gentry Middle and High School Library and distance learning Lab will be open to virtual students in the event that they need support. Gentry School District has established a technology hotline for students and families who need technology support. The hotline can be accessed at any time of the day or week.

## 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.

The paraprofessional hired by Gentry School District to serve as the Virtual Arkansas Facilitator will monitor the health, wellness, social/emotional stability and physical needs of the students once per week via the parents' preferred form of communication and in the language that they understand. If issues are discovered, the paraprofessional will contact the appropriate Virtual Arkansas teacher(s) and Gentry School Counselor. Action may include but is not limited to a call to the Arkansas Child Abuse Hotline if necessary. Virtual Arkansas teachers are trained to employ actions and behaviors to ensure the physical and mental health of students. Virtual Arkansas uses a variety of methods of communication to do this and partners with schools to ensure students are cared for. When a situation arises where intervention is determined to be needed beyond what can be done virtually, Virtual Arkansas will contact the partnering school including the facilitator and counselor to step in to provide intervention. Virtual Arkansas teachers are trained to report any suspected maltreatment/abuse to the Department of Health Services. Additionally, Virtual Arkansas provides ongoing professional development to their teachers to support SEL strategies.

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.

Gentry School District has access to the Virtual Arkansas Genius SIS and the CANVAS LMS to monitor students in real time. Virtual Arkansas teachers will initiate intervention when a teacher determines a student isn't actively engaging or successfully mastering the content. In cases where needed, Virtual Arkansas will involve the partnering school through the facilitator, first. Virtual Arkansas will contact the administrator or request the administrator to be contacted if the initial intervention is not successful. The district paraprofessional will monitor academic progress and engagement of the students daily. If a student is not making progress or has not attended the required zoom class per subject, the paraprofessional will initiate contact with the Virtual Arkansas teacher(s) to collaborate and coordinate contact with the student and family in a language they understand according to the established Virtual Arkansas procedures discussed above. If a student receives special services, the applicable specialist will also be involved if any contact or action needs to be initiated by Virtual Arkansas or the school administration.



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

Gentry School District offers after school tutoring and a full spectrum of special services that virtual students will have access to including dyslexia support, ESOL, 504 and special education services. The Virtual Paraprofessional will collaborate with the Virtual Arkansas staff and district staff to develop a plan to implement response to intervention for virtual students. Supports include additional virtual after school tutoring, Tier II and III interventions through zoom by district staff, and zoom sessions with the building counselor. All will be organized on Google Classroom. The district will collaborate with Virtual Arkansas to determine when a student is in need of more intensive interventions through Tier II and Tier III support on-site. In the event that the student is not able to participate on-site, the appropriate district specialist will provide Tier III support virtually through Zoom. Intervention lessons will be organized on Google Classroom. Students will be monitored weekly and appropriate support procedures will be implemented in collaboration with Virtual Arkansas to ensure the student succeeds. If the committee determines that the virtual setting is inappropriate for the student's success, they will be required to come back on-site for instruction. All means of support will be exhausted and documented before the committee considers bringing the student back on-site. Additionally, Virtual Arkansas teachers have been trained in the RTI process to identify and intervene with immediacy when a student is determined to not be successful. They are trained to deliver Tier I and II interventions and, if those are not successful, reach out to the partnering school regarding additional Tier II or Tier III interventions. Virtual Arkansas also has a PLC structure designed to address intervention with targeted intervention meetings that occur in the 4th and 7th weeks of the 9 weeks.



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

All students enrolled in Gentry School District will participate in NWEA MAP assessments three times per year (Fall, Winter, Spring). Each assessment will be conducted on-site during the hours of 8:00 am to 3:00 pm at one of the following locations: Pioneer Partnership Room B, GCTEC, or the learning lab on each school campus. Specific dates, times, and locations on campus will be coordinated by the District Testing Coordinator in collaboration with Virtual Arkansas, students, and families. Data will be compiled and disaggregated by the students' PLC teams in collaboration with the Virtual Arkansas staff. Strengths and weaknesses will be identified and addressed through the district's established RTI process based on the plan-do-check model.

Virtual Arkansas courses have 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). Teachers also use weekly live Zoom to do informal formative checks to ensure clarity for students on asynchronous learning tasks. These strategies of formative assessment, both formal and informal, are utilized in order to guide the RTI process and methods of intervention.

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



The district will ensure all requirements of the dyslexia law are met for on-site and remote learners. All virtual students will have the same access to services as on-site students as is outlined in the district dyslexia plan found at this link: <https://www.gentrypioneers.com/state-required-information/required/Parent%20Information%20and%20Student%20Achievement/District%20Dyslexia%20Intervention%20Plan/>.

Dyslexia screening will be conducted on-site at the Gentry School District Dyslexia Specialist Office by a district Dyslexia Interventionist. The district will work with Virtual Arkansas, students, and parents to coordinate screenings, progress monitoring, meetings, schedule services, and when needed, develop 504 plans. Services provided will be based on each individual student's needs as determined by a compilation of data. Virtual students who have been identified as having characteristics of dyslexia in grades 7-8 will receive virtual Tier III dyslexia services with a dyslexia interventionist daily for 45 minutes. All interventions will be provided live through zoom. Phonics First, Structures, and Spire will be the programs used for these interventions. Students in grades 9-12 who have been identified as having characteristics of dyslexia will be served in a critical reading class that will be added to their schedule and coordinated with the Virtual Arkansas schedule. The course will be live through Zoom daily. Google Classroom will be used to organize materials and assignments for all dyslexia services. All dyslexia services are provided by a certified teacher who has been hired by Gentry School District for this purpose. These teachers will have a dedicated virtual period in which to provide these services. Virtual Arkansas provides accessibility tools to support students with dyslexia including ReadSpeaker that will read any text in the course to students. Virtual Arkansas will provide the needed accommodations/modifications per the individual 504 plan uploaded into the SIS by partnering school.

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



All requirements from GT Program Approval Standards are met for the gifted program for remote learners. All current 7-12 grade Virtual Arkansas teachers will deliver the GT Program Option of Secondary Course Content (I.C. pg 21, GT Program Approval Standards). These teachers have completed Secondary Course Content training and will provide copies of training certificates and quarterly documentation of differentiation to participating districts, as required in the description of this program option in GT Program Approval Standards. Virtual Arkansas will ensure that any new hires will also complete this required training in order to provide this GT program option. Training and differentiation documentation will be obtained by contacting Kirsten Wilson, Virtual Arkansas Director of Curriculum and Instruction. An approved teacher of the gifted (licensed GT coordinator/GT teacher), employed by the participating school district maintains oversight of the students' activities at a minimum by collecting differentiation documentation on at least a quarterly basis and meeting with identified students monthly, as required by I.C.3 from GT Program Approval Standards.

The following AP courses will also be available to 10th-12th grade students through Virtual Arkansas: AP Language and Composition, Literature, Calculus, Biology, Chemistry, Statistics, US History, Art History, Computer Science, Computer Science Principles, Environmental Science, European History, Human Geography, Music Theory, Psychology, and US Government and Politics. Rebecca Mills, Virtual Arkansas AP Coordinator, will provide documentation of required AP teacher training and copies of approved AP syllabi for each course the district provides.

The following concurrent credit courses are available to 11th and 12th grade students through Virtual Arkansas: Public Speaking, College Algebra, College Math, Beginning Spanish I and II, Experiencing Art, World History to 1500, US History to 1877, and English Composition I and II.

The participating district will ensure all requirements from GT Program Approval Standards will be maintained for virtual services.

Referrals - The District Gifted and Talented Coordinator will solicit information from the Virtual Teachers needed for the Gifted and Talented identification process.

All requirements from the Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards will be met for virtual students.



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



The district will ensure that all requirements of the District English Learner plan are met for on-site and remote learners. The District ESOL Coordinator in collaboration with the Virtual Arkansas Facilitator and Virtual Arkansas will ensure that students receive support and services according to their LPAC. Screening, progress monitoring, failure procedures, and LPAC development will be coordinated by the District ESOL Coordinator. Any on-site services determined to be needed by the LPAC committee will be provided by ELL teachers employed by Gentry School District. The district will ensure that all requirements of the District English Learner plan are met for on-site and remote learners, including ELPA21 screening and summative assessment provided by the district. Communication with families will be in a language and manner families will understand.

All ELL accommodations are determined by the districts' Language Proficiency and Assessment Committee (LPAC) and will be shared with the virtual platform providers who will ensure accommodations are provided so that English Learners have access to the core curriculum via providing integrated supports. The district will regularly communicate with the virtual platform provider regarding the ELL students' progress and make any necessary adjustments to needed accommodations and supports.

For students choosing your virtual option, complete the following to describe how ELD services will be provided:

7th-12th Grade ELD instruction will be provided in a class period designated in the student schedule for this purpose.

The secondary ELL instructor will be provided with a dedicated virtual period in which to provide ELD instruction to virtual students in grades 7-12. ELD instruction will be provided daily through Zoom. Google Classroom will be the platform used to organize ELD instruction, materials, and assignments. The services will not differ by proficiency level. The programs that will be used differentiate the level of instruction based on the students' needs within the programs. Virtual students will utilize English 3D and Read 180 for ELD instruction.

Link to the Gentry School District Program Guide:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O0TA0OGdXzZLpBzXSg4Dk\\_Zf8apMf8mH/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1O0TA0OGdXzZLpBzXSg4Dk_Zf8apMf8mH/view?usp=sharing)





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

All students who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) will receive special education services. Parents or guardians are encouraged to contact their child's teacher or school administrator with concerns. Parents/ teachers may request conferences at any time to discuss programming. Parent notifications regarding IEPs will follow due process procedures as outlined in Procedural safeguards. Parents of children who receive special education services will be notified of any district-wide processes or changes, along with all students. Special Education services will be provided according to a student's IEP. Resource teachers will provide/send modifications to general education teachers and the virtual teachers. General education teachers are required to implement/apply the modifications to the assigned classwork.

**Referrals:** Referrals for special education will continue as normal. If a teacher or parent feels a referral is needed, they will contact the building designee for special education to get the referral started. If the student is deemed eligible for evaluating, all evaluations will be in-person.

**Evaluations:** All timelines for the district will be followed. When a student is up for reevaluation, all evaluations will be done in person.

Virtual Arkansas teachers will provide information for evaluations and conferences when requested. Gentry School District will upload the modification/accommodation sheet to the Student Information System (SIS) within the first 10 days of school or enrollment if enrollment occurs after school begins. Virtual Arkansas courses are designed in such a way that all applicable accommodations/modifications can be met in the course in conjunction with services provided by the partnering school.

Special Education programs delivered in a virtual learning environment will follow all IDEA/Arkansas Rules and Regulations for Special Education. Information discussed during meetings will be documented and placed in the student's file. All modifications/accommodations will be provided according to students IEP. During virtual learning, students who have been identified as needing special education services will be served through Zoom, or other communication platforms. Based on progress monitoring data, students needing Special Education services may be required to meet face-to-face with district special education certified staff.

Virtual Teachers use curriculum and instructional strategies that include the following evidence-based practices, including Universal Design for Learning, which is designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities:

1. Provide explicit instruction,
2. Model learning strategies,
3. Make instruction accessible,
4. Provide tools to support learning, provide appropriate feedback, and capitalize on technology.

The digital curriculum and learning management system provide accommodations for Special Education students and families. These accommodations include addressing multiple learning preferences, accommodations for assessments, video captions/transcripts, color and contrast considerations, read-aloud and translation tools, multiple means of representation of key concepts (verbal, concrete, manipulative, numerical)



representation of key concepts (verbal, concrete manipulative, numerical, graphical, and symbolic.) For Special Education students with language challenges, Virtual Teachers can enable Canvas' embedded ReadSpeaker tool, a robust language-support, feature. This tool allows students to hear on-screen text read aloud. Students and families will be supported in using the tools during asynchronous learning through the initial course orientation and the Virtual Teacher will facilitate the usage of the tools, as needed, during synchronous learning.

Speech and OT/PT-Therapy will be provided by a licensed Speech Language Pathologist, Occupational and Physical Therapist according to the IEPs. Occupational, physical and speech therapy will be provided onsite. The district has set up a room specifically dedicated to therapy services of remote learners.

In keeping with current legislation and the philosophy of the Gentry Public School District, the board recognizes that the District shall provide a free appropriate public education and necessary related services to all children identified as a student with a disability, required under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans With Disabilities Act, and Arkansas Statutes.

It is the intent of the District to ensure that students who exhibit a disability within the definition of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 are identified, evaluated and provided with appropriate educational services. Students may have a disability within the meaning of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act even though they do not require services pursuant to the IDEA.

If warranted, the student will receive appropriate assessments by a qualified examiner who will interpret the results to parents and staff. Gentry Public School District does employ certified special education teachers to develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to insure the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Special Education students will participate in all activities with regular classmates unless determined otherwise by the IEP team. A full continuum of service options and related services are available to meet the needs of identified students from 3-21 years of age.

For students eligible for services under IDEA, the District shall follow procedures for identification, evaluation, placement, and delivery of services to children with disabilities provided in state and federal statutes which govern special education. Implementation of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) in accordance with the IDEA satisfies the District's obligation to provide a free and appropriate education. Gentry Public School District employees certified special education teachers and staff, and are under the supervision of the building principal.

The Board directs the Superintendent to ensure procedures are in place for the implementation of Special Education services and that programs are developed to conform to the requirements of state and federal legislation. The Superintendent is responsible for appointing a District coordinator for overseeing District fulfillment of its responsibilities regarding students with a



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overseeing District attainment of its responsibilities regarding students with a disability. Among the coordinator's responsibilities shall be ensuring District enforcement of the due process rights of students with a disability and their parents.



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.

All Virtual Teachers receive training on and have access to digital software/resources to ensure courses are adaptable to include interactive video tutorials, narrated text, concept maps, digital slide presentations, and usage of images. Interventions may be provided using online tools and assistive technology. Online tools and assistive technology will be available to Virtual general education teachers. Tools will include an interactive whiteboard, annotation tools, mirror image setting, text-to-speech translators, and speech-to-text transcribers.

Virtual Arkansas courses meet the guidelines of IDEA and Section 508. All courses are evaluated for accessibility using Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. Additionally, Virtual Arkansas utilizes embedded tools including ReadSpeaker to provide for students who need content read aloud. Virtual Arkansas also follows the Universal Design for Learning Principles to eliminate both visible and invisible barriers to learning.

In the event that there is a need and it is requested, Virtual Arkansas teachers will be provided access to the same digital accommodations that Gentry School District teachers have access to.

## Teacher Supports



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

Gentry School District will be utilizing Virtual Arkansas as our digital content and digital instruction solution. Virtual Arkansas provides robust online teacher training and development for all new teachers entering the field of online teaching. All Virtual Arkansas teachers are provided both directed/scheduled and embedded professional development activities, book studies, and weekly collaborative teams. Virtual Arkansas provides a team of instructional and digital content experts for just-in-time support for all teachers. Virtual Arkansas also has a team of technology support specialists to assist with any technology. As part of the Professional Learning Community process, Virtual Teachers will use student data to drive a continuous plan-do-check cycle of improvement. If there is a support need beyond what the Virtual teacher can provide, the Virtual Campus Coordinator will facilitate the support. On-going and job-embedded support will occur throughout the school year based on student achievement data and classroom observations.

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?

Gentry School District will be utilizing Virtual Arkansas for our digital content and digital instruction solution. The Virtual Arkansas teachers will be scheduled with a minimum of two hundred (200) minutes each week for each teacher to schedule time for conferences, instructional planning, and preparation. Virtual Arkansas teachers will utilize curriculum developed by Arkansas subject matter experts (SME's) aligned to Arkansas standards. Schools will provide a facilitator or facilitators, depending upon the number of students, to aid Virtual Arkansas teachers as they provide instruction to the students. Virtual Arkansas will provide training to the partnering school's facilitator(s) and ongoing support to facilitator(s) through Virtual Arkansas' Facilitator Coordinator. Prior to the start of school, Virtual Arkansas will support Virtual Teachers with digital content and planning through training on the primary digital content. This training includes guides for recommended pacing, adding supplemental content, and navigating the platform. This digital content and planning component will be supported by Virtual Arkansas.

## 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.

Gentry School District will ensure equitable access to opportunities for success for all digital learner's needs in the areas of poverty, homelessness, migrant, foster care, and military connected students. Gentry School District is a Title One district. Digital learners experiencing poverty and/or homelessness will have access to the support and services provided by Title I funding including McKinney Vento set aside funding. An interpreter and communication assistance programs (Talking Points, Swift Alert, Transact Notices) will be used to ensure that students and families receive information in a language they can understand. Access to counseling services are available on-site in each building and referrals to outside agencies may be made. Gentry School District partners with NWAESC to provide Migrant services for students who qualify. Military connected students will also have access to all of the accommodations and support provided to all children and those beyond the basic services as dictated by law. Equitable services for all students include family support, support of academic, physical, and social/emotional needs.

Link to annual Title One Meeting information:

[https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/138rWgOE77GLOI6d5HdPfx\\_N6DpyzDiPoC14UKg0Tfa0/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/138rWgOE77GLOI6d5HdPfx_N6DpyzDiPoC14UKg0Tfa0/edit?usp=sharing)

Link to Comprehensive School Counseling Plan:

<https://www.gentrypioneers.com/state-required-information/required/Parent%20Information%20and%20Student%20Achievement/Student%20Services%20Plan/FY21%20Comprehensive%20School%20Counseling%20Program%20Plan.pdf>



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.

Virtual Arkansas requires trained proctors for major assessments. Gentry School District's plan for students to take proctored assessments includes: All virtual students will take their tests on-site in the presence of the Gentry School District Virtual Arkansas Facilitator in the Distance Learning Lab. Dates and times for tests will be coordinated together with the students, families, and Virtual Arkansas. Proctoring of tests will be available during the school hours of 8:00 am-3:00 pm Monday through Friday.

Districts partnering with Virtual Arkansas will sign a memorandum of understanding to acknowledge this requirement. Communication with parents will include teacher emails, information posted within the announcement section of the learning management system, information via the learning management system with push notifications, and using the learning management system parent application. If parents do not wish to bring their child on-site to test, we will contact the parents and offer a meeting to discuss the reason for this. We will explain the importance of standardized testing, provide a tour of the district testing sites, and address any other concerns they may have. We will make any and all accommodations that are allowed by DESE to support the family including providing transportation to the testing site. Ultimately, it is the parents' decision to come on-site or not. If they still refuse, we will be negatively impacted on our overall tested percentage rate.

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.



Virtual Arkansas provides the partnering school with access to the SIS and CANVAS LMS. Facilitators are trained to pull grades from the SIS weekly to monitor student progress. Additionally, parents can access student grades through the Canvas App. Teachers send weekly reports via the SIS messaging that is sent to both student and parent email.

The 7-12 virtual option will be closely monitored for effectiveness by the District Superintendent, District Central Office Staff, and District Principal in partnership with Virtual Arkansas, and the Executive Director of Virtual Arkansas, along with Virtual Arkansas Academic Leadership team. Components that affect student achievement are addressed below.

**Teacher Effectiveness:** Virtual Arkansas will follow Arkansas Teacher Effectiveness Support System along with the National Standards for Online Teaching for teacher evaluations with scheduled and non scheduled virtual classroom visits.

**Curriculum Effectiveness:** The content in the learning management system will be reviewed formally on an annual basis through the Quality Matters K-12 Standards for Quality by Quality Matters trained virtual staff to ensure Arkansas standards and International standards for quality are being met. Additionally, Virtual Arkansas is in the process of having a variety of courses reviewed by Quality Matters to earn the Quality Matters Certification.

**Student Achievement:** Student learning will be monitored through formative and summative assessments. This monitoring will be in the form of a Professional Learning Community composed of Virtual Arkansas Teachers and Administration.

**Data Sources:** Monitoring, assessing, reflection on data (inferences and next steps). Parent, student, and staff (virtual) surveys will be conducted at least once per year to monitor the effectiveness of the services.

In addition to the information obtained by Virtual Arkansas, Gentry School District will collaboratively and independently monitor the effectiveness of the digital option for our 7-12th grade students by monitoring nine weeks grades and student engagement. District and building administration will review grade, engagement, and enrollment reports quarterly. Google surveys will be used to obtain perceptual data from students, parents, and staff involved with the digital option. Common formative assessments from Virtual Arkansas, NWEA MAP and ACT Aspire data will be used alongside all of the other information listed above to evaluate the fidelity of implementation and the effectiveness of the program overall.





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)

Gentry School District, in collaboration with Virtual Arkansas, will host a Family and Student Virtual Arkansas Orientation Night. The district also employs an Elementary and Secondary FACE Coordinator along with a FACE Facilitator at each campus. The district Virtual Arkansas Facilitator will collaborate with the FACE representatives and Virtual Arkansas to engage families in scheduled FACE events on-site.

Link to Gentry Schools FACE Plans:

<https://www.gentrypioneers.com/state-required-information/required/Parent%20Information%20and%20Student%20Achievement/Parent%20and%20Family%20Engagement%20Plan%20and%20Policy/PFE%20Plans%20for%20District%20and%20Buildings/>

Virtual Arkansas provides parent/guardian informational webinars throughout the school year for families of students in Virtual Arkansas courses. Virtual Arkansas teachers communicate course and grade updates weekly to parents/guardians with provided email addresses. Parents/guardians are also given access to the Parent Canvas App which allows them to monitor their students activity and grades within the course. Family engagement is highly valued and encouraged throughout the year by providing regular Virtual Arkansas updates, emails from teachers, just in time meetings at the local level, and up to date information on the Virtual Arkansas website, including the Virtual Arkansas Parent Guide ([https://www.virtualarkansas.org/293342\\_2](https://www.virtualarkansas.org/293342_2)).

Provide the URL to evidence of the local school board's approval of the waiver request(s).

Although we are not requesting any waivers, the Gentry School District Board of

Provide a URL to evidence of stakeholder feedback regarding the waiver request(s) and the district communication plan regarding digital learning program(s).

Although we are not requesting any waivers, our stakeholders are our partners, a

## Policies



Please provide a link (URL) to the attendance policy for digital learning students.

Page 18 in Parent Student Handbook found at this link: <https://www.gentrypion>

Please provide a link (URL) to the discipline policy for digital learning students.

Begins on page 31 in Parent Student Handbook found at this link: <https://www.g>

Please provide a link (URL) to the grading policy for digital learning students.

Gentry School District students who choose to participate in Virtual Arkansas wi

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