



Act 1240 Digital Learning Waiver Request

Status: **Submitted to ADE DESE**

 North Little Rock School District (6002000)

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 #: 6002000


Superintendent: Gregory Pilewski

Email: pilewskig@nlrsd.org

Phone: (501) 771-8006

Duration Requested (not to exceed five years): 2 Years
(School year 2021-2022 to 2023-2024)

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

LEA(s)	Grades/Courses	Interaction	Delivery	Platforms
6002050 - Amboy Elementary School	K-12	Asynchronous	Virtual (Online) / Remote (Distance)	
6002054 - Boone Park Elementary School		Synchronous		
6002055 - Crestwood Elementary School				
6002056 - Glenview Elementary School				
6002057 - Indian Hills Elementary School				
6002058 - Lakewood Elementary School				
6002061 - Meadow Park Elementary School				
6002082 - North Little Rock High School				
6002070 - North Little Rock Middle School				
6002071 - North Little Rock Middle School 6th Grade Campus				
6002067 - Pike View Early Childhood Center	6002084 - Ridge Road Elementary School			
6002069 - Seventh Street Elem. School				



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)	<p>The district will utilize this waiver.</p> <p>A student who is enrolled in remote learning will not physically attend school.</p> <p>A student may be marked present in the remote learning environment by attending live meetings and completing asynchronous work when live meetings are not required.</p>
Class Size Number of students:	1-A.5	DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load	6-17-812(a)(2)	The district will not utilize this waiver. Class size limits will not be exceeded per DESE requirements.
Teaching Load Number of students: 150 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	The district will not utilize this waiver.



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; 6-16-126	<p>The district will utilize this waiver. The district will not be required to provide a school day that averages six hours a day or 30 hours per week to remote students.</p> <p>Students in a virtual setting have some opportunity to work asynchronously at their own time, place, and pace.</p> <p>The instructional day may consist of live classes meeting and asynchronous work outside of “normal school hours”. The district will not be required to provide six daily hours of synchronous learning due to the nature of the virtual environment and its asynchronous aspect.</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			The district will utilize this waiver . Students participating in a virtual environment asynchronous and synchronous will meet the required 120 clock hours of seat time to master course standards.
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)	<p>The district will utilize this waiver. Student schedules will suggest break and physical activity times.</p> <p>Students will be assigned asynchronous and synchronous lessons that support physical activities, but will not have synchronous supervision.</p>

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 NLRSD will use Arkansas licensed teachers and curriculum provided by Pearson, a Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) approved provider for students K-12. Pearson teachers will interact with students during synchronous Live Lessons and asynchronously using recorded video instruction. Students may also contact their teacher and request additional synchronous interaction for individual assistance when needed. Students will be expected to complete lessons as assigned by the Pearson teacher.

All K-2 students will receive synchronous lessons for the science of reading provided by Pearson teachers. Pearson teachers are licensed by the state of Arkansas

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 NLRSD will utilize remote instruction for virtual K-12 students provided by Pearson who has been approved by DESE. The students will complete all of their work in a location away from campus. The Pearson (Arkansas licensed) teachers will be remote as well.

The synchronous lessons will be conducted using Live Lesson, a Pearson product for synchronous meetings. Students will utilize the Pearson Connexus platform to view recorded instruction, access lessons, and turn in assignments.

Students are expected to be on campus for all state mandated tests. Students will be allowed to participate in on campus activities sanctioned by the Arkansas Activities Association (AAA). Career Technical Education (CTE) classes will be offered for virtual students using Pearson teachers and curriculum. Any CTE courses not offered by Pearson, those courses will be offered to virtual students onsite.



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.

NLRSD will use dedicated Pearson (Arkansas licensed) teachers for remote instruction and they will be dedicated to remote instruction.

If special services such as Gifted and Talented (GT), Special Education (SPED), and English Language Learners (ELL) are not provided by Pearson, then NLRSD will provide the services for those students. Those services will not be simultaneously with in-person students.

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

The Pearson teachers who are Arkansas licensed are expected to meet regularly with students using the Live Lesson platform. These are weekly meetings students are able to attend for synchronous interaction. The lessons are also recorded for students to view at a later time for reinforcement or if their schedule did not allow them to view the schedule synchronously.

Pearson teachers are expected to:

- *Respond to Webmail messages and telephone calls within 1 business day.
- *Provide synchronous direct instruction (individual or small group) that is teacher-initiated or in response to student-initiated questions.
- *Hold regular office hours to provide availability for synchronous student support.
- *Grade assignments, provide descriptive feedback, and assign final grades
 - o Assessments: 2 business days
 - o Portfolios: 5 business days
 - o Final Grades: 5 business days

Arkansas licensed Pearson teachers will meet daily with K-2 students for the science of reading component.

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 not utilize this waiver.

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?

The district will not utilizing this waiver.



Technology / Platforms

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

Pearson Connexus will be the primary management system for virtual learning.

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 offers over 350 proven, standards-aligned K-12 courses at a variety of course levels.

The Pearson Connexus Education Management System (EMS) is the foundation for the Pearson online program offerings and is the platform proposed for NLRSD K-12 students. EMS is a combination of a learning management system (LMS) and communication tools. The EMS enhances and streamlines all aspects of an online school from enrollment and curriculum to teaching, learning, and evaluation.

The EMS creates a rich, vibrant online classroom experience that allows parents, teachers, and students to work together in a supportive environment. The cloud-based, comprehensive, and user-friendly platform is designed to guide students through a rigorous curriculum in a way that also meets their individual learning needs. Students and parents can access the reliable EMS 24 hours per day from any Internet connection. The EMS integrates key functions and end-to-end services that are critical to maximizing the academic experience and performance of students. NLRSD will have personalized access to the EMS through a branded login page, and administrators will have an easily-accessible dashboard view of student progress and performance.

The K-2 science of reading teachers will be provided by Arkansas certified Pearson teachers.



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.

Live Lesson® is Pearson's online teaching tool and meeting area accessed through a secured link within the platform, delivered using a market leading web conferencing solution. A Live Lesson session allows teachers to communicate with their students synchronously (live) and asynchronously (recorded session). Live Lesson sessions provide for real-time direct instruction with individual and small groups of students using voice-over IP, chat, electronic whiteboard, and shared presentation areas. These sessions allow teachers and students to interact with one another in real-time in a virtual classroom.

Live Lesson sessions provide dedicated access to credentialed content-area teachers who are focused on creating and delivering high-quality learning experiences. They also provide more focused opportunities for struggling students to receive differentiated support and instruction on an individual basis, or in small groups. In addition, Live Lesson sessions may be recorded and saved for students to revisit at a later date if they had scheduling conflicts or want to refresh themselves on the topics covered resulting in a library of on-demand Live Lesson recordings that students can consult as needed.

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 school district will provide each student with a district owned and managed Chromebook for use of school work and live meetings.

District will provide hotspots to any family needing assistance with internet connectivity, live meetings, and completion of classroom assignments.

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 NLRSD will utilize its school counselors to conduct weekly wellness checks on virtual students. Counselors will be responsible for contacting each student on a weekly basis. If it is determined by the counselor that the students need additional mental support, the NLRSD contracts with Strive, the Point, Life Strategies and the Pat Center to provide therapy services for virtual students.

We will continue our weekly food pick-up program to any virtual student that requests a meal box. This service is allowed for all students.

The school district has a social worker that is able to provide support with food and clothing for families.

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.

Pearson provides an Academic Program Manager who will work with the NLRSD virtual academy director to monitor the academic and student engagement in the virtual setting. The Pearson administrator dashboard will allow the NLRSD Virtual Director to monitor student progress in real time. Student monitoring will be conducted daily by the NLRSD.

If it is determined that a student needs additional support, the virtual academy director will schedule a time with the Pearson (Arkansas licensed) teacher and student where the student will receive individual assistance.

All K-12 students who need assistance will be assisted by an by Pearson (Arkansas licensed) who will:

- *Assist in classroom performance
- *Help students navigate the Pearson Connexus platform and other Pearson technology
- *Facilitate communication between the student, and the subject matter teacher(s) as needed.

At the end of the nine weeks, if a student falls below a “C” average and/or has six or more absences, a parent conference will be scheduled and held by the NLRSD Virtual Academy Director and all stakeholders to determine if the student should remain a remote learner or return to an onsite campus.

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



Pearson (Arkansas licensed) teachers will differentiate instruction through group sessions, one-on-one instruction, intervention, extension activities, and additional activities using tutorials, manipulatives, virtual labs and/or graphic organizers, and supplemental instructional resources.

The Personalized Performance Learning process used by Pearson teachers includes:

- Review of Student Background. Teachers and students discuss student strengths, skill deficiencies, and previous school performance.
- Course Selection. Pearson offers a wide range of courses that are available for selection at the time of enrollment to meet each student's individual learning needs.
- Instructional Customization. Teachers can use the customization tools within Pearson Connexus to add, remove and change content based upon the individual needs of the learner.
- Regular Communication. Once a student is enrolled, Pearson (Arkansas licensed) teachers will be in constant communication with the student and parent.

Pearson (Arkansas licensed) teachers review progress daily and communicate with students frequently. Consistent communication—both synchronous (phone call, Live Lesson) and asynchronous (webmail exchanges, grading feedback)—is utilized to provide feedback on student progress in their courses.

Remote students K-10 will be required to participate in the NWEA Map growth assessment. Results will be shared with Pearson teachers to support instruction. Results will be shared with students and parents as well.

The NWEA is not used by 11-12 grade remote students. They will be monitored by Pearson teachers and academic advisors to determine additional support that may be needed.

The NLRSD will provide students response to intervention using all three tier levels. For tier one support, students will receive whole group instruction from their Pearson (Arkansas licensed) teachers. For tier two support, students will be given small group instruction with their Pearson (Arkansas licensed) teacher. Students will be screened/assessed for tier three support. If determined that tier three support is needed, then students will received the extra support from either a dyslexia interventionist, ELL teacher, Special Education teacher or an Arkansas licensed Pearson teacher depending on the need of the student.

NLRSD Virtual Academy Director will collaborative with Pearson teachers to determine if additional support is needed which will be provided by the NLRSD.



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

The district uses NWEA Map Growth for formative assessments which are administered three times a year for grades K-10. Pearson curriculum based assessments will also be used to determine support for student learning. All K-12 teachers will use Common Formative Assessments.

For grades 11-12, Pearson teachers will use curriculum based assessments to check for understanding.

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

The NLRSD will ensure dyslexia law requirements are met for remote learners. Remote students that have current dyslexia services will continue to receive services through a district dyslexia specialist through synchronous instruction based on the required time.

If it is determined that a student requires a dyslexia screening, the virtual director will request a screening with one of the three district dyslexia specialists. The student will have to report onsite for screening. The K-2 mandated screening will be conducted onsite. If the parent's prefer, the screening may be conducted virtually via Google Meet.

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

The NLRSD will ensure Gifted and Talented (GT) program standards are met for remote learners. K-2 enrichment activities will be provided by Pearson (Arkansas licensed) teachers through activities and advanced lessons.

If additional GT services are needed, students will receive services by a NLRSD licensed GT teacher. This will be conducted synchronously live lessons as well as asynchronously through Google Classroom activities.

If it is determined that a student needs to be tested for GT, the virtual director will request a screening with one of the district GT specialists. The student will have to report onsite for screening.



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

The NLRSD will ensure LPAC requirements are met for remote learners. Instruction for ESOL students will be provided by Pearson (Arkansas licensed) teachers.

ESOL remote students will continue to receive their required services as a remote learner. ESOL virtual plan is listed below.

Before an ESOL student is enroll as a remote student, a parent conference will be conducted to determine the appropriateness of remote instruction for the student.

English Learners will be required to report to campus for the ELPA21 test and Language Minority Students will need to report to campus to receive the ELPA screener.

LPAC conferences may be conducted virtually or onsite.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/100elgqjoppNJTFz7JTWvwH4OjX4us9l12898m0_2wE/edit

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

The NLRSD will ensure SPED services will follow all rules and regulations. SPED minutes will be served through synchronous instruction. SPED evaluations will continue to be conducted every three years and annual reviews conferences will be held yearly in accordance with part B of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Students with an IEP or 504 plan who enroll as remote students will continue to receive services as prescribed in their IEP/504.

Before a student with an IEP or 504 plan enrolls as a remote student, a parent conference will be conducted to determine the appropriateness of remote instruction for the student. This conference should include the parent, a representative from the special education department or 504 designee, and the virtual academy director.

Support for remote SPED students will include consultation from the NLRSD special education department for the virtual program to provide guidance on interventions and modifications as needed.

Annual review, evaluation, and 504 conferences may be conducted virtually or onsite.



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.

The NLRSD is outsourcing instruction to Pearson Online and Blended Learning. The teachers at Pearson are licensed by the state of Arkansas and it is an approved provider for K-12 instruction by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Pearson provides all of the general education teachers with the resources including technology. The NLRSD will provided the resources for all students including the technology.

All students are provided Chromebooks equipped with assistive technology such as magnification and highlighting tools that teachers may use with students.

Google Chrome has extensions available to students upon teacher request that provide text-to-speech.

Teacher Supports

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

The NLRSD Virtual Academy Director will collaborate with Pearson on the support needed by teachers. If additional support is needed, NLRSD will have specialized teachers in K-2 science of reading, SPED, GT, and ELL to collaborate with Pearson (Arkansas licensed) teachers on their needs.

If additional supports in technology is needed, then NLRSD will collaborate with Pearson to create an plan of support to the teachers utilizing the instructional technology facilitators in the NLRSD.

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?

NLRSD is outsourcing its digital learning instruction to Pearson who will provide Arkansas licensed teachers. Pearson will provide its teachers with preparation and planning time within their day to meet the needs of students enrolled in the NLRSD virtual academy. The virtual academy director will consult with Arkansas licensed Pearson teachers to ensure that they provide quality instruction that aligns with the Arkansas state standards.

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.

Title I funds will be used to ensure equitable access to opportunities for success for digital learners who are classified as living in poverty, homeless, migrant, in foster care, and military connected.

Each student will be provided a district managed Chromebook for remote learning use. If a family is in need of Internet access, the district can provide the family with a hotspot. The IT department has set up an exclusive help desk email for remote students and has created a technology help flowchart which may be found here.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1u29O2BtGZvX8lABc2Ds8AZM8XNzcBU-v/view>

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.

Testing dates will be communicated with parents via a variety of methods. We have a district social media site, district website, remote learning website, email, and phone call system where testing dates and procedures may be communicated.

Administration for AP testing for the 21-22 school year had not been determined by the College Board. Depending on their decision, students may be required to report to campus for those tests as well.

If a family is unable to bring the student to school for required assessments, the school district will provide bus transportation.

Students will be required to report onsite to take the ELPA, DLM, Aspire, ACT, and K-2 spring NWEA. The location will be determined by the number of students testing.



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 effectiveness of our digital program will be monitored in numerous ways. The K-10 students will participate in the NWEA Map Growth periodic assessments to view academic growth, planning instruction and intervention. The growth of remote students may be compared with growth of the national norms provided by NWEA as well as the growth of their onsite peers.

K-12 Interim and nine weeks grades as well as student engagement will be monitored to determine the academic achievement of virtual students. The virtual director will use the Pearson administrative dashboard to monitor student engagement and academic progress. The virtual director will also work with the Pearson academic program manager to evaluate program effectiveness and student progress.

The virtual director will communicate with families after each grading period to receive feedback on the virtual learning program. This feedback will determine any necessary adjustment to the program.

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)



The virtual academy has a dedicated website providing information for all virtual students.

Pearson provides families with support through Family 411. The Getting Started section contains several helpful documents and videos, including the Quickstart Guide. The Orientation & Tutorials sections contains a video that provides an overview of how students use and experience the Pearson Connexus EMS.

A designated Pearson administrator will work directly with NLRSD leadership to plan and host a personalized virtual Family Information Session prior to the launch of the program. During the event, prospective and newly enrolled students and their families will learn more about NLRSD’s requirements of the virtual program, receive an overview of Pearson Connexus, view a quick demo of the solution, and participate in a Q&A session.

Parents and students will be asked to attend in-person orientation to demonstrate the use of the Chromebook, mobile hotspot (if needed), and Google tools that will be utilized in remote instruction, and assistance with any remaining questions about the Pearson Connexus platform.

Ongoing support throughout the school year may be obtained from the dedicated helpdesk email address for remote students from the NLRSD IT department.

Provide the URL to evidence of the local school board's approval of the waiver request(s).	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1aWxGdTiaBWosDm5TcUFgYZMWz6-lpR0w/view
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Provide a URL to evidence of stakeholder feedback regarding the waiver request(s) and the district communication plan regarding digital learning program(s).	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Z2fBjk51G0QRRQ0beY2toySnnvQD909UO
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Policies

Please provide a link (URL) to the attendance policy for digital learning students.	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hs-La4__rSr9TgPUjDhL2XlrPoZLfxQTaMq
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Please provide a link (URL) to the discipline policy for digital learning students.	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hs-La4__rSr9TgPUjDhL2XlrPoZLfxQTaMq
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Please provide a link (URL) to the grading policy for digital learning students.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hs-La4__rSr9TgPUjDhL2XlrPoZLfxQTaMq

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