



Act 1240 Digital Learning Waiver Request

Status: **Submitted to ADE DESE**

 Alpena School District (0501000)

School Year 2022-2023

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

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

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

District:

LEA #: 0501000

Superintendent: Larry Mckinney

Email: lmckinney@alpenaleopards.org

Phone: (866) 425-7362 Ext. 112

Duration Requested (not to exceed three years): 1 Year
(School year 2022-2023 to 2022-2023)

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

LEA(s)	Grades/Courses	Interaction	Delivery	Platforms
0501002 - Alpena High School	7-12	Asynchronous	Virtual (Online) / Remote (Distance)	LMS CMS

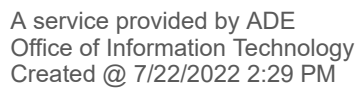


Waivers

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



Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
				<p>The nature of digital learning gives students and their families some degree of control over time, pace, path, and place for learning. Special attendance consideration is given to students working at an accelerated pace. District policies and practices regarding student absences apply to digital learning students. Chronic absenteeism may result in a recommendation to return to onsite instruction or a referral to the juvenile court for additional services.</p> <p>A Digital Learning Facilitator, (a licensed staff member), will be assigned to support the virtual teachers in monitoring attendance weekly. The facilitator will contact each teacher twice a week to monitor attendance and completion of assignments. The Digital Facilitator will access the LMS to determine whether students have completed the assignments, quizzes or tests by viewing the documentation provided by the teacher. This will also determine whether students will need to complete required Zoom sessions with the instructors.</p> <p>The facilitator will then send attendance to the office for recording in eSchool twice a week. The office secretary over attendance, will then determine next steps; a letter to parents, or a meeting with parents.</p>



LEA# 0501000

Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
Class Size Number of students:	1-A.5	DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load	6-17- 812(a)(2)	This waiver would not be needed. We are sufficiently staffed to remain within the current guidelines.



Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
Teaching Load Number of students: Teacher of Record provides virtual instruction to only students who are remote. Please note that 100% virtual (online) or remote (distance) classes are considered large group instruction courses as per DESE Rules for Distance and Digital Learning and teaching load would not apply as per DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load.	1-A.5	DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load	6-17-812	The District will stay within the required teaching loads.
Six Hour Instructional Day (Waiver applies to virtual/remote students only)	1-A.4.2		6-16-102; 6-10-126	Virtual students may have more control over the pace of their coursework than those engaged in onsite instruction. Virtual students may work at an accelerated pace and may complete multiple days of work for a class in a shorter amount of time. Therefore, students may not engage in six hours of instruction daily. Some may work ahead, take longer, etc. on some days and work less on other days.



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			<p>Because virtual students have more control over the pace of their instruction and learning, mastery of grade level standards and completion of coursework may not require 120 clock hours. Some students will require more time to complete a course and it is possible that some students will be able to finish a course in less time. Instruction is designed so that students master the standards; how long that takes each student may vary. Recess (will be needed for grades in which recess is required)</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.
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)	N/A for 7-12.

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 goal of the Alpena School Virtual Learning Program is to provide a flexible and supportive learning option for families and students who need an equitable alternative to the on-site school experience. Students who choose to apply for virtual learning are making a semester-long commitment.

The Alpena School Virtual Learning curriculum is a challenging program that provides students with a variety of learning options. The district will utilize Virtual Arkansas (7-12) as the primary LMS, curricular materials will be drawn from Virtual Arkansas, teacher-created materials and additional source(s) from the DESE Approved Digital Providers List as needed.

Instruction will include digital coursework, live-streaming meetings as needed, and computer-based platforms. Students attend school online and work asynchronously to complete learning activities. Students work independently, with a curriculum that mirrors the same standards, concepts, and graduation requirements as students in on-site classrooms. Grades 7-12: Students will have to apply for virtual learning and be approved by the principal or the principal's designee(s) through a process that will be communicated to the AHS learning community. Students will be expected to complete course orientation and to become acquainted with the virtual teacher and/or director as fits their individual learning situation. They will be expected to continue two-way communication with the school including but not limited to communicating with teachers, the principal, the counselor, and the digital learning provider. If students and their families do not participate adequately in two-way communication the student may have their virtual option privilege revoked at the discretion of the principal or his/her designee(s). A student who has had their virtual learning privilege revoked may not re-apply for virtual learning the next semester but may the semester after that. Students will be required to maintain a 70% or higher in each course in order to work on a flexible and independent schedule. The virtual coordinator will monitor student coursework and provide feedback and redirection, aid, and additional resources as needed. Teachers will be available by phone at certain times, through e-mail during the school day or through virtual meetings as needed. Students falling below 70% in any course may be asked to return to school until their grades are above 70% or may have their virtual option revoked at the discretion of the principal or his/her designee(s). A student who has had their virtual option revoked may not re-apply for virtual learning the next semester but may the following semester.



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/online instructional model. Students will receive direct instruction from their digital curriculum, complete learning tasks, and receive intervention virtually as Virtual AR and Pearson Connexus follow IEP, 504, and ELL documents that are in place and shared.

The digital curriculum itself contains the direct instruction and instructions that most students will need most of the time. When there is any problem or confusion with instruction or instructions on the student's part the students are encouraged to reach out to their teachers or the DL coordinator as soon as possible.

Teachers will work on-site and provide aid as needed, but they are not the students' primary instructor rather the LMS directs and staff aids. Students will work remotely from home receiving services such as OT and PT through teletherapy unless the family chooses for the learner to come on campus to receive these services. Some testing such as screeners and standardized testing may be offered only on campus for everyone equally. As a condition of digital learning students and parents will assure the school in their application process that they both can and will participate in onsite standardized testing as required. They must agree to participate whether this testing is onsite or remote. Refusal or unreasonable reluctance to do so may result in their digital status being revoked. Students may sign in at the high school office as needed to participate in person with extracurricular activities such as clubs and competitive athletic teams.

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.

7-12 teachers will not serve in a full dual role. Learning will be asynchronous with students being instructed by Virtual AR instructors. Students' primary point of contact will be the Virtual Coordinator, though Alpena teachers will be available to help students. The LMS and digital curriculum will be primarily stand alone with supports as needed.



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

Each student in grades 7-12 will have a mentor as does every 7-12 student. Their primary contact though is the Digital Coordinator who monitors student progress, attendance, and engagement and makes recommendations for student intervention when necessary. This was a successful model in the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years.

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?

N/A

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

Technology / Platforms

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

Grades 7-12: Students will be utilizing Virtual Arkansas as the LMS.

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.

Grades 7-12: Virtual AR will be used for student learning. All plans will be implemented (IEP, 504, ELL) with guardian permission to share information. Alpena teachers will facilitate learning if a student needs extra support or intervention. Course curriculum is grounded in research and aligned to state standards. Courses combine direct-instruction videos featuring expert, on-screen teachers with rigorous assignments, performance tasks, and assessments to engage students and ensure subject-area mastery. In order to provide consistency and clarity to students and families in the virtual program, the district utilizes courseware that follows a similar set-up, policies, and procedures for all courses.



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.

Teachers will use Zoom video communication software or Google Meet to communicate with students as needed. Software is included on the teacher and student devices provided by the district. All student and teacher devices also have built in webcams for video communication. Students will be provided with access to Pearson Connexus or Virtual AR.

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 district provides a chromebook to all virtual students in grades 7-12. Students with limited or no connectivity will be provided a district-owned hotspot.

Students experiencing temporary internet outages or the inability to connect are instructed to contact the school to establish a plan for missed days of instruction.

State filters are in place to meet the provisions outlined in the Children's Information Protection Act.

The Alpena Technology Department is available for support to students and families during school hours via phone or email. The technology staff is also able to access district-owned student devices remotely to troubleshoot.

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.



To ensure that families are prepared for learning from home, the Alpena Virtual Learning Program will require every virtual student and parent or guardian to attend a program entrance orientation. During this event, parents/guardians and students will be instructed on virtual learning schedules, introduced to the learning management system, review and sign student and parent contracts, and learn strategies for success in the virtual learning program. Support for families will continue throughout the school year in the form of virtual program updates and orientation to current topics, including grade reporting, strategies for monitoring student progress, and important academic and social-emotional milestones at each grade level. These events will allow virtual program staff a connection to monitor the well-being of students.

Students and/or parents will be asked to complete a virtual learning survey in the first week to inform the teacher of individual needs and possible support areas, including factors influencing access to food, social and emotional well-being, and academic success.

Each student in grades 7-12 is assigned a mentor acting in an advisory role for families and students. The teacher's role is to support the student with their online education in the Alpena Digital Learning Program. This includes monitoring student progress, attendance, and engagement- each linked to a student's wellbeing when learning at home- and making recommendations for student intervention when necessary.

Each campus maintains a Student Engagement Team that intervenes when students and/or families are struggling with non-academic factors. The district-level Mediation Team coordinates with campus teams for full wrap-around support of district and community resources. The District Protocols for Student Engagement describes the campus and district process for support and intervention.

Alpena School District offers breakfast and lunch pickup for virtual students needing access to food.



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.

Weekly progress monitoring will take place utilizing reporting from the learning management system and attendance records of the virtual classroom teachers. Teachers will provide intervention for students not showing progress. If interventions are not successful, the student will be referred to the Problem Solving Team. Interventions may include but are not limited to weekly check in meetings with the teacher of record, parent and student meetings with campus administration, or a transition to face to face instruction. The district maintains a district-level mediation team to support students and families who do not show improvement after working with the campus teams. This district mediation team coordinates with county support services in order to meet student and family needs. The District Protocols for Student Engagement described the campus and district process for wrap around support and intervention. district-level mediation team to support students and families who do not show improvement after working with the campus teams. This district mediation team coordinates with county support services in order to meet student and family needs. Student's may be asked to return to campus at the discretion of the principal or his/her designee. This course of action may be recommended to the principal as part of a student's solution.

Students may continue or elect to enroll in school-based counseling services on campus or remotely.

All services provided by support programs, including Special Education, English Language Learner, or 504 plans, will be provided remotely as available. Students may be required to meet onsite for specific services and assessments.

Support Personnel Include (but not limited to):

Mediation/Social Worker

Counseling/Mental Health Coordinator

Gifted and Talented Coordinator

Virtual Learning Coordinator

Multi-Tiered System of Support (Intervention) Coordinator

Alternative Learning Environment Coordinator

Special Education Coordinator

English Language Learner Coordinator



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

If a student is not making the required daily academic progress or is not engaging consistently, the student's teacher or the Digital Coordinator will intervene. The interventions may include, but are not limited to:

Teacher activity:

- A phone call to student and parents
- Create and implement Student Individualized Intervention Plan
- Academic coaching

*Student's return to campus

Student activity:

- Specific completion of specific daily and/or weekly goals determined by the teacher and accomplished by the student.
- Mandatory in-person or virtual meetings with the teacher, student and/or parent to monitor progress.
- Increased time spent on coursework
- Remediation with a teacher to ensure success on assignments

If intervention data does not show improvement or gains in student learning, the student will be referred to the Problem Solving Team.

Interventions may include but are not limited to weekly check in meetings with the teacher of record or Digital Coordinator, parent and student meetings with campus administration, or a transition to face to face instruction. The district maintains a district-level mediation team to support students and families who do not show improvement after working with the campus teams. This district mediation team coordinates with county support services in order to meet student and family needs. Student's may be asked to return to campus at the discretion of the principal or his/her designee. This course of action may be recommended to the principal as part of a student's solution.

Students may continue or elect to enroll in school-based counseling services on campus or remotely.



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

Instruction decisions will be made using multiple data points, including assessment results- formative and summative, classwork, as well as student engagement data. Student engagement data includes attendance, discipline, and mobility in the current school year and in previous school years. The Virtual Program will utilize the district Multi-Tiered System of Support Process (Intervention Process) to monitor and support student growth.

Students in grades 7-10th grade will complete NWEA MAP Growth three times per year on-site. Students will be asked to reflect on their progress and set growth goals in Reading and Math after each MAP Growth Assessment.

Students and parents will be provided support through program orientation in setting and reaching course progress goals. During virtual student check-ins, teachers will discuss progress with students.

District and state assessment timelines for assessment windows will be communicated with parents and students. When possible based on assessment requirements, families will be provided with flexible scheduling options for the assessment (local formative assessments, NWEA MAP, Civics, Aspire, screening assessments); however, exams with required start times (ACT, AP) will not run on flexible schedules. As a condition of digital learning families will assure the school as part of their application process that they both can and will participate in standardized testing, as required. They must agree to participate whether this testing is onsite or remote. Refusal or unreasonable reluctance to do so may result in their digital status being revoked.

Families will receive contact information for tech support before each assessment administration. Teachers will also provide guidance on common technical issues and solutions when testing at home.

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

Dyslexia services and progress monitoring may be provided remotely utilizing intervention staff or on campus if that is determined to be best for the individual student. Staffing ratios for intervention services will be based on program standards, and time will be scheduled in the day for providing virtual services proportional to student enrollment.

The district will ensure requirements of the dyslexia law are met for virtual learners.



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

Additional screening and evaluation will take place remotely when possible or will be scheduled individually through the district GT coordinator. GT services will be provided remotely utilizing GT staff and the learning management system. Staffing ratios for GT services will be based on program standards, and time will be scheduled in the day for providing virtual services proportional to student enrollment. The district will ensure that GT Program Approval Standards are met for virtual learners.

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

Program evaluations will be scheduled on-site with the ESL Coordinator. ESL services will be provided remotely utilizing ESL staff unless it is determined that it is in the student's best interest to be onsite. Accommodations will be provided through the learning management system. Students will be scheduled on-site for ELPA 21. Staffing ratios for ESL services will be based on program standards, and time will be scheduled in the day for providing virtual services proportional to student enrollment. The district will ensure all requirements of the LPAC plan are met for virtual learners.

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

Special Education services and supports will be determined by the student's IEP Committee. This committee will determine the method for delivery of services that best meets the needs of the child and agreed upon by all parties, including district and parents/guardians. Accommodations will be provided through the learning management system. Students will be scheduled on-site for special education evaluations. Conferences can be conducted by choice of parent- either virtually or onsite. Staffing ratios for Special Education services will be based on program standards, and time will be scheduled in the day for providing virtual services proportional to student enrollment.

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

Digital accommodations include, but are not limited to: digital copies of notes, text to speech embedded in the learning platform, internet browser text reader, extended time on assignments, flexible assignments, and adaptive intervention resources. Student services committees may determine additional accommodations based on individual student needs.

Teacher Supports



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

The district will utilize Virtual AR for grades 7-12 as the primary LMS. Curricular materials will be drawn from Virtual Arkansas, teacher-created materials and additional source(s) from the DESE Approved Digital Providers List as needed. The district will continue to provide resources and training on the many, many resources available.

Teacher training will support the use of the learning management system, effective virtual instruction methods, and strategies for maintaining effective student engagement in the virtual classroom. This training/professional development may be obtained by attending professional development opportunities offered by the area educational cooperative, through DESE, and other educational agencies. The majority of the instruction will be through Virtual AR unless intervention is needed.

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?

Our district will have no full-time virtual teachers. We are a small school and our program will be overseen almost entirely by our Digital Coordinator who will make resources available and communicate with parents and students. The additional workload on staff will be minimal.

The district learning management system will include digital content to reduce the need for teacher-created materials; however, teachers do have the flexibility to create materials/lessons that meet the needs of their students.

Virtual content through Virtual AR already has content aligned to state standards that eliminates the need for teachers to design and create their own curriculum.

If an Alpena teacher is providing an intervention, they have a 40-minute plan time to prepare for instruction. Teachers will be able to use planning time for reviewing course materials and monitoring student progress. Virtual teachers also have PLC to collaborate on student engagement and support as well as student progress.

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.

Alpena School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin or disability in any of its policies, practices or procedures.

The district will use the following measures to ensure equitable access:

- The budgeting and use of state and federal funds to provide equitable access to educational services
- Equal access to technology devices and support in connectivity
- Coordination with district support service programs, including Special Education, 504, ESL, GT
- Utilization of the district MTSS Process for student support and intervention

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.

Parents will be notified of the onsite testing requirement:

- via district communication for all students leading up to each test administration

The district will utilize DESE guidelines when testing virtual students, which includes:

- testing virtual students as a separate cohort from their grade-level group
- organizing small group virtual testing rooms to accommodate the need for additional social distancing

As a condition of digital learning families will assure the school as part of their application process that they both can and will participate in standardized testing, as required. They must agree to participate whether this testing is onsite or remote. Refusal or unreasonable reluctance to do so may result in their digital status being revoked.



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.

In order to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the virtual learning program, the district will:

- conduct student learning surveys in the first week of the program to determine student support needs and survey to reassess those needs at mid-year and in the spring
- survey parents after each orientation session to determine immediate needs and develop supportive response
- analyze student data of course progress and NWEA MAP Growth to determine instructional effectiveness
- analyze student engagement data and NWEA MAP Growth to determine effectiveness of program supports for engagement
- conduct and analyze virtual teacher surveys ● utilize the Ready for Learning Committee to analyze relevant data and program effectiveness

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)

Teachers will provide parents with strategies to support students through a productive struggle during the learning process.

Parents will receive access to the parent portal of the learning management system to monitor their student's progress, and parent orientation will address key strategies for engagement. Families will be asked to complete surveys and participate in forums to provide feedback on the program as well.

Families will be provided with training on the virtual learning system. The Digital Learning Coordinator will be available throughout the year by phone, email or in person for assistance as well as our tech department to help parents with any issues that may arise.

Parent orientation will be provided in person , and may be recorded so that parents may access it at a later time if needed. Additional training will be provided as students add to the program with a minimum offering of once per semester.

Virtual AR provides student orientation videos and documents.

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

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1wd__BzxcWMRkfJH0A1kBiEfqJoveGf

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/19IVfKLMfbqEjjRvzc5IVNlLxNnbVJ85VF>



Policies

Please provide a link (URL) to the attendance policy for digital learning students.	https://s3.amazonaws.com/scschoolfiles/449/student_handbook_2020-2021
Please provide a link (URL) to the discipline policy for digital learning students.	https://s3.amazonaws.com/scschoolfiles/449/student_handbook_2020-2021
Please provide a link (URL) to the grading policy for digital learning students.	https://s3.amazonaws.com/scschoolfiles/449/section_5.pdf Virtual students

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