Act 1240 Digital Learning Waiver Request

Status: **Reviewed**

🏛 Ozark Mountain School District (6505000)

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 #:	6505000
Superintendent:	Jeff Lewis
Email:	jlewis@omsd.k12.ar.us
Phone:	(870) 439-2218 Ext. 502
Duration Requested (not to exceed three years):	2 Years (School year 2022-2023 to 2023-2024)

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

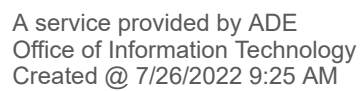| LEA(s)	Grades/Courses	Interaction	Delivery	Platforms
6505017 - Bruno-Pyatt K-12 School	K-12	Asynchronous Synchronous	Virtual (Online) / Remote (Distance)	LMS
6505015 - St. Joe K-12 School	K-12	Asynchronous Synchronous	Virtual (Online) / Remote (Distance)	LMS
6505016 - Western Grove K-12 School	K-12	Asynchronous Synchronous	Virtual (Online) / Remote (Distance)	LMS

LEA INSIGHTS

Waivers

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

Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
				The district is applying for this waiver for virtual/remote students only. A student in the virtual learning environment who is not physically present on campus will be marked present if the student maintains engagement in the learning.

Attendance in virtual learning courses shall be determined by the online attendance and time the student is working on the coursework as monitored by the teacher of record to ensure the student progresses toward standard mastery and credit attainment for the course.

Engagement requirements: A student logs in weekly to the learning platform and submits assignments according to specified due dates. Students will also meet weekly small group attendance requirements. The adjustment may be made to meet an individual student based on their IEP, 504, or LPAC plan.

For extenuating circumstances that require longer periods of time to complete assignments, the building administrator and Digital Program Coordinator will work with the student and family to create a student success plan. |

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 is not requested for K-6. Class size limits will not be exceeded in these grades.

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	This waiver is not requested. Teachers assigned to this program will be dedicated to this program, and not teach other students K-6. 7-12 teachers will not exceed 150 students total.
Six Hour Instructional Day (Waiver applies to virtual/remote students only)	1-A.4.2		6-16-102; 6-10-126	

LEA INSIGHTS

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

LEA INSIGHTS

Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
Clock Hours	1-A.2			The district is applying for this waiver for virtual/remote students only. Students in a virtual setting where learning is synchronous and/or asynchronous will learn in their own time, place, and pace. This may mean that 120 hours of seat time or clock hours per credit may not be needed to master the 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)	

LEA INSIGHTS

Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
				The district is applying for this waiver for virtual/remote students only. Request to waive the DESE rules governing recess standards for students in a virtual setting. Students will be assigned lessons that support physical activities while learning asynchronously; however, it will not include synchronous supervision. Student schedules will include suggested breaks to ensure students have time in their day for recess.

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.

Ozark Mountain Digital Learning School is a digital learning program that uses the benefit of synchronous along with aligned asynchronous courses. This allows for flexible learning, access to an instructor or student when needed and the ability to build the important relationship between a student and instructor for the ideal learning environment. The bulk of the content provided to students grades K-6 will be in Google Classroom. A certified teacher will design and provide curriculum for all K-6 students. Students at K-4 will be required to attend daily synchronous zoom/google meet meetings with their instructor and have the ability to request additional support through one on one zoom meetings as needed. These daily meetings will last 30 minutes. In addition, small groups will meet two times per week for an additional 30 minute session. Students at grades 5-6 will meet in synchronous small groups via Zoom/Google Meet two times per week for 30 minutes each meeting and have the ability to request additional support through one on one zoom meetings as needed. Students in grades 7-12 students will be required to meet with their instructor for synchronous instruction two times a week to ensure proper progress.

The additional support the K-2 students receive will be systematic phonics instruction using Saxon Phonics synchronously and Lexia asynchronously. Our staff will be trained in the Science of Reading as appropriate for the level they are instructing and principals will be trained as assessors. The Science of Reading assessor will conduct observations to ensure the requirements of Science of Reading are met in the synchronous instruction. Phonological awareness will be intensively addressed in K-2 using Heggerty Phonemic Awareness both synchronously and asynchronously, and as needed in grade levels above.

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.	Ozark Mountain Digital School will utilize a Teacher created curriculum utilizing Amplify literacy and Envision Math curricula resources. Certified instructors will provide assignments, assessments and feedback through Google Classroom while using daily Zoom interactions to provide instruction and intervention in a distance learning environment. All the same applies for students in grades 7-12 who will use Virtual Arkansas. CTE courses, elective, and extra-curricular activities may involve some blended learning for a true hands-on experience throughout the courses.
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.	Ozark Mountain Digital School will be dedicated to online only instruction. Enrollment in grades kindergarten through 6th grade will follow Arkansas rules for class size. All 7-12 grade courses will utilize the teachers provided by Virtual Arkansas.
Describe the expectation for teacher instruction, interaction, and frequency with virtual students.	Each Ozark Mountain Digital School teacher of record will actively monitor their courses and ensure the following of Arkansas State Curriculum Standards and will provide synchronous sessions and maintain daily communication via the Learning Management System, text or email. Each week teachers send a grade report to the student and parent/guardian, and initiate further contact with students demonstrating difficulties with course content. Teachers will be provided PD and support for providing engaging and relevant synchronous instruction prior to the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year.
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 is not requesting 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 is not requesting this waiver.

Technology / Platforms

Identify the learning management system/content management system that schools and districts will use? (Canvas, Buzz, Google Classroom, etc.)	Our instructors will be using Google Classroom. Teacher created curricula will be utilized as the majority of the educational content in grades K-6, while Virtual Arkansas courses will be provided for grades 7-12. Supplemental services of instruction will also be used to help implement any gaps in the standards that are not addressed with Lincoln 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.	Ozark Mountain Digital School courses will be designed and written by our designated staff, who are Arkansas Certified teachers using Amplify literacy and Envision Math content and additional supplemental materials. The courses and content will be designed and developed using the Arkansas State Standards as their foundation. Courses will be designed to be fully ready for student interaction and teachers have all the content needed to effectively provide support and instruction to students.
What video communication software is required for any remote student? Please describe the video communication software the teacher will use to facilitate live conferences between two or more participants.	Students will be utilizing Zoom or Google Meet video conferencing software to participate in synchronous learning sessions with their teacher. The software is downloaded to the district provided device. Our teachers will utilize these products to facilitate synchronous sessions with students during scheduled sessions during the week. The link and schedule will be placed in a common location within each course.
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.	Students are provided with a laptop and reimbursed for internet costs used to access their online school work. Parents submit paid bill statements twice per year, and are reimbursed for amounts paid on internet costs. If proper internet is not available to the student, a hotspot will be provided. If the student is unable to access the internet using traditional methods, wifi access is available 24/7 from the school parking lot or the local libraries.

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.	Ozark Mountain Digital School teachers will have face to face interaction with the students on a weekly basis. The teachers will be trained to employ actions and behaviors to ensure the physical and mental health of students. Our district uses a variety of methods of communication to ensure students are cared for. When a situation arises where intervention is determined to be needed beyond what can be done digitally, the on campus counselor will step in to provide intervention. Our teachers are trained to report any suspected maltreatment/abuse to the Department of Health Services. All students who participate in the digital school will continue to receive instruction on the Guide for Life Standards. Also, counseling services that are currently available to students on campus will also be available to the digital students. Those services include small group or individual counseling, Student Success Plan support, college and career support, etc. Our digital families will have the option to participate in our weekly meal pick-up program each week. The meal pick-up is at no cost for students. Parents may pick up five breakfasts and five lunches per child each week, at one of three sites that is most convenient for them.
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.	The Ozark Mountain School District administration will have access to Google Classroom to monitor students in real time. Our teachers will initiate intervention when a student isn't actively engaging or successfully mastering the content. Contact with parents will be made to ensure they are aware of the lack of engagement. Then a plan will be made with the struggling student to receive additional meetings with the certified staff and paraprofessionals to ensure that the maximum amount of interaction is being put in place.
Describe the Academic Response to Intervention plan for remote (virtual) students, including additional supports and personnel.	Ozark Mountain Digital School teachers will be trained to identify and intervene with immediacy when a student is determined to not be successful. They will be trained to deliver Tier 1 and 2 interventions and, if those are not successful, the teacher or a designated interventionist will provide instruction face to face with the student.

Describe the district or school's formative assessment plan to support student learning.	Ozark Mountain Digital School courses will have periodic formative assessments, checks for understanding, and pre-tests to determine students' mastery of learning throughout the course that are aligned to the summative assessments. There are varied methods of assessment utilized both through the asynchronous course with open ended discussions/assessments, choice response activities, and multiple choice. Teachers also use weekly live Zoom/ Google Meet sessions to do informal formative checks to ensure clarity for students on asynchronous learning tasks.
Describe how dyslexia screening and services will be provided to digital learning students.	Ozark Mountain Digital K-12 teachers will administer Connections screener to digital learning students onsite, if at all possible, to identify students who may demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia (COD). If needed, interventionists will administer Level II dyslexia screener to digital learning students' onsite, if at all possible. Interventionists will provide dyslexia intervention for those students who demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia (COD) or who have been diagnosed with dyslexia by a medical doctor. Digital learning students will be able to choose weekly virtual or onsite intervention sessions using Connections and Lexia. We will provide the needed accommodations/modifications per the individual 504 plan and ensure dyslexia law requirements are met for digital learners.
Describe how Gifted and Talented supports and services will be provided to digital learning students.	

Ozark Mountain Digital School's Gifted and Talented programming options will be provided to digital students across all grade levels. STEAM whole-group enrichment will be provided by a licensed gifted-and-talented GT teacher to all virtual K-2 students for a minimum of 30 minutes per week. Identified gifted students in grades 3-8 will receive asynchronous and synchronous instruction from a licensed GT teacher. These services will be in place of, and not in addition to, the general education curriculum. Grade-level GT teachers will collaborate with Ozark Mountain Digital School teachers to determine appropriate scheduling for at least 150 instructional minutes per week. The 9-12 grade digital instructors with identified gifted students will work with the GT teacher to develop differentiated instruction for those students at least once a month. Lesson plans will be checked quarterly to ensure those students are being served appropriately. The GT director will collaborate with the OUR GT director and area GT directors to ensure that best practices are effectively implemented. The district will ensure GT program approval standards are met for digital learners.

The GT department will accept referrals for digital students in the same manner as students attending school onsite. All testing will be conducted onsite. Results from placement conferences will be mailed home and parents may request a meeting to review test data. Meetings may occur in-person or via Zoom.

GT staff will provide professional development to the Ozark Mountain Digital School teaching staff and will collaborate with teachers throughout the year on appropriate GT services, documentation of differentiation, characteristics of GT students, etc. The GT Specialist from the OUR Co-op will support by providing professional development as needed. The digital academy will become a component of the annual program evaluation of the gifted program.

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. The LPAC will meet on-site to determine the plans to best meet the needs of the student. Weekly ESL services will be provided remotely utilizing ESL staff. Accommodations will be provided through the learning management system. The ESL Coordinator will check quarterly on the student's progress and review current assignments to ensure the LPAC plans are followed for digital learners. 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 digital services proportional to student enrollment.
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. If direct services are determined to best meet the needs of the child, this program may not be the best placement for the student. If related services are needed, students will have the option of coming to campus for those services or scheduling virtual meetings with the therapist if appropriate. 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. The district will ensure that the special education law requirements are met for digital learners.
Describe common and frequently used digital accommodations that the district or school has provided to general education teachers to assist students in digital learning classes.	Digital accommodations include, but are not limited to: digital copies of notes, text to speech embedded in the learning platform, internet browser text reader, extended time on assignments, flexible assignments, and adaptive intervention resources. Student services committees may determine additional accommodations based on individual student need.

Teacher Supports

Describe district and school supports to provide on-going digital content and instructional supports for teachers.	Our instructors connected to the digital program will receive training on an ongoing basis to improve their knowledge on best practices, effective digital instructional methods, and strategies to keep parents and students engaged in a digital setting. To promote parent involvement, the district will also host a one day, on-site boot camp in August for parents to learn how to utilize the LMS, how to support their digital learner and other helpful tips to navigating the digital learning world.
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?	All of the Ozark Mountain Digital School instructors will be scheduled for 225 minutes of planning time each week. Curriculum will include digital content to reduce the need for teacher-created materials, but the teachers do have the ability to add or create their own materials to meet their students' needs.

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.	Every student in the Ozark Mountain Digital School will be provided with their own device and charger. The school district has invested money on building the infrastructure to accommodate the devices and have worked hard to ensure every student has access to the internet. The school provided devices contain various applications and materials that the district provides at no cost to the student to enhance their learning time. Each student is assigned an email address that is used to regularly communicate with their teachers.

Our district has designated staff to ensure opportunities for success for our homeless, migrant, and foster care students. With help from our digital instructors, these students will be identified and properly assisted as needed by the designated staff. |
| 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 requirement to participate in all state mandated testing before enrolling their student in the digital program and acknowledge their awareness of end of year testing with a signed Digital Learning Contract. Parents will also be notified of the mandatory testing in the Digital Learning Handbook, through communication with teachers, and the weekly district communication calls in the weeks leading up to 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 Ozark Mountain School District will evaluate the effectiveness of the digital program by analyzing student attendance, engagement levels, and achievement on the formative and summative assessments administered. Achievement levels of the digital students will be compared to the performance of the onsite students. Parents and students will be surveyed to gather information that could help improve the program for the future. An advisory committee made up of parents in the program will meet quarterly to provide feedback and suggestions to better serve families in the program.

Administrators, teachers and counselors will identify students receiving below 70% to determine instructional next steps, and to monitor students' progress toward meeting graduation requirements.

Parent, student, and teacher surveys will be conducted to gather information about platform navigation, student and family needs, what is going well within the program, what needs improvement, etc. Advisory committees will be formed and will contribute additional data to evaluate effectiveness.

Administrators will also use data and feedback collected from teacher meetings and PLCs to monitor program implementation levels.

The Ozark Mountain Digital School Director and building and district administrators will conduct formal and informal observations, noting teachers' instructional practice based on TESS, PGPs and Science of Reading monitoring requirements.

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)	Parents play a large role in their student's learning, especially when that student is a digital learner. Teachers will provide parents with an orientation that will address keys to learning successfully. The orientation will also include: an overview of the Ozark Mountain Digital School's expectations, training on how to navigate the learning management system, and more. Instructors will send weekly emails with important information and updates. Parent surveys will be conducted to gather information about platform navigation, student and family needs, what is going well within the program, what needs improvement, etc. Advisory committees will be formed and will contribute additional data to evaluate effectiveness.
Provide the URL to evidence of the local school board's approval of the waiver request(s).	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1JaVeF8D8o46nm29_QDj4y9ZCi7wqN
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/17SlXAg4JzSQ9Hg2ogXj7hmS0q75unZ

Policies

Please provide a link (URL) to the attendance policy for digital learning students.	https://docs.google.com/document/d/17CWJYDyY93neu-fG7y1JwGmGMoGfl
Please provide a link (URL) to the discipline policy for digital learning students.	https://docs.google.com/document/d/17CWJYDyY93neu-fG7y1JwGmGMoGfl
Please provide a link (URL) to the grading policy for digital learning students.	https://docs.google.com/document/d/17CWJYDyY93neu-fG7y1JwGmGMoGfl

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