



# Act 1240 Digital Learning Waiver Request

Status: Reviewed

 Decatur School District (0402000)

School Year 2021-2022

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 #:** 0402000  
**Superintendent:** Steven Watkins  
**Email:** swatkins@decatursd.com  
**Phone:** (479) 752-3986  
**Duration Requested (not to exceed five years):** 1 Year  
(School year 2022-2023 to 2023-2024)

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

LEA(s)	Grades/Courses	Interaction	Delivery	Platforms
0402009 - Decatur High School 0402011 - Decatur Middle School	K-12	Asynchronous	Virtual (Online) /	LMS
0402008 - Decatur Northside Elementary		Synchronous	Remote (Distance)	



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.
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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. Student attendance in the Decatur Virtual Academy (DVA) is based on daily login to a district-issued device between the hours of 6:00 AM and 10:00 PM. Special attendance consideration is given to students working at an accelerated pace. Teachers will continue to record attendance in eSchool.</p> <p>DSD has developed an internal device management system (CMD) that identifies student access to district-issued devices. Teachers will monitor student time and pace with a combination of the Virtual Arkansas/Buzz and internal management system (CMD). District policies and practices regarding student absences apply to virtual academy students. Chronic absenteeism may result in a recommendation to return to onsite instruction or a referral to the juvenile court for additional services.</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>Class Size</b> Number of students:	1-A.5	DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load	6-17- 812(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 DESE Rules Governing Distance and Digital Learning, Sec. 6.07, state that distance learning courses, as defined in rule are considered “large group instruction” courses for the purposes of the Standards for Accreditation. Classes with 100% virtual enrollment may exceed class size maximums due to the fact that technology-based approaches are the primary instructional delivery and teachers are providing instruction through technology-based approaches utilizing an LMS with digital content and allowing for some degree of self-paced or flexible access. Teachers of record who are dedicated to teaching virtually or have a virtual class will adhere to DESE’s rules regarding large group instruction. Current class size restrictions are in place for many reasons including classroom management, physical space limitations, and the ability to give students individualized attention. The nature of digital learning and virtual instruction remove some of those issues. Because virtual learning is primarily asynchronous, teachers can instruct more than the usual class size load of students. There isn’t a limit to how many students can access the curriculum at one time; however, we believe that virtual teachers should have no more than double the class size mandated by law.</p> <p>Requested student-teacher class size ratios are as follows:</p> <p>K: 40:1</p> <p>1-3: 50:1</p> <p>4: 56:1</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:  30  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	



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 Decatur Virtual Academy (DVA) offers a virtual option using an LMS with digital content. This provides for some degree of self-paced or flexible access, allowing for increased class size and teaching load maximums.</p> <p>Teaching loads by grade levels for DVA are as follows:</p> <p>7-12: 60:1, not to exceed 180 students total Teachers in grades 7- 12 who teach both virtual and onsite classes can have 10 additional students per digital period, not to exceed 180 students total. Although this would be considered the maximum number of students for a teaching load, current projections indicate numbers much lower than the maximum.</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>Six Hour Instructional Day</b> (Waiver applies to virtual/remote students only)	1-A.4.2		6-16-102; 6-16-126	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.
<b>Clock Hours</b>	1-A.2			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.





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>Recess</b> (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)	K-6 virtual teachers will encourage students to engage in supervised, unstructured social time, free play and vigorous activity scheduled as part of the day; however, given the nature of virtual school, it is not possible for teachers to ensure that this takes place.

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 Decatur Virtual Academy (DVA) is to provide students and their families an equitable alternative to onsite learning.

DVA offers students a robust digital learning option with the benefit of synchronous “live” instruction coupled with aligned asynchronous courses. This allows for students and teachers to develop relationships, to address support and enrichment needs, and to provide flexibility with learning.

Decatur certified teachers deliver instruction online through SeeSaw (K-1) Google Classroom (2-6), and the DESE approved digital provider Virtual Arkansas Global Virtual Arkansas/Buzz (7-12) learning management systems (LMS). Students attending the virtual academy will, in large part, have control over their pace and location of learning management systems access.

Content for grade-level general education curriculum is developed by Virtual Arkansas, a DESE approved digital provider. EL Achieve and Imagine Learning support English learners’ mastery of the English language; TeachTown, and Unique Learning are developed to best meet the learning needs of our students with individual education plans. In addition to the content lessons provided through the Buzz LMS, teachers have the flexibility to create their own lessons in order to meet the needs of individual students. All units of instruction, whether purchased or locally developed, will be aligned with Arkansas’ Academic Standards.

Virtual students and teachers will be using learning and content management systems which will require special training prior to navigating the platforms. (SeeSaw, Google Classroom, Buzz, etc.) One paraprofessional will be trained and will step in as a guest teacher in the event a virtual teacher is absent. Students interact with teachers to complete learning tasks, both teacher-directed and independently. Teachers and students monitor task completion and mastery of the same standards as students in onsite classrooms. Teachers provide feedback through LMS and live stream sessions. Results from formative and summative assessments provide data to determine the need for enrichment or Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.

Grades K - 6: Students will be expected to follow a daily schedule for the first ten days of each semester in order to ensure student engagement, to build collaboration, to develop relationships with the teacher as well as with fellow classmates, and to maximize student learning. After the initial 10 days of, students will be required to maintain pace in the curriculum and to attend weekly check-ins with the teacher in order to work on a flexible, independent schedule. Teachers will monitor student coursework, provide feedback, and offer reteaching opportunities. Virtual students will work with their classroom teacher using the learning management systems Google Classroom and/or Seesaw. K-2 teachers will share Science of Reading (SoR) instructional lessons videos 3 times a week for students to participate in as well as instructions to support student virtual learning. Additionally, K-2 will have daily, required, synchronous instruction to meet SoR requirements.



Teachers will be available throughout normal school hours. In addition, teachers will host virtual office hours twice weekly, and early out Wednesdays will provide dedicated time for teachers to plan, meet with virtual parents and students via zoom.

Each week, teachers will notify students and parents when a student grade falls into the D or F range. Teachers will monitor student coursework and provide feedback and reteaching. Students whose grades fall in the D or F range in any course will be required to attend individual and/or small group virtual intervention sessions and may be asked to come onsite for additional support for a minimum of one week or until their grades rise to a C or above.

Grades 7-12: Students will be expected to follow a schedule, complete daily check-ins with their advisor, and attend a minimum of two live virtual sessions per subject each week during the first two weeks of each semester to complete course orientation and to become acquainted with the virtual teacher.

During the remaining weeks of the semester, students and parents will be notified weekly by official correspondence (email, letter, phone call, text message, etc.) when a student's grade falls into a D or F range. Teachers will monitor student coursework and provide feedback and reteaching. Students whose grades fall in the D or F range in any course will be required to attend individual or small group virtual intervention sessions and may be asked to come onsite for additional support for a minimum of one week or until their grades rise to a C or 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.

The Decatur Virtual Academy (DVA) will partner with the DESE approved virtual provider Virtual Arkansas/Buzz LMS to provide a fully online learning experience for its students.

Students working during asynchronous learning times have control over the pace, place, and time they are completing assignments.

DVA teachers will work onsite to provide students both synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities. Scheduled Zoom and Google Meet sessions will allow for synchronous learning. Students will engage in asynchronous digital coursework through Virtual Arkansas/Buzz Learning Management Systems (LMS) (7-12), Google Classroom (2-6), and SeeSaw (K-1). Students in grades 6-8 are able to participate in a hybrid model by coming onto campus to participate in band, choir, or athletics as applicable.

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.

The Decatur School District will hire DVA teachers, fully licensed in the state of Arkansas, to deliver instruction for its virtual students.

Core content teachers will be dedicated entirely to virtual instruction in K-6 grade.

Music and art teachers at the K-6 grade levels will serve in a dual role, but not simultaneously. The teachers will have designated class periods built into their schedules for virtual and onsite students. They will not be teaching virtual students and onsite students at the same time.

7-12 grade teachers will serve in a dual role, teaching both online and onsite learners, but not simultaneously. The teachers will have designated class periods built into their schedules for both virtual and onsite students. They will not be teaching virtual students and onsite students at the same time.

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



One of each student's teachers will serve as his/her DVA teacher advisor. The teacher advisor's role is to support students' online learning experience. This includes monitoring student progress, attendance, and engagement. The teacher will make recommendations for additional services, including, but not limited to, counseling, School Intervention Team (SIT) referral, and additional asynchronous times to meet students' individual needs.

In Grades K-6, students will participate in asynchronous learning. Also optional for students are individual student support sessions, offered virtually for four (4) hours per week. Early out Wednesdays will allow teachers to host support sessions. Specifically, K-2 will have daily, required, synchronous instruction to meet SoR requirements.

In Grades 7-8 teachers provide optional synchronous instruction a minimum of two times each week with additional optional opportunities for individual student support offered virtually during the school day. DVA teachers will provide students in grades 7-8 additional optional opportunities for onsite tutoring during the teachers designated virtual class periods.

Students and parents will be notified when a K-8 student earns grades in the D or F range in any course. These students will be required to join synchronous small-group sessions for intervention, remediation, and supplemental learning opportunities for a minimum of one week or until their grades rise to a C or above. Teachers will analyze student data to determine content, frequency and length of small group sessions.

In addition to instructional interaction, teachers will communicate with students at least weekly to identify barriers to student success including physical and social-emotional well-being. DVA will have an online counseling form that virtual students can complete. This form notifies the counselor if a student would like to speak to them. Students complete social-emotional learning curriculum in grades K-8 (Second Step). The District will provide equitable student services to both onsite and virtual students to provide wrap-around support when needed.



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 use of Virtual Arkansas Curriculum (7-12), Google Classroom (2-6), and Seesaw (K-1) support allow a teacher to exceed class size requirements. The learning platforms, along with additional teacher resources, greatly reduces the workload in preparing lessons, assignments, and assessments.

The district will provide necessary instructional supplies and materials to all students. This includes student-issued Chromebooks, chargers, and any additional instructional supplies necessary for effective instruction and student success. The district will provide a mobile hotspot, if necessary, to eliminate barriers for families without access to Wi-Fi or who are experiencing unstable Wi-Fi connectivity.

The district will provide time weekly for teachers to work collaboratively in academy, building, grade-level, and content-area professional learning communities (PLC). PLC activities include aligning curriculum, planning instruction, assessing student performance, and creating interventions and/or enrichment based on results.

District leadership facilitates monthly PLCs for counselors, special education teachers, gifted and talented teachers, reading interventionists, and ESL teachers. These leaders facilitate professional learning activities related to teachers' specific job responsibilities in the virtual setting.

A minimum of 200 minutes per week will be provided for teachers to plan differentiated instruction. Teachers will be able to modify the online content and develop personalized lessons to better support the students they serve. Teachers will provide Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions to meet students' individual needs. Teachers or students may choose digital services provided through the content management system, synchronous intervention services, or face-to-face services. Student support staff (ESL, GT, Sped, Interventionists) will be available to support teachers and students.

District instructional coaches will support teachers by providing ongoing, job-embedded professional development and facilitating student-centered coaching cycles. Professional development will be focused on learning and refining current best practices for instructing students in the online learning environment.

The DVA Team will also provide additional instructional support to teachers through the DVA PLC process. The Team's responsibilities are related to the virtual academy. The Team is members of the administrative leadership team and works collaboratively with other team members to address needs of the Decatur Virtual Academy (DVA).

A paraprofessional will be hired in 2021-2022 to help track progress of students, step in as a substitute when a virtual teacher is absent, and provide support to teachers working on student interventions.

Beginning with the 2021-2022 school year, the ALE school counselor will spend a portion of his time working with virtual academy students to provide additional



portion of his time working with virtual academy students to provide additional support, including but not limited to: student scheduling, monitoring student credits for graduation, providing student and family support, and acting as a liaison between the virtual academy and the buildings.

District Directors of ESOL, Special Education, Gifted Education, and Student Services will provide assistance to the DVA Team when needed to ensure teachers are able to address the needs of all students that are assigned to their classroom.

The district will determine the effectiveness of these supports by observing and/or participating in PLC meetings; analyzing student achievement data; and providing and collecting specific, meaningful feedback to and from teachers following classroom observations.

The district will determine the effectiveness of student supports by analyzing various data sets including, but not limited to students' attendance, levels of engagement, and mastery of essential standards, as well as results from teacher, student, and family surveys.

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 support teachers with their teaching load by placing a cap on the number of students enrolled in each class.

Teachers in grades 5-6 and 7-12 who teach both virtual and onsite classes may have 10 additional students per digital period, not to exceed 180 students total. 5-6 teachers will implement Google Classroom units of instruction as well as teacher resources to enhance online learning. 7-12 teachers will implement Virtual Arkansas/Buzz LMS that includes digital units of instruction, as well as teacher resources to enhance online learning. LMS training will be provided by the Virtual Arkansas prior to using the platform. The curriculum itself, along with additional teacher resources greatly reduces the workload in preparing lessons, assignments, and assessments.

The Northwest Arkansas Educational Service Cooperative (NWAESC) content specialists will be available to provide teachers with support as needed, including ongoing, job-embedded professional development will be provided as needed.

Student performance data will be monitored weekly by all teachers, with frequent updates sent home to families.

Students and parents have access to Home Access Center (HAC) to monitor grades in real time. Virtual Arkansas also offers a dashboard feature for families to monitor individual student progress at any time. Families and students will be trained in the use of the dashboard feature at the beginning of the school year orientation and as needed throughout the year.

Stakeholder feedback will be collected two times each year, through teacher, student, and parent surveys. The data collected will be used in the DVA PLC process to further explore areas of growth within the program. Informal monthly check-in meetings will be conducted with teachers and support staff who work with our special populations (SPED/ESOL/GT). The Decatur Virtual Academy Team and district leaders for these special population programs will facilitate the informal monthly meetings.

District leadership facilitates monthly PLCs for counselors, special education teachers, gifted and talented teachers, reading interventionists, special education teachers, and ESL teachers. These staff members provide additional support to teachers and students who teach and learn in the virtual setting. Virtual teachers will also receive additional support through the PLC process led by the DVA Team.

The district will monitor the effectiveness of supports by observing the PLC process, analyzing assessment results (MAP and Aspire Testing), and survey data.





## Technology / Platforms

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

The Decatur Virtual Academy (DVA) will use Buzz (Virtual Arkansas) and Google Classroom as learning management systems for all virtual learning students in grades 2-8, and Buzz (Virtual Arkansas) and SeeSaw as learning management systems for all virtual learning students in grades K-1. Utilizing the Buzz (Virtual Arkansas) curriculum provides consistency and clarity for all students and families in the virtual academy.

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.



Teachers will enter grades into eSchool. Families and students will have access to their grades through the Home Access Center (HAC).

DVA will use the Virtual Arkansas (Virtual Arkansas) curriculum and Khan Academy as a supplemental learning management system for students in Grades 7-12. K-2 will use Seesaw/Buzz curriculum as a supplemental learning management system. Grades 3-6 will use Buzz/Khan Academy as a supplemental learning management system. All students K-12 will use google classroom units of instruction developed and managed by the onsite classroom teachers.

K-2: Seesaw/Buzz (Supplemental)

3rd-6th: Buzz/Khan Academy (Supplemental)

7th-12th: Virtual Arkansas/Khan Academy (Supplemental)

K-12th: Google Classroom (Teacher developed and uploaded - Primary)

The majority of instruction (>80%) to DVA students will be developed and uploaded to google classroom by our onsite teachers. Curriculum will follow pacing and content that onsite students receive allowing seamless transition from virtual to onsite or onsite to virtual.

In order to fully support all students in the virtual academy, other content management systems may be implemented as Tier 1 instruction, as well as Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions.

EL Achieve is core content, systematic, research-based English Language Development Curriculum, and will be used with ESOL students to support second language acquisition needs.

TeachTown and Unique Learning may serve as the primary curriculum resource in self-contained learning environments (SLE), or to provide interventions for students with specific IEP goals in need of additional support.

Imagine Learning may be used as a Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention to supplement core content in reading and math.



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.

Zoom and Google Meet video communication are used to facilitate live communication between two or more participants. All district-issued devices have web cameras for video communication.

Teachers use Zoom and Google Meet Breakout Rooms during synchronous teaching times to foster a deeper level of connection and communication for/with virtual students in a smaller setting.

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 will provide students with a district-issued Chromebook and charger. Families with little or no connectivity will be provided a mobile hotspot.

Students and families may contact the District Technology Department during regular school hours or submit a help desk ticket at any time for technological assistance.

Drive-up WiFi is available in every school parking lot in the district. Students may also access free WiFi at Decatur School parking lots. Use of all district devices is monitored and KaJeet filters are in place to meet the provisions outlined in the Children's Information Protection Act.

In order to ensure that students are using devices at appropriate times, student devices are shut off from 10PM-6AM for all students in grades K-8.

## 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 make certain families prepared for learning from home, the Decatur Virtual Academy will require that every virtual student and parent or guardian participate in an onsite orientation prior to the first day of instruction. Families will have the ability to attend an orientation session during the day or the evening to allow for greater flexibility.

During the orientation, virtual students and their parents/guardians will receive an overview of DVA expectations, training on how to navigate the learning management systems and strategies for successful online learning. DVA staff will distribute hardcopies of students' virtual learning schedules, the student/parent contract, and the Chromebook agreement form. Throughout the first weeks of school, teachers will continue to train students during small and large group synchronous instruction on how to navigate the learning management systems. If additional support is needed teachers will provide opportunities for families to come onsite for individual training sessions.

During the first week of school, students and parents will be asked to complete a survey 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. These surveys will also provide an opportunity for sharing important information with teachers, such as the need for a hotspot, number of children in the family, particular needs of the family, and the best way for the teacher to communicate with the family.

Surveys will be conducted at semester and again at the end of the year. This will provide important data to the DVA team to ensure that current programming is meeting the needs of students and their families. These surveys will also be used as part of the yearly program evaluation to determine the overall effectiveness of the Decatur Virtual Academy.

DVA teachers will monitor students' wellness and safety through student-teacher interactions, both digitally and live. These interactions may include submission of assignments through learning management systems and video conferencing. Email, texts, and phone conversations also provide a communication avenue for students and their families to reach out to virtual academy, building and district-level staff.

DVA teachers document and monitor student attendance and engagement levels. Teachers, along with administrators, contact families when students do not log on, submit assignments, or join synchronous lessons and/or interventions over a minimum of three consecutive days.

If families experience changes so that they are no longer able to adequately support students in a virtual setting, they are encouraged to return their students to onsite learning. If onsite learning is not an option, Staff may contact the Department of Child and Family Services or the Juvenile Court for additional services and support or families may elect to homeschool..

Meals are provided for students who choose to participate in the district's child nutrition program. Drive-through meal pick-up is available at Decatur High School for all DVA students every day that school is in session. On Fridays, weekend snack packs are also available for DVA students who qualify.

DSD operates a school based health clinic, Decatur Medical Clinic in partnership with Ozark Guidance & Counseling (OGC), Community Clinic, and Bright Futures Decatur. Both physical and mental health services are available at the clinic.



# LEA INSIGHTS

Decatur. Both physical and mental health services are available at the clinic.

Families may contact the clinic for more information at 479-752-3986.

Ozark Guidance Center provides school-based therapists to DVA students through a referral process initiated by the family or the school. Sessions with digital learners are typically conducted using telehealth services made available through the service provider. However, families may request face-to-face services.

Community Clinic employs a nurse practitioner (APRN) who provides acute care (non-emergency illnesses), chronic disease management, sports physicals, child wellness checks, and immunizations for students, families, staff, and community members.

Bright Futures Decatur (BFD) is a non-profit organization dedicated to meeting the basic needs of our students. Food, clothing, school supplies, and support for accessing community resources is available by contacting the District Social Worker coordinator online, by phone, or in person at the clinic. Families may request assistance for these basic needs on the Family Needs Request block, posted on district and school websites.



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 reports from the learning management system and attendance records of the virtual classroom teachers. DVA teachers will share weekly academic progress reports to keep students and families abreast of student mastery of grade level skills and standards. If students do not show progress in weekly assignments, or if an overall grade drops below 70%, DVA staff will follow the Protocols for Disengaged Learners. In addition, teachers will provide interventions for these students. Interventions could include, but are not limited to: reteaching of a lesson, small group sessions, one to one sessions, or onsite tutoring time. If interventions are not successful, an academic meeting will be required with the student, parent and DVA Team. Students may be required to attend daily digital or onsite check-in meetings with the teacher for more frequent individual or small group support. Additionally, teachers may request support through the School Intervention Team (SIT) process. As a last resort, students may be asked to return to onsite learning.

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



If a student does not make daily academic progress or is not engaging consistently, the DVA teacher will intervene. These interventions may include, but are not limited to:

Teacher activities may include, but are not limited to: academic coaching, providing small group or one-on-one instruction, reteach the skill or standard, and/or a phone call to parents.

Student activities may include completion of specific daily and/or weekly goals determined by the teacher, participation in mandatory in-person or virtual meetings with the teacher and parent to monitor progress, remediation session to ensure success on assignments, and increased time spent on coursework.

Additionally, interventions may include weekly check-in meetings with the mentor teacher, parent and student meetings with campus administration, or a transition to onsite instruction. If student achievement data indicates interventions have failed to produce improved student performance within a 4 week timeframe, the student will be referred to the School Intervention Team (SIT) for consideration of more intensive support. The SIT team consists of an administrator, a counselor, and at least one other licensed staff member. Guest experts are also included when appropriate. For example, if the team is considering a referral for Level II dyslexia screening the reading interventionist is invited; if TDT is a possibility, the OGC therapist is invited, etc.

Students are eligible for face-to-face instructional support during established hours of on-site learning and evening hours twice per week. Teachers may host evening hours from home. Those hours will be posted each school year based on the campus schedule.

Students may access school-based counseling services onsite or remotely.

All services provided through special education, English speakers of other languages (ESOL), gifted education, dyslexia intervention, or 504 plans will be provided remotely, or onsite based on family preference and/or student need. Students may be required to meet onsite for specific services and assessments. Support personnel include, but are not limited to the following:

Migrant Aide

Gifted and Talented Director

DVA Team

Behavior Interventionist

Special Education Team

ESOL Director

School Counselors

Bright Futures

Director ESOL Communications Specialist

Northwest Arkansas Educational Service Cooperative Specialists



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





To support student learning the Decatur School District uses current school year trends along with previous school years' data points, including formative and summative assessment results, to make evidence-based instructional decisions in the best interest of the students we serve.

Additional data points are analyzed including attendance, discipline, mobility, etc. The DVA, depending on analysis of data, uses the School Intervention Team (SIT) at each building site to monitor and support students showing limited improvement throughout the multiple data points.

Kindergarten - 2nd grade students will complete state required initial screening assessments onsite three times per year to address the following areas: Phonological and Phonemic Awareness, Sound Symbol Recognition, Alphabet Knowledge, Decoding Skills, Rapid Naming, and Encoding Skills. Based on individual need, in extreme circumstances, digital administration of the K-2 screeners could be employed. Students must come onsite for the state-mandated MAP assessments.

Students in grades 3-12 will complete beginning (BOY), middle (MOY) and end (EOY) of the year assessments in core content areas. Additionally, the initial screening assessment criteria, as mentioned above for K-2, will be used when needed to identify student deficit areas in grades 3-12. Based on individual need, in extreme circumstances, digital administration of the assessments could be employed.

Students in 3rd -10th grade will complete ACT Aspire Interim assessments onsite three times per year. Assessments will include reading, math and science content areas, the English assessment is administered at the discretion of the building principal in collaboration with the DVA Team. Teachers and students will conference over the formative assessment results in order to celebrate success areas and set goals for growth. Based on individual need, in extreme circumstances, digital administration of the 3-10 ACT Aspire Interims may be administered.

DVA staff will monitor student progress weekly in order to ensure students are meeting academic goals or targets within the digital curriculum. Parents and/or students will receive communication through texts, emails, phone calls or video communication methods if adequate progress is not achieved.

In the rare instance a student is administered any district or state formative assessment through a digital format, the District Technology Department will be accessible by phone or email to provide technical assistance. Families may also submit a Help Desk Ticket. Additionally, teachers will be able to provide limited support for technical issues or concerns. Formative assessments may be PLC developed or included in content management systems. Teachers will analyze results from common formative assessments (CFA) to monitor students' mastery of grade level content standards and determine instructional next steps.



DSD formative assessments are outlined in the District Assessment Expectations which include a timeline of assessment windows. When aligned with testing requirements, district formative assessments (NWEA MAP, ACT Aspire Interims, teacher created CFAs, etc) may allow for flexible testing schedules.

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

Teachers in Grades K-2 will administer state-required screeners to digital learning students onsite, if at all possible, to identify students who may demonstrate characteristics of dyslexia (COD). Teachers or reading interventionists will administer Level I screeners to digital learning students in Grades 3-12 either onsite or via Zoom/Google Meet. Reading interventionists will administer Level II dyslexia screeners to digital learning students' onsite, if at all possible. Rapport, mouth formation, and pronunciations are vital to ensuring results accurately reflect students' performance. However, virtual screenings are available if absolutely necessary. The district will ensure dyslexia law requirements are met for all virtual learners.

Reading 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. SSSD uses Phonics First and Structures (Level 1 both) as its primary curriculum resource to support students with COD. Sonday System I and II are implemented by some secondary special education teachers. Digital learning students will be able to choose either virtual or onsite intervention sessions.



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

Decatur School District gifted programming options will be provided to virtual students across all grade levels, K-8. 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. The GT teacher will meet with the GT virtual students via Zoom twice a month to assist with PreAP and AP classes, resources for AP Classes/college prep/goal setting/ AP testing.

These services will be in place of, and not in addition to, the general education curriculum. Grade-level GT teachers will collaborate with DVA teachers to determine appropriate scheduling for at least 150 instructional minutes per week. The GT Director will collaborate with the NWAESC GT Director and area GT Director to ensure that best practices are effectively implemented.

The GT department will accept referrals for virtual 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 DVA 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 Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative (NWAESC) will support by providing professional development as needed. The virtual academy will become a component of the annual program evaluation of the gifted program.

The district will ensure all 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.

ESOL Services are provided for identified English Learners (ELs) in grades K-12. Daily English Language Development classes will be offered synchronously or asynchronously by an English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) endorsed, licensed teacher using the programming guidelines set forth in the Decatur School District ESOL Service Handbook and declared in the district's yearly Title III application.

Curriculum, grouping, and pacing will follow that of the Decatur School District ESOL Department guidelines. The district- approved English Language Development curriculum, EL Achieve, will be implemented. This curriculum addresses second language acquisition by addressing the national English Language Proficiency Standards. Students' language progression will be monitored through annual state testing using the ELPA21.

Meaningful access to core curriculum standards will be provided in all content areas using grade appropriate content standards. Meaningful access will be supported using scaffolds and differentiation based on each student's language proficiency. Teachers will be trained to determine appropriate scaffolds and differentiation methods to provide the right amount of support for the appropriate amount of time. The ESOL Specialist from the Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative (NWAESC) will help provide professional development as needed. Testing accommodations will be listed in each English Learners' Language Proficiency and Assessment Committee's form, updated annually.

The district will ensure LPAC plan requirements 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.

Every digital learning student with an IEP will be assigned a special education teacher in addition to his or her general education teachers. The special education teacher will be available to assist general education teachers with instructional strategies, modifications, and accommodations for digital learners to access the learning environment, as well as curriculum paths for success.

The special education teacher will provide direct instruction to digital learning students according to the student's IEP and IEP minutes.

The special education teacher, a general education teacher, and the parent or guardian will meet together by phone or online session at least once each year for the IEP meeting. Referral and Initial Placement conferences will be conducted on-site.

Student evaluations will be conducted on-site due to validity requirements. At the end of each quarter, the special education teacher will provide students, families, and general education teachers a report of each student's progress toward meeting IEP goals.

Special Education students are required to meet the same attendance policies as their peers, unless stated differently on the IEP. DVA Special Education teachers will follow the federal laws, state regulations, and district expectations set forth for all special educators.

The district will ensure SPED services will be provided based on rules and regulations.

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.

Frequently used Digital Accommodations will be shared with all DVA, as well as all onsite teachers. Student services committees may determine additional accommodations based on individual student needs. These accommodations will be reflected on students' IEP, 504 Plan, or LPAC.

Frequent accommodations used will be text-to-speech, voice-over, extended time, accommodation add-ons, and reduced assignments.

## Teacher Supports



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

The district will purchase seats through Virtual Arkansas for virtual students 7-12. The digital coursework provides core content and elective course offerings. Virtual Arkansas will provide training to DVA teachers on the learning management system as well as strategies for being an effective virtual teacher. The curriculum itself, along with additional district provided teacher resources, supports teachers in preparing lessons, assignments, and assessments. The DVA Team will provide summer workshops for virtual teachers to align digital curriculum with the scope & sequence of onsite curriculum.

DSD will provide ongoing, job-embedded professional development focused on content management and instructional practices appropriate for virtual learning. The Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative (NWAESC) will assist with technology tools/instructional practices as needed. District instructional technology coaches will provide weekly tech instructional support for digital instruction. The district instructional technology coaches will also be available for modeling or team-teaching with DVA teachers to provide robust digital lessons to students.

K-12 grade teachers will receive additional instructional support through two professional learning community (PLC) meetings every month during the school year, support from the NWA Coop Specialist, and technology support by the district's technology department. The PLC will be led by the DVA Team, who is a member of the district leadership team. The district leadership team will work closely with the DVA administrator to provide support in leading the Decatur Virtual Academy (DVA).



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 virtual teachers will be scheduled for a minimum of 200 minutes of planning time per week, which aligns with district onsite staff requirements. Planning time will be used to review data, content, assessments, and monitor student progress. Additional release time will be provided as needed to support curriculum, accommodations, technology tools, instructional practices, etc. The virtual school learning management system will include digital content to reduce the need for teacher-created lessons. However, teachers will have flexibility to insert lessons into the learning management system to help further meet the needs of the students. The district will continue to partner with the Northwest Arkansas Education Service Cooperative (NWAESC) to provide additional support to DVA teachers for digital learning.

Virtual teachers will attend weekly PLC meetings to review student data, collaborate on student engagement strategies and ways to support student progress. Wednesday will be an early out day for students, releasing at 1:20pm, allowing teachers time to have PLC meetings and plan instruction.

## 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.



In order to ensure all digital learners have equitable access to virtual instruction, DSD provides every student, regardless of living situations, with a Chromebook and charger. If necessary, a mobile hotspot to access the internet (Mobile Hotspot Agreement). If families elect to participate, low cost insurance for Chromebooks is available through the school district. These costs may be waived for students qualifying for assistance, such as those who receive McKinney-Vento Educational Services.

Bright Futures Decatur provides basic needs such as clothing, food, and school supplies to remove barriers to student learning.

The Director of Student Services and School Improvement serves as the equity coordinator for the district and is responsible for ensuring equitable access is available for all students and handling inquiries regarding non-discrimination policies.

Additionally, the district will use the following measures to ensure equitable access: budgeting and use of state and federal funds to provide equal access to all educational services, coordinating the district support service programs, including Special Education, 504, ESL, GT, counseling services, etc., along with utilizing the School Intervention Team (SIT) 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.

Summative ACT/ACT Aspire, ELPA, ACT Aspire Interim, and NWEA MAP assessments as well as K-2 screeners are administered onsite for digital learning students.

Parents will be notified of onsite testing requirements during student enrollment and registration. Testing requirements are also outlined in the DVA Program Guide. Student/family refusal to test on site may result in denied enrollment in the virtual academy.

Students will test onsite as per DESE guidelines in their grade-level buildings. The assessment plan/schedule will be directed by the building test coordinator with input from the DVA Team and virtual academy teachers. Virtual students will test as a cohort and may test at the same time as onsite students, depending on student needs, personnel availability, and DESE assessment flexibility provisions. Schedules for assessment will be communicated in advance to give families adequate time to plan and, if appropriate, families may have some choice in the date/time of the assessments.

DVA teachers and the DVA Team will assist building test coordinators with communication to students and families regarding testing dates, times, and options.

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 the Decatur Virtual Academy (DVA) will be measured by analyzing various data sets including student attendance, engagement levels, and achievement as measured by formative and summative assessments such as ELPA 21, ACT Aspire, and MAP.

Administrators, teachers and counselors will identify students receiving D/F grades 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 academy, what needs improvement, etc. Focus groups and/or 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 Decatur Virtual Academy Team and building and district administrators will conduct formal and informal observations, noting teachers' instructional practice based on TESS, PGP's and Science of Reading monitoring requirements. Building administrators, including the virtual academy Team, will meet at least once each month to work collaboratively to improve student outcomes across the district.

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)



Family and community feedback was a key component in the development of the Decatur Digital Learning Plan. Throughout the 2020-2021 school year parents and students have completed surveys, and parents/community members have attended and reviewed the digital learning plan to provide feedback and guide the process.

Teachers will facilitate an orientation for DVA students and families to provide the following:

- An overview of DVA expectations
- Training on how to navigate the learning management systems (Buzz, SeeSaw, and Google Classroom)
- Training on the content management systems, if applicable (EL Achieve, TeachTown, Unique Learning and Imagine Learning)

● Strategies on how to be successful with online learning  
DVA staff will publish weekly memos, via email and the DVA website, with important information and updates for students. All correspondence to families will be communicated in English and Spanish.

The DVA Team partners with the District ESOL Communications Specialist to provide community outreach for cultural and language support. Parents have access to the Home Access Center, parent portal of the Buzz Learning Management System, and they receive notifications from SeeSaw and Google Classroom to monitor their student’s progress. Teachers provide parents with progress reports and parents are encouraged to attend parent/teacher conferences conducted each semester. At any point during the school year, parents may contact the DVA Team or an DVA teacher for individual assistance with digital learning tools, academics, or student support services.

Provide the URL to evidence of the local school board's approval of the waiver request(s).	<a href="https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1L4pUa6M0zwXLmi1RaVI05GMdqn0q9a6">https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1L4pUa6M0zwXLmi1RaVI05GMdqn0q9a6</a>
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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).	<a href="https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vT2s4eyGHf-TeVcpoNZnze4v">https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vT2s4eyGHf-TeVcpoNZnze4v</a>
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**Policies**



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

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1x2HZtJobU7xr0cH477ZDKvueNI5Gb>

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

The virtual students will be following the district policy stated in the handbook.

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

The virtual students will be following the district policy stated in the handbook.

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