Act 1240 Digital Learning Waiver Request

Status: **Submitted to ADE DESE**

🏛 Poyen School District (2703000)

School Year 2021-2022

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

Applications will be reviewed in the order received. Incomplete applications will be returned to the district.
A notification letter will be sent to the superintendent at the email address listed above upon approval by the Arkansas State Board of Education.
NOTE: The approved application must then be posted on the district website - State Required Information.

District:

LEA #:	2703000
Superintendent:	Ronnie Kissire
Email:	kissire.ronnie@poyenschool.com
Phone:	(501) 332-8884
Duration Requested (not to exceed five years):	1 Year (School year 2021-2022 to 2022-2023)

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

LEA(s)	Grades/Courses	Interaction	Delivery	Platforms
2703010 - Poyen High School	9-12	Asynchronous Synchronous	Virtual (Online) / Remote (Distance)	LMS

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.
				Request Waiver- A student in a virtual/remote environment who is not physically present on campus will be marked present if the student stays engaged in the remote learning. Definition of Engagement- A student logs in weekly to the learning platform, participates in scheduled zooms, and submits assignments according to specified due dates. The adjustment may be made to meet an individual student based on their IEP, 504, or LPAC plan. Extenuating circumstances that require longer periods of time to complete assignments, the digital learning coordinator or building administrator will work with the student and family to create a student success plan. AMI days or days when a class or school needs to pivot to remote learning, attendance will be determined by the District's AMI 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)	
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	
Six Hour Instructional Day (Waiver applies to virtual/remote students only)	1-A.4.2		6-16-102; 6-16-126	

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.
				Request Waiver- The District will not be required to provide a school day that averages six (6) hours per day or thirty (30) hours per week on days, or portions of days when virtual/remote approaches are the primary instructional delivery or for specific groups of students that are receiving their instruction primarily through technology-based approaches. Students in a virtual/remote setting where they are learning synchronously or asynchronously will learn in their own time, place, and pace. This may mean that 6 hours for an instructional day may not be required.

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			Request Waiver- Students in a virtual/remote setting where learning is synchronous and/or asynchronous will learn in their own time, place and pace. This may mean that the 60 hours of seat time for .5 credit or required clock hours 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)	

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.	9-12 Virtual Arkansas is a virtual/remote learning experience that harnesses the benefit of synchronous or "live" instruction combined with aligned asynchronous courses. This allows for students and instructors to develop relationships, address needed "just-in-time" instruction, and flexibility with learning. Students are provided the opportunity to attend two Zoom sessions per week, per content area, and request additional one:one Zoom sessions as needed. Students in grades 9-12 will be required to attend at least one zoom session per week. Students/teachers are also able to communicate 24/7 via the CANVAS LMS messaging or the SIS email system that is monitored by Virtual Arkansas. Teachers are expected to reply to students within 24 hours of a student communication during the school week. Students are expected to read and interact with messages in their courses on a daily basis during the school week.
	Students will be required to maintain an 80% or higher in each course in order to work on a flexible and independent schedule. Teachers will monitor student coursework and provide feedback. If the student falls below an 80% at the end of the quarter, the teacher will hold a meeting with the student to discuss if the student needs to return to on-site classes. At semester, students who fall below an 80% will need to return on-site.
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.	Students will be required to maintain a 80% or higher in each course in order to work on a flexible and independent schedule. Teachers will monitor student coursework and provide feedback. If the student falls below an 80% at the end of the quarter, the teacher will hold a meeting with the student to discuss if the student needs to return to on-site classes. At semester, students who fall below an 80% will need to return on-site.
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.	Teachers will be dedicated to primarily remote instruction. Student expectations will remain the same for remote students.

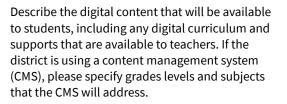|	
Describe the expectation for teacher instruction, interaction, and frequency with virtual students.	Grades 9-12 For students utilizing Virtual Arkansas courses, teachers actively monitor their courses, provide synchronous sessions and maintain regular communication via the LMS and SIS messaging systems. Each week teachers send a grade report to the student and parent/guardian, and initiate further contact with students demonstrating difficulties with course content. Students are highly encouraged but not required to attend all Zoom sessions. Teachers are continuously provided PD and support for providing engaging and relevant synchronous instruction. Instruction will be delivered by Arkansas teachers asynchronously with a weekly synchronous zoom. Teachers will interact with students daily following a consistent schedule during regular school hours. Instruction will be provided synchronously and asynchronously. The teacher's role is to support the student with their online education in the Poyen Virtual Learning. This includes monitoring student progress, attendance, and engagement and making recommendations for student intervention when necessary.
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?	Class size waivers will not be needed.
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?	Teaching load waivers will not be needed.

Technology / Platforms

Identify the learning management system/content management system that schools and districts will use? (Canvas, Buzz, Google Classroom, etc.)	Grades 9-12 The Canvas Learning Management System (LMS) will be utilized through Virtual Arkansas (Grades 9-12).

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 9-12
9-12 Virtual Arkansas courses are designed and written by subject matter experts (SME's) and who are Arkansas Certified teachers. Virtual Arkansas courses and content are designed and developed using the Arkansas State Standards, Quality Matters standards, and the National Standards of Quality of Online Courses as their foundation. This process includes an internal review of the courses by Quality Matters certified online course reviewers. Courses are designed to be fully ready for student interaction and teachers have all the content needed to effectively provide support and instruction to students.

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.

All teacher and student devices have built in webcams for video communication. Teachers and students will communicate with Zoom and/or Google Meet.

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.

Each 100% virtual student will be assigned a district device. Students who do not have reliable internet service may apply for a district-issued hotspot. Wi-Fi will be available on each campus in posted areas.

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.

Students in grades 9-12 will participate in regularly scheduled check-ins to allow for teachers to monitor the wellness and safety of students. 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. Students will be allowed to pick up food during their scheduled lunch time from our cafeteria.

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.

To ensure that families are prepared for learning from home, the Poyen 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 in 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.

Teachers will monitor student progress and communicate with parents should a student fall behind at any point.

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 progression is not engaging consistently, the student's teacher 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 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 return on-site. Interventions may include but are not limited to weekly check in meetings with the mentor teacher, 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. Students are eligible for face to face instructional support during established hours of on-site learning. Those hours will be posted each school year based on the campus schedule.
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.

Describe the district or school's formative assessment plan to support student learning.	9-12 students will take the NWEA three times a year. Each student will establish goals based on NWEA scores.

Describe how dyslexia screening and services will be provided to digital learning students.	The Poyen School District will ensure all requirements of the dyslexia law are met for on-site and virtual/remote learners. If the characteristics of dyslexia are shown, students will be screened on-site. Dyslexia services can be given remotely and/or on-site.
Describe how Gifted and Talented supports and services will be provided to digital learning students.	The Poyen School District will ensure Gifted and Talented Program Approval Standards are met for virtual/remote learners. 9-12 students are offered the opportunity to enroll in pre-AP/AP courses.
Describe how English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL / ESL) supports and services will be provided to digital learning students.	The Poyen School District will ensure all requirements of the LPAC plan are met for virtual/remote learners. Program evaluations will be scheduled on-site with the ESL Coordinator. ESL services will be provided remotely utilizing ESL staff. 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.
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

Teacher Supports

Describe district and school supports to provide on-going digital content and instructional supports for teachers.	The district has a site license for Edgenuity for grades 9-12 that includes coursework for all core and elective courses offered in the virtual program. Teachers in the virtual program will receive initial preservice training, updated training one day in the fall and again in spring as well as additional training as the need arises 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.
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?	Teachers will have 225 minutes scheduled for planning. 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.

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.	Poyen 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

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.	Poyen School District has a communication plan that will enable the use of all social media outlets, the district website, phone contact, and via mail, if needed. We will also utilize buses and home visits, if necessary, for parents that do not cooperate and bring students on-site to test. Those not cooperating will also be sent a certified letter. All Virtual Arkansas students will be required to do statewide summative and school/district required testing (NWEA MAP, Istation, etc..) at the building/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
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 need 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 parent and student forums and surveys two times per year in each grade band ● conduct and analyze virtual teacher surveys ● utilize the Ready for Learning Committee and NWA Educational Service Center 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)	9-12 Virtual Arkansas provides parent/guardian informational webinars throughout the school year for families of students in Virtual Arkansas courses. Virtual Arkansas teachers communicate course and grade updates weekly to parents/guardians with provided email addresses. Parents/guardians are also given access to the Parent Canvas App which allows them to monitor their students activity and grades within the course. Family engagement is highly valued and encouraged throughout the year by providing regular Virtual Arkansas updates, emails from teachers, just in time meetings at the local level, and up to date information on the Virtual Arkansas website, including the Virtual Arkansas Parent Guide (linked here).
	Teachers will provide parents with strategies to support students through productive struggle during the learning process, and parents are encouraged to communicate with the teacher throughout this process.
	The district will support parents with tutorials, media center resources, chromebooks, zoom or face to face walkthrough sessions, or any necessary technology device.
	Families will be asked to provide feedback.
Provide the URL to evidence of the local school board's approval of the waiver request(s).	https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Ez34ovUlji9egntg4Zm9FxMa5a0cR8Wg
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/18XwM0Y3igKD-ph6uABXAQozv_KCPRajyI

Policies

Please provide a link (URL) to the attendance policy for digital learning students.	https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hpE0ajUvA8qBpQD0kmPm1nsDcXepTZ(
Please provide a link (URL) to the discipline policy for digital learning students.	https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hpE0ajUvA8qBpQD0kmPm1nsDcXepTZ(
Please provide a link (URL) to the grading policy for digital learning students.	https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hpE0ajUvA8qBpQD0kmPm1nsDcXepTZ(