Act 1240 Digital Learning Waiver Request

Status: **Submitted to ADE DESE**

🏛 Marked Tree School District (5604000)

School Year 2022-2023

> ⚠ 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 #:	5604000
Superintendent:	James Wright
Email:	wrightm@mtree.k12.ar.us
Phone:	(870) 358-2913 Ext. 1662
Duration Requested (not to exceed three years):	1 Year (School year 2022-2023 to 2022-2023)

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

| LEA(s)	Grades/Courses	Interaction	Delivery	Platforms
5604015 - Marked Tree Elementary School 5604017 - Marked Tree High School	All Grades and Courses	Synchronous	Virtual (Online) / Remote (Distance)	LMS CMS

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.
				Marked Tree School District is requesting a waiver requiring on-campus attendance. With the approval of this waiver students will be allowed to "attend" Marked Tree School District's Virtual School through provided technology from home or another location. This does not take away the requirement for documented daily attendance, according to the Attendance guidelines found in the District Student and Parent Handbook. It is required that students access and interact with the online content on a daily basis and participate in the interactive sessions. Students will zoom in real time with their teachers during assigned periods. Attendance will be taken by the teacher at the beginning of each period. As usual, parents will be notified of absences and if a student exceeds the number of allowed absences, they will not be allowed to participate virtually. Extenuating circumstances must be communicated and approved through the teacher or a building administrator. to be considered an excused absence and for the missed submission deadline not to count against the student's allowable absences as defined by the District Student Parent Handbook.
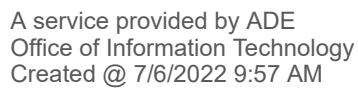
Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
Class Size Number of students:	1-A.5	DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load	6-17-812(a)(2)	The district is not requesting a waiver for class size. Class size will not exceed DESE limits.

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:	1-A.5	DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load	6-17-812	THE DISTRICT WILL NOT EXCEED THE REQUIRED TEACHER LOAD. THE DISTRICT IS NOT REQUESTING A WAIVER FOR TEACHING LOAD.
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.				
Six Hour Instructional Day (Waiver applies to virtual/remote students only)	1-A.4.2		6-16-102; 6-10-126	

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.
				Marked Tree School District is requesting a waiver for the requirements of a six hour instructional day for students enrolled in virtual learning. Students will access courses through Zoom while off campus and there will be synchronous learning each day with students completing the coursework at their own pace, time and location therefore a student may not engage in learning in the typical time frame of a six hour day as required by an onsite student. If an assignment is given, there might be situations where students log off from the classroom to do work or it might not be necessary to do so in the presence of the teacher. Therefore, this might cut short the 6 hour day, occasionally. This would not be the norm. There would be very few circumstances this would be allowed.

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 Marked Tree School District is requesting a waiver for clock hours are required by law. While students will be required to attend class virtually each day, there might be situations where students logoff to work on assignments. The district is requesting a waiver for clock hours to accommodate the times when students may need to log off of synchronous lessons to complete an assignment.

Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
Recess (Waiver applies to virtual/remote students only)	1-A.4.3	DESE Rules Governing Nutrition and Physical Activity Standards and Body Mass Index, Section 7.11	6-6-102(a)(5)	The district is asking for a waiver for virtual/remote students. The district will encourage students to take required physical activity breaks, but evidence of student participation will not be required to be submitted to the district.

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.

Marked Tree School District intends to use a synchronous approach for our digital learning option. At the beginning of each day or period, students will be required to login to their class through zoom. It is expected that students will participate in discussion, complete daily classroom assignments, and be on-time for instruction. We have seen through our data that students who participate in live Zoom sessions are much more successful than those who do not.

Every student has internet access or has the ability to utilize a wi-fi hotspot through the school. Our district has been 1:1 for several years, so we are uniquely prepared to provide our students with technology.

Every student will receive instruction through a licensed teacher in real time. By doing so in real time, students have immediate access to instructors for assistance and feedback Assignments will be built and posted into Google Classroom. Our district has utilized Google Classroom for several years and our students begin using it in kindergarten.

It is the expectation that the student's learning environment be appropriate. During Zoom sessions, students should be in a quiet space that is free from district for both the virtual and face-to-face student. This means that objectionable, offensive material must not be posted on walls, other people shouldn't be present, there shouldn't be background noise, and pets shouldn't be in the stream.

Dress should be appropriate and meet the criteria set forth by the student handbook.

Any violations could result in the student being removed from the Zoom session. If a student is removed, notification should be sent immediately to the building principal for further action.

Since this will be synchronous instruction, we can guarantee that the science of reading requirements will be met during walkthrough, observations, and review of planning documents.

Students who have classes that will have hands-on experiences (CTE classes, science labs, etc.) will have the option to attend school on the days of those assignments. We will also make time available after school hours so students can participate in those hands-on learning opportunities.

If a student does not login to class, the student is counted absent and the parent will be notified via email AND phone call on each absence. In addition, letters will be mailed home on the 2nd, 5th, and 10th absence.

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.	Instruction will be provided to students virtually to our remote students while also occurring with students in the classroom. The district will utilize Zoom for our video conferencing software. The data collected during this school year has shown that asynchronous learning has not worked well for our community. While we believe that virtual learning is needed, we think it is best for students to have immediate access each day to teachers and be able to engage in the classroom in real time.
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.	Our teachers will serve in a dual-role for both in-person and remote learners. The reasons for that are as follows: We do not have a significant number of students who have expressed interest in participating in virtual learning. We will not exceed the required teacher load. We will not exceed the required classroom size. The only difference in our virtual plan and our face-to-face instructional plan for next year is that teachers will have to admit students to the Zoom class at the beginning of each period. Teachers are expected to engage virtual students in their classroom discussions and treat them as if they are in the classroom environment.

Describe the expectation for teacher instruction, interaction, and frequency with virtual students.	Teachers and virtual students are expected to engage in class as if the student was in the classroom. Students should participate in discussions, complete daily assignments, and answer questions. Strategies that will help ensure equity and participation in the classroom will be put in place so that all participate in the learning. The various platforms we intend to use also have ways for virtual learners to interact with learning material.
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?	OUR DISTRICT WILL NOT UTILIZE A WAIVER FOR CLASS SIZE, NOR WILL WE EXCEED DESE LIMITS.
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?	OUR DISTRICT WILL NOT UTILIZE A WAIVER FOR TEACHING LOAD, NOR WILL WE EXCEED DESE LIMITS.

Technology / Platforms

Identify the learning management system/content management system that schools and districts will use? (Canvas, Buzz, Google Classroom, etc.)	The content management system for our district will be Google Classroom. All materials, lectures, assignments, etc. will be posted into Google Classroom. Parents will be able to monitor grades by accessing HAC.

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.

Our teachers in grades k-12 have access to online digital support for their curriculum. We have digital supports for Wit and Wisdom, Eureka Math, Amplify Science, Zearn, Lexia Learning, Happy Numbers, Prodigy, Fundations, My Perspectives, Illustrative Math, and we are examining our math and science curriculums for additional online support. In addition, students will have access to a library of daily lessons that have been presented AND access to lessons that have been created and recorded that address our essential standards.

All grades and all subjects will utilize Google Classroom.

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.

Our district will utilize synchronous Zoom sessions.

Zoom has been utilized constantly throughout the pandemic. There are tools within zoom that will help to engage the student in classroom discussions. There are polls, chats, whiteboards, screen sharing, hand raising, and more.

In addition to those tools, teachers will implement strategies that will make sure to incorporate virtual students into the classroom setting. Our teachers routinely use equity sticks and random number generators to ensure student participation is random and equitable.

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.

Our district has been 1:1 laptops at 7-12 since 2012 and K-12 since 2017. Each student will be issued a Google Chromebook, both face-to-face students and virtual students. We have worked with Ritter Communications to promote an affordable internet option to our families called Ritter Connect. After pushing that initiative in the spring of 2000, we then conducted surveys and partnered with Ritter to find the number of students who still did not have internet access. Once that number was identified, we purchased enough hot spots to ensure that every student at Marked Tree School District has the ability to have access to the internet.

All students and teachers of our district will have laptops and internet connection, both at work and at home.

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.

Based on gathered data, we anticipate having fewer than 30 students (K-12) enrolled in our virtual option. At this time, we anticipate only one K-6 student being virtual.

For students who are participating in our virtual option, there is a once a week zoom to meet with a teacher or counselor they have been assigned. During this time, educators will discuss grades, well-being, mental health, and will look for indicators of concern.

All students will have access to mental health providers and the school counselor. That can be scheduled via Zoom or face-to-face. Our district and our mental health providers will do random home visits with virtual students to monitor their well-being.

In addition, students can schedule face to face meetings with teachers and receive additional help. Our district will also offer an after school tutoring program next year that virtual students can attend in-person or via zoom.

Teachers will also be available via email, Class Dojo, or Remind101.

The district will provide breakfast and lunch to students free of charge. We will allow the student to pick up meals by having a drive-through during our breakfast and lunch times.

Students will be required to participate in BMMI, vision, hearing, and scoliosis screenings. Students are allowed to participate in any health related presentation we have during the school year (typically we have between 5-7 health-related presentations for our students).

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.

Students will be monitored each week through grades, attendance, and quality of work. If students aren't engaged or excelling in their learning, the teacher will notify the members of their building RTI team. This will be reviewed at their weekly meeting. Discussion and possible placement into Tier 2 or 3 will be made.

The District RTI team will discuss virtual students at their meeting every other week. Students in our RTI program will be monitored closely to ensure progress is being made. All virtual students will be discussed at the District RTI meeting. Marked Tree School District has hired additional aides to help teachers support virtual students. These aides check attendance, communicate weekly with parents, help set up additional video meetings, get students needed materials, check grades, and help make sure interventions are scheduled for students below a 70. These aides will be a part of the RTI team.

Our special education supervisor and teachers will monitor work and assist our SPED students.

When students are placed in Tier II, Tier III, or in after school tutoring, students will have the option to do so virtually or face-to-face. All tutoring and interventions will be done by a licensed professional.

It is the expectation and a requirement of the plan that students maintain above a 70% to remain in our virtual program. If a student records below a 70% during any quarter, the student is expected to return to face-to-face instruction.

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

Virtual students who are placed in tier 2 or tier 3 interventions will attend interventions virtually through zoom. These students will be monitored the same as the face to face students. Teachers will analyze the student's work, grades, interim, and progress monitoring data to determine what interventions need to occur. Adjustments will be made to intervention groups as needed according to the student's progress. Students in Tier II interventions will have this provided by their classroom teacher. Students in Tier 3 interventions will have interventions provided by classroom teachers and an assigned support staff member.

Describe the district or school's formative assessment plan to support student learning.	Virtual students will be required to participate face to face in benchmark, progress monitoring, and interim assessments. This will ensure that these assessments are taken in the appropriate environment and the data is valid. Classroom assessments and classwork will be submitted electronically with teacher feedback given regularly and in a timely manner. The focus of our leadership team meetings (district, building, and RTI teams) and our grade/department level staff meetings will be on student data and achievement. By focusing on the data collected around essential standards, this will help drive instruction.
Describe how dyslexia screening and services will be provided to digital learning students.	Virtual students will be face to face for dyslexia screening. They will be screened on the same schedule as the face to face students. Dyslexia modifications will be provided by the classroom teacher. Dyslexia interventions will be done virtually through zoom. The district will ensure all requirements of the dyslexia law are met for on-site and virtual learners.
Describe how Gifted and Talented supports and services will be provided to digital learning students.	K-3 and 7-12 students will receive GT instruction virtually from the classroom teachers. 4-6 students will be provided GT instruction virtually by the GT teacher. The district will ensure that the GT Program Approval Standards will be met for virtual learners.
Describe how English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL / ESL) supports and services will be provided to digital learning students.	ESL students will receive support and interventions virtually by the classroom teachers. Currently, we have no ESL students in our district. Should that change, we would adjust our plan accordingly. The district will ensure all requirements of the District English Learner plan have been met for on-site and 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.	Speech: Students will have the option of receiving speech through Zoom or coming for face to face speech instruction. Small Group Instruction: The special education teacher will meet with the student using Zoom. Students will attend school for PT and/or OT services. Other arrangements can be made for extenuating circumstances. Special education conferences will be conducted virtually. Special education evaluations must be done face to face. The district will ensure special education services will follow all rules and regulations for virtual students.
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.	Teachers will use Zoom and Google Classroom to provide instruction to virtual students. Students with an IEP or 504 will receive digital accommodations according to their individualized plan. These accommodations include text to speech and extended time.

Teacher Supports

Describe district and school supports to provide on-going digital content and instructional supports for teachers.	Teachers will be trained in all the platforms used with digital students. All of the programs used besides zoom will be used with all students whether they are digital or face to face. This will ensure that instruction is seamless. Technology difficulties will be addressed by the office or IT department.

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?

In terms of additional time developing or planning, virtual students will receive the same instruction and activities that face to face students receive. With Google classrooms serving as our main hub, all activities will created, housed, or linked to teacher google classrooms. Our teachers will use ZOOM for instruction. The only extra time needed, as stated by teachers, would be to upload the activities to Google Drive. In an effort to do that, we are building time into our schedule that will allow teachers one hour per work to do those extra activities.

Training for new teacher will be held at our new teacher onboarding training on July 12th and July 13th. This training will last for two full days.

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.

The district will provide our remote learners with access to all the needed tools that they will require for virtual learners. In addition, the district will provide all needed training for the digital tools (including internet access) that our families will use.

In order to achieve equitable access, the district will use federal and state funds to provide equitable access to education. Students will have support for general education, special education, GT, and 54 students.

Marked Tree School Distrcit does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, or disability in any policies, procedures, practices, and educational opportunities.

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.

In the application process, our district will make a requirement that all students must take state tests and other needed assessment in a face to face environment.

Each month, our district plans to send home a calendar of events to the parents and students that will show the upcoming days students will need to test.

Prior to testing, our testing coordinator will call and share available testing times and will work to schedule the best available time for the parent and student. The day before the tests, responsible parties will call the parent and email the student to remind them of their testing appointment.

We will allow numerous chances for testing. However, we will follow the district's protocol for absences. If students are absent from school on days of assigned testing, they will be counted absent. Also, students who do not attend in a reasonable time for testing will be required to return to school and will not be allowed to participate in virtual learning.

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.

Our district leadership team meets once a month. As we have this year, the district will monitor the learning of students based on grades, participation, and various other types of feedback (such as communication with parents). Ultimately, the evidence of student learning isn't a grade, but rather student work and feedback. The leadership team will examine student work to make sure students are being held to rigorous levels of performance in addition to attendance, grades, and classroom participation.

In addition to examining our digital learning plan at our leadership team meetings, our district will also ask parents and students to participate in quarterly surveys. Based upon this feedback and other data, we will make needed adjustments to our program.

| Describe how the teacher(s) will engage families into the digital learning process. (District may link the District Engagement Plan if digital learning is included. The plan must address how the district will support parents/students with digital tools and resources) | Families will be able to engage the district in numerous ways. As per every year, parents will be able to email, request meetings, or call our teachers.

As far as other tools, our district will have an app that will keep parents current on news, events, and other things that are happening in our district. The app will have access to email accounts or teachers and phone numbers.

The district will utilize a website (markedtreeschools.com) for communication with parents.

The district will utilize an automated call/text systems to communicate with parents.

Teachers will use apps such as Class Dojo and Remind 101 for communication with parents and students.

The district provides and will continue to provide video updates on YouTube and Facebook.

Throughout the summer, the district will have various opportunities for parents to attend training. Parents must attend at least one training (one will be held online). During this training, parents will be shown how to access student email, taught how to use Zoom, Google Classroom, and HAC. Parents will also be shown GoGuardian so they will understand how students are being monitored.

The district will also make sure to communicate with families in their language using various translation programs and/or translators.

Upon approval of our plan, the district will set dates for these training sessions with parents. |
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| Provide the URL to evidence of the local school board's approval of the waiver request(s). | https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hNW6gmveVJxyu3CpMGt7Bs0c2QDM |
| 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/1xe296W_13Z6SXeVJVFH9JyED9LXFBr |

Policies

Please provide a link (URL) to the attendance policy for digital learning students.	Pages 12-13 Under 4.7 Current handbook has not been uploaded, but the po
Please provide a link (URL) to the discipline policy for digital learning students.	Students will follow the handbook that has been provided by the district. Se
Please provide a link (URL) to the grading policy for digital learning students.	Students will follow the grading policy for all students set forth in the handbo

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