



Act 1240 Digital Learning Waiver Request

Status: **Submitted to ADE DESE**

Nettleton School District (1611000)

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 #: 1611000
Superintendent: Karen Curtner
Email: karen.curtner@nettletonschools.net
Phone: (870) 910-7800 Ext. 1200
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
1611039 - Fox Meadow Elementary	K-2	Asynchronous Synchronous	Virtual (Online) / Remote (Distance)	LMS
1611045 - Fox Meadow School of Creative Media	3-6	Asynchronous Synchronous	Virtual (Online) / Remote (Distance)	LMS
1611040 - University Hgts. Elem. School	K-2	Asynchronous Synchronous	Virtual (Online) / Remote (Distance)	LMS
1611043 - University Heights School of Medical Arts	3-6	Asynchronous Synchronous	Virtual (Online) / Remote (Distance)	LMS
1611050 - Nettleton Steam School	3-6	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.
				<p>Regular attendance in a virtual setting is crucial to the academic growth of students; therefore students are expected to attend and complete 178 days of instructional content. Students in each grade will have a schedule to ensure academic success with mandatory live instruction times, as well as times for office hours that can be used for additional support, academic intervention, etc. Days missed due to illness or other events will be made up through designated small group instruction, asynchronous lesson review, or other methods deemed to be in the best interest of the student. If additional time and/or supports are needed the student and/or the parent (learning coach) can contact the teacher for assistance.</p> <p>Attendance via synchronous 'live' lessons shall be defined as: a minimum of 3 hours per day for students. *Some schedules (depending on grade level) may adjust this synchronous lesson requirement.</p> <p>Attendance via asynchronous 'offline' lessons shall be defined as: a minimum of a lesson (such as materials, projects, assessments, etc.) per subject area to be completed each day.</p> <p>Canvas Student Engagement Reports will be ran every Monday to calculate the total time (for the previous week) of student activity and logged hours toward assignments/materials, as well as completion of required work.</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.
Class Size Number of students:	1-A.5	DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load	6-17-812(a)(2)	The waiver is not needed as class size limits will not be exceeded.
Teaching Load Number of students: 40	1-A.5	DESE Rules Governing Class Size and Teaching Load	6-17-812	The waiver is not needed as teaching load limits will not be exceeded.
Six Hour Instructional Day (Waiver applies to	1-A.4.2		6-16-102; 6-16-126	



virtual/remote students only)

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.

Students in each grade will have a daily schedule to ensure academic success with mandatory live instruction times, as well as times for office hours (to provide additional support, intervention/enrichment, etc.) If increased assistance is needed outside of the daily schedule, the student and/or the parent (learning coach) can contact the teacher for such assistance.

Students and their learning coach should anticipate a 6-hour learning day each of the 178 school days. Each day will consist of set mandatory live instruction times (at least three hours per day) and set times for office hours (at least one hour per day) that will provide students with a structured, yet flexible, schedule to complete asynchronous course work at their own pace. This type of instructional schedule will also allow for some course work to be completed outside of the Monday through Friday school week.



Waiver Topic	Standard for Accreditation	Division Rules	Arkansas Statutes	Indicate if the district is applying for the waiver and explain how the district waiver will be utilized.
Clock Hours	1-A.2			<p>The clock hours for the school day will be set within the perimeters of 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. each day. As such, each student's daily schedule will be created within these hours. However, since there is flexibility given to some course requirements/instructions/completions, there are opportunities for students to complete work outside of the perimeters of the school day. Furthermore, academy instructors will provide opportunities for student assistance outside of the school day in various ways including email, text, technical help desk, etc.</p>
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)	<p>Within each student's daily schedule, various times will be provided to allow for physical activity/stretching. Each day will encompass at least (2) 10-minute physical activity periods in the morning, and at least (1) 10-minute physical activity period in the afternoon. These activity periods will be guided by a designated instructor.</p>



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.

Nettleton Virtual Academy will provide academic instruction to students in grades K-6 via a weekly schedule that is a blended environment of both synchronous and asynchronous learning. This model allows for structured learning, increased interactions, and direct instruction for all academy students. Virtual students will have the flexibility to complete learning tasks at their own pace using a weekly schedule that is conducive to their specific needs. Using this model of instruction and scheduling helps to increase student-teacher communication, as well as targets the individual learning needs of all students.

Academy instructors are expected to have all resources and materials uploaded to Canvas (chosen learning management system) at least one day prior to the synchronous lesson. All synchronous lessons will be recorded so that students may access them at any time after an absence or when in need of review/assistance. Reminders of synchronous lessons will be given to students via Canvas, emails, or Remind. Along with leading synchronous lessons, academy instructors will assist small groups and/or individual students as needed.

Synchronous lessons will align with work assigned to be completed asynchronously. During this time, teachers will be able to schedule office hours within their day, which will allow them time to give individual assistance to digital learners, including providing additional support and feedback. Instructors can also use this time to monitor student attendance and interactions via synchronous lessons, Canvas analytics, Remind, emails, tech help desk, etc.

*Please note that Nettleton students in grades 7-12 interested in virtual learning will be given the option of receiving their education via Virtual Arkansas, given they meet their entrance requirements.



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 delivery of instruction will be virtual (on-line)/remote (distance) as teachers and students will not be located in the same place. Academy teachers will be housed in the Nettleton Support Services Building and students will be able to attend virtually at a location of their choice.

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 selected to provide remote instruction to digital learners will be responsible only for the academic instruction of their assigned digital learners.

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

It is the expectation that academy instructors will have daily interactions with their digital students. The number of interactions and length of each interaction will be dependent upon the grade level and the set schedule for that day, however, each day will require both personal interaction and instruction between the academy instructor(s) and the virtual student.

Specifically, academy instructors are expected to have all resources and materials prepared and placed in Canvas at least one day prior to the synchronous lesson. All synchronous lessons will be recorded in order for students to access them at any time. Reminders of synchronous lessons will be given to students via Canvas, emails, or Remind.

Further, academy instructors will ensure synchronous lessons (at least three total hours per day) for each student. They will assist small groups and individual students as needed in scheduled daily groups, and each instructor will have a scheduled time each day (at least one hour) to provide their digital learners with additional support and feedback.



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?

Even though Nettleton Virtual Academy is not using this waiver, the district is committed to the support and success of the instructors and the students of the Academy. Thus, the district has created a dedicated space within its Student Services Building for the academy, its faculty and its families. This space includes a "technology hub" that will provide the virtual students with a technologically-enhanced space to come and meet with academy instructors, take state-mandated assessments, etc.

In addition to the technology that is provided to each virtual learner, each virtual classroom is equipped with the technology needed to provide an interactive and fulfilling on-line learning experience.

Also, along with the personnel dedicated solely to the instruction of digital students, the district has created a new position, Virtual Academy Facilitator, that will be responsible for the continuous review of the needs of virtual instructors and virtual students. This individual will serve to secure the proper supports for these groups so that their success as a virtual learner and as a virtual instructor are ensured.

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?

Nettleton Virtual Academy is not using this waiver, but please refer to the question above for additional supports that the district has put in place to support virtual instructors and students.

Technology / Platforms

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

Canvas - Learning Management System

*Please note that courses provided through Buzz/Virtual Arkansas will be loaded into Canvas

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.

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt - Core Curriculum (K-6)
Lincoln Learning - Art & Music (K-6)

*Please note that all content is being pulled into our chosen learning management system, Canvas



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.

Canvas will house all of the communication software that will be used within the academy, and will provide an ease of accessibility for virtual learners and their teachers.

Specifically, Google Workspace for Education (Google Meet) and Zoom will be the video communication software used to facilitate live conferences, including live lessons, office hours, small group sessions, etc.

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.

Nettleton Public Schools will provide (1) an iPad (6th Generation), (2) a Logitech case with a detachable keyboard, and (3) a carrying case to all of its digital learners, as well as an Internet hot spot in order to ensure connectivity and equity for academic instruction at offsite locations.

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.

Each week, a team of administrators and (appropriate) instructors will meet to discuss the performance and participation of each virtual learner. Within these discussions there will be a review of the weekly report provided by Canvas that details the student's academic activity of the previous week.

Also, in addition to the administrative and teaching staff, a social worker and school resource officer may be included in the weekly team meeting to discuss the social and emotional wellness and/or overall safety of each digital learner. Academy instructors may request assistance at anytime for their students' health and well-being. However, at every mid-quarter, and at the end of every quarter, a survey will be provided to both the virtual learner and their parent to assess any need for assistance in such areas. If it is determined that assistance is needed, referrals to district personnel (such as Food Service Director, Homeless Liaison, School Psychologist, District Nurse) can immediately be made for assistance.



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.

Each Monday, student engagement reports will be retrieved from various data points including: Canvas, Remind, Call Logs, Email Logs, etc. These reports will be reviewed by the Academy Principal for appropriate action. In addition, teachers can share any student concern of academic or student engagement at anytime with Principal who will then refer to social worker or School Resource Officer as appropriate.

Technology Help Desk - Provide in person assistance to resolve engagement issues if it relates back to the technology itself. The 'Hub' (library) can provide live hands on lessons/experiences to assist them in understanding how to use the tools. "Back to School" Orientation Sessions will provide each student with a time/date to come on-site and meet their teacher, pick-up devices, access accounts, etc. (If on-site is not acceptable to the family, other arrangements can be made to provide orientation on-line or at home).

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



All practices and procedures put in place for RTI onsite students will be followed for offsite students requiring such services. Students not performing at appropriate levels academically, socially, emotionally, or behaviorally, will be referred for Response To Intervention services and supports so to best address the student's need(s).

The RTI process is described in levels of instruction, Tier 1 (regular instruction) and Tier 2 (more specified instruction), both of which is provided by the classroom teacher. When a student is being considered for Tier 3 instruction (more intensive instruction), a conference is held with the parent to notify them that the student is not making progress and in need of more intervention.

Using personnel dedicated to the academy including the principal, academy facilitator, social worker, special education teacher, and virtual instructor(s), decisions will be made as to the appropriate intervention needed and the best way in which to implement the intervention(s). Interventions may include: small group instruction, individual tutoring, counseling services, etc. If it appears that even more intervention is needed, the team can reach out to other personnel within the district who may be of assistance, including those outside agencies that provide contracted services for the district. During Tier 3 instruction, specific skills will be targeted in deficit areas and students will be monitored in order to ascertain any achievement or growth.

In addition to using the same RTI practices and procedures for offsite students as are used for onsite students, offsite students will also be provided academic interventions via the HMH curriculum, as it can track student academic growth and adapt intervention lessons specifically designed to assist each student in attaining grade level.



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

Canvas, along with the HMH curriculum, provides insight to how students perform on teacher-graded activities within each course. The desegregation of student achievement data tracks student growth, as well as provides insight to how best meet and support each student's academic needs.

Further, Canvas provides detailed reports regarding student time spent on academic materials, pages, quizzes, etc. Such information will allow the instructor to analyze what should be done in terms of student engagement in order for each student to make appropriate academic progress.

All formative assessment data collected will be regularly reviewed so that if needed, it can help design a plan for additional support services, or guide the creation of more intensive instruction. This data often comes from informative pieces such as quizzes, exit tickets, question and answer sessions, etc., that allow for information to be gained both quickly and often. While the collection of such information may or may not result in a student grade, it does provide the instructor and the student with an overall look at the student's current state of learning and what current teachings have yet to take hold with the student. It is through this knowledge that the student knows the current content area(s) they need to focus on, and the instructor knows what academic standards they need to re-address.

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

All students will be screened as required by law and/or in response to academic performance/achievement. All virtual instructors will be appropriately trained using "Connections" in order to serve dyslexic students. All necessary and appropriate student interventions will be provided using live synchronous instruction that is integrated into the student's daily schedule. The learning materials needed for a student to successfully receive dyslexic services will be provided for their personal use offsite. If additional instruction, supports or materials are needed, these can be provided to the student at scheduled times, either offsite or onsite. The district will ensure all requirements of the dyslexia law are met for onsite and remote learners.



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

Gifted and Talented supports and services will be virtually provided in alignment with current practices of the school district: whole group instruction grades K-3, pullout instruction grades 4-5, Honors Course instruction in grade 6. All of these requirements will be incorporated into the student's schedule as time requires, and will be provided by teachers certified in Gifted and Talented instruction, or as properly trained in instruction of Honors courses. The district will ensure all GT Program Approval Standards for the gifted program will be met for onsite and remote learners.

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

ESL supports and services will be provided in K-2 by district tutors who currently provided such supports to onsite students. They will join the academy instructors for synchronous, live lessons to "push into" the classroom and provide supports/services at scheduled times.

For grades 3 and above, students will be served by "pull out" lessons presented by district tutors via synchronous, live instruction at scheduled times. Additionally, for those students who require, or who request more assistance, additional assistance/instruction can be provided either virtually or onsite.

The district ESL Coordinator will coordinate all of these services and the district will ensure all requirements of the District English Language Learner Plan are met for onsite and remote 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.

The chosen curriculum (HMH) provides the options to adapt materials for students, so academy instructors have access to modify the academic work to meet the student's needs.

Students with OT/PT/Speech can be provided the option to receive services onsite, or offsite at the chosen clinic. (Transportation offsite can be provided if needed.)

For students grades K-6, a special education teacher will be dedicated to the support of all services needed for those receiving special education services. All academy instructors will provide any needed modifications to ensure student success.

Conferences and evaluations will be conducted in the mode that offsite learners and parents find the most accessible for their family, including: video conferencing, phone calls, email, or in-person meetings.

The district will ensure that all special education services will be provided to onsite and remote learners based on the required 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.

Apple Accessibility Features
Canvas - UDL & ADA Compliant
HMH - offers visual aids, readers, etc.

A special education teacher will be designated for providing the supports to those students receiving special education services.

Teacher Supports



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

With the purchase of Canvas and HMH, this included both initial and continued professional development for the academy instructors. This professional development also includes daily support services regarding technical/application issues that may arise.

Further, the academy instructors chosen will advance through trainings to attain certifications of "Google Certified Educator" and "Apple Certified Teacher" in order to gain deeper understanding and knowledge of these programs. Currently, the Academy Facilitator and the Technology Help Desk Coordinator have received extensive training in both Canvas and HMH, as well as in various Apple products and Google Workspace. Both of these individuals are highly trained in technology, which would be of great help to the academy instructors.

In addition, the district has various support personnel that will be able to support the teachers in their instruction and delivery. These support personnel include:

- Nettleton Virtual Academy Facilitator
- K-12 Tech Coach Supervisor/District App Coordinator
- Virtual Learner Help Desk
- Building Technology Coaches
- Building Technology Facilitators

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 be given at least double the time each day required for preparation. As such, (80) minutes will be secured within the teacher work day to devote to curriculum development and planning.

With the purchase of Canvas and HMH, in-depth (and on-going) teacher training will be provided for both. In addition, with this purchase, there is full-time technical support for Canvas.

Through the purchase of such intensive professional development and the securing of extended time each school day, teachers' efforts to first learn and then plan the digital content for their virtual students is both reinforced and prioritized.

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.

[https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2739/district_counseling_plan_\(1\).pdf](https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2739/district_counseling_plan_(1).pdf)

Just as is done for onsite learners, offsite digital learners will have access to all needed items and support systems to ensure their overall success. Such things include weekly food service provisions (distributed each Monday at Student Services Building-NPS Food Services Director), technology and internet devices (Technology Department and Tech Help Dest in Student Services Building-Technology Director), necessary home, health and clothing items (Nettleton Virtual Academy-Social Worker), as well as all academic learning provisions (Nettleton Virtual Academy-Facilitator).

Further, digital learners will have access to all district personnel that can help to provide the above listed items including academy principal, academy social worker, academy school resource officer, district homeless liaison, district migrant counselor, school psychologist, outside (contracted) counseling agencies, etc.

The district is committed to every student's success. However, the district has a keen focus on this commitment to their offsite, digital learners as there is an understanding that the lack of direct contact can present a barrier to such success. Therefore, the daily student contacts, as well as the weekly student engagement reviews, will help to prevent such barriers and allow any needs to be addressed quickly and effectively. Also, the district has asked for the assistance of both our local educational cooperative, and our contracted attorney during the creation of this application so to ensure that our commitment to both student equity and student success is well documented throughout.



All students are expected to test (statewide summative assessments) onsite as per DESE guidance. Provide an overview of how the district may communicate to parents and test digital learning students at a district site.

Parents will be notified of the expectation that virtual students must test onsite (but not with onsite learners) prior to the completion of the student application/selection process. This notification will be provided via online information forums, social media platforms, informational brochures, etc.

Upon receiving the notification of student selection for the virtual academy, both digital learners and their parents will be required to attend academy orientation. During this time, everyone will be given testing information and required to both acknowledge and agree to this stipulation. (For those families who cannot attend orientation, other arrangements can be made including an additional scheduling, providing orientation at their home, or going through the orientation process on-line.

Testing flexibilities provided during the 2020-21 school year may not be available for the 2021-22 school year. As such, offsite learners and families need to be made aware of specific requirements as soon as possible so that they may make appropriate decisions and necessary arrangements.

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.



There are multiple personnel dedicated solely to the virtual academy, as well as to the success of the digital learners and their families. Such personnel include the principal, facilitator, social worker, school resource officer, special education teacher, and various virtual instructors. Through the use of use of Canvas, as well as HMH and Virtual Arkansas, and the constant review of various student engagement reports, the effectiveness of the implementation of the digital options described will be continuously monitored, by multiple individuals, in order to find those areas that may need to be addressed and/or improved.

Specifically, the chosen learning management system, Canvas, offers analytics known as "learning analytics" that collects and analyzes student usage patterns. This data will allow instructors to examine various factors that could impact the effectiveness of the digital options including: relationship between student engagement and learning outcomes, collection of login information, student participation time in various activities, student time spent interacting online with resources and/or peers, etc. Such analytics can help to not only identify students who are struggling academically, but also build informed, targeted interventions. Teachers can use this information to adapt and modify curriculum and student assignments, as well.

Further, the chosen curriculum, HMH, offers analytics that provides tools for student evaluation and instructional planning. This information will allow the instructors to utilize both student assessment data, and the artificial intelligence built in, to evaluate student achievement so to ensure student success.



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)

The district will provide various digital tools and resources to parents via the school website, the virtual academy facilitator, and the virtual teachers of their student(s). These tools include a LMS that provides engagement opportunities for teachers, students, and parents with a designed app for each party. This LMS has various tools and resources to support them in their own "digital learning."

The chosen curriculum provides the same types of parental support, as well as a "parent corner" that provides learning opportunities on how to best support a "digital learner" at home. Families will also have the support of the Nettleton Technology Department that will assist with technology training and/or tech help, both virtually and onsite.

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

https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2739/01_minutes-may_2021.pdf

Provide a URL to evidence of stakeholder feedback regarding the waiver request(s) and the district communication plan regarding digital learning program(s).

https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2739/nps_rfl_minutesdocx.pdf

Policies

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

https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2739/student_policy_-_handbook_2020-21.pdf

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

https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2739/section_4_-_students-final-2020-21.pdf

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

https://assets.speakcdn.com/assets/2739/section_5_-_curriculum-final-2020-21.pdf

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