



# PULASKI COUNTY SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

925 East Dixon Road, Little Rock, AR 72206 • 501.234.2000 • Website: [pcssd.org](http://pcssd.org)

February 9, 2023

Dr. Sutherlin,

DRIVEN Virtual Academy (DVA) opened in August 2021 as the first 100% virtual school for Pulaski County Special School District (PCSSD). DVA was designed to provide asynchronous and self-paced learning. Due to a change in mask mandates due to the COVID pandemic, DVA's enrollment increased from approximately 200 to 500 students, with an additional 150 students on a waiting list. This increase in enrollment drastically changed the target population of DVA.

The 2021 - 2022 school year was also the first year of testing in the state of Arkansas while navigating the safeguards of the COVID pandemic. Despite the diligent efforts of the DVA administration and staff to inform all parents and students of the importance of ACT Aspire testing and providing transportation, many parents still refused to allow their students to enter a school setting due to concerns regarding the pandemic. Of the 399 3rd - 10th grade students enrolled in DVA during the 2021 - 2022 testing period, 319 students tested in all areas. We had 6 students who participated in some testing, and 76 students refused to participate in testing or withdrew to avoid testing.

Lastly, the students who are unable to remain in the traditional setting due to serious behavioral issues are assigned to DVA in lieu of expulsion. These students also refused to participate in ACT Aspire testing.

In preparation for the 2023 - 2024 testing season, we have put in place the following step to ensure that more students are actively engaged in the testing process:

1. All students and parents must attend an orientation and agree to participate in district and state testing for enrollment.
2. Transportation will be provided for students during the ACT Aspire testing window.
3. The administrative team will develop a specific action plan to ensure that the 52 students who remained enrolled participate in the 2022 - 2023 testing process.

Please feel free to contact me should any other information be needed.

Respectfully,

Yolaundra Williams, Ed.D

Director of Educational Accountability and Special Projects