

<p><b>PIEDMONT PUBLIC SCHOOLS</b>  <b>BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY</b></p>	<p><i>Instruction</i>  <i>EHAC</i></p> <p>Adopted: August 10, 2020</p>
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**VIRTUAL, HYBRID, AND DISTANCE LEARNING**

THIS POLICY MAY BE USED IF STUDENTS ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND SCHOOL OR ABLE TO ATTEND SCHOOL ONLY ON A PART TIME BASIS FOR VARIOUS HEALTH OR SAFETY REASONS. COMPLETE SCHOOL CLOSURE IS NOT A PREREQUISITE TO USE OF THIS POLICY.

When the District engages in virtual, hybrid, or distance learning, instruction can be delivered via a number of District-Approved Means and Mediums, but in all cases, instructional delivery methods will comply with requirements and guidance from the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE). These methods can include, but are not limited to, means and mediums already implemented or may be implemented in the future by District administration which may or may not include use of technology. Although the child may not be on school grounds, “school” will continue, and the District shall continue to engage students with instruction and experiences that provide opportunities for continuous learning while allowing them to stay connected with their instructors and classmates.

Whether provided through virtual, hybrid, or distance instruction, the District shall, to the greatest extent practicable, provide its students with quality educational opportunities and continuity of instruction that is consistent with the District’s vision and mission. When making decisions regarding the means and mediums utilized for virtual and distance learning, the District shall strive to bridge any equity gaps between those students with and without the technology and resources necessary to access virtual instruction. The District shall utilize all available funding sources and means to bridge these gaps in compliance with federal and state law.

**DEFINITIONS**

- **Virtual Learning:** Instruction provided via electronic means, utilizing the internet and computers as the primary tools for delivery of instruction, evaluation, and interaction. Instructional delivery may include video or audio means, online instructor interaction using District-Approved Means and Mediums (platforms, software, and resources, along with District social media, instructional television, video telecourses, or other District-approved means that require the internet and computer technology).
- **Blended Learning:** Instruction provided through a combination of traditional, in-person coursework and student-selected virtual coursework.
- **Distance Learning:** Instruction provided via the online learning management platform, utilizing the internet, computers, and/or material, augmented by virtual contact/instruction with students via District-Approved Means and Mediums (e.g., video-conferencing) consistent with this and all District policies.

- **Hybrid Instruction:** Instruction provided via the learning management platform, utilizing the internet and computers and/or printed material using District-Approved Means and Mediums as well as in class instruction. Instruction is primarily provided through traditional, in-person learning. During periods of student absence, alternative schedules (e.g. AB schedule), or short-term class/school closure, instruction/learning can continue.
- **District-Approved Means and Mediums:** Equipment and electronic programs and platforms that have been pre-approved by the board of education for instructional delivery and communication/interaction with students and their legal guardian(s) appropriate to the grade level and subject matter concerned.
- **Social Media:**
  - **Generally:** Online platforms, websites, or networks on which users share information, communications, or other content and includes, but is not limited to, sites used for media sharing and social networking (e.g., YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.).
  - **District Social Media:** Authorized District-related social media that is either school-based (e.g., approved, established and/or monitored by the building principal or designee) or District-based, District computer network-based, or subject area/department-based.
  - **Personal Social Media:** Social media that is not District Social Media, which is established by a user for his/her personal or private use and objectives.
  - **Non-District Social Media:** Social media that is not District Social Media, which is established by a third party or other organization.

## **IMPACT ON EXISTING POLICIES, RULES, AND SERVICES**

Once this policy is effectuated, though instruction will be provided via virtual, blended, hybrid or distance learning, each is a continuation of the District's instructional program. Therefore, the rules and responsibilities of students, their legal guardian(s), and District personnel, unless otherwise expressly stated in this policy, are the same as if students were present at school during the instructional day. Unless specifically noted in this policy, existing provisions of the Student Handbook, "Acceptable Use" policies and agreements, and privacy policies shall remain in effect. For example, students shall attend scheduled online meetings or classes in a timely manner (attendance), prepare for class in advance of the day's lesson (homework), meaningfully and appropriately participate in instruction (class participation), and shall also adhere to all existing rules concerning behavioral (e.g., bullying, harassment, violations of the Acceptable Use Policy) and academic misconduct (e.g., cheating, unauthorized group work on individual assignments). When students are visible to District personnel or other students, they shall dress in conformance to the school dress code.

### **Attendance**

Students must continue to meet all state-mandated compulsory attendance requirements and are not exempt from state truancy laws, except to the extent permitted or required by the OSDE. To the extent appropriate under the circumstances, District attendance policies shall remain in effect, and student attendance and participation shall be monitored and recorded as closely as possible to existing District policies. Attendance and participation shall be measured by means appropriate in a virtual, blended, hybrid, or distance learning environment which may include, but are not limited to, District-approved-and-monitored chatrooms and message board posts, emails, submission of assignments, or other District-Approved Means and Mediums.

Teachers shall make contact with each of their students a minimum number of times per school week, as determined by District administration, and count these contacts as full-time attendance. These contacts may include, but are not limited to, student participation in virtual classes or virtual learning platforms, submissions or posts to approved message boards, instructor confirmation with a student's legal guardian(s) that the student did participate, and physical or electronic submission of assignments. Instructors shall maintain a log of their contacts with each student and provide such reports to their building principal or designee.

### **Grading, Class Rank, Promotion and Retention**

In conformance with guidance from the OSDE and to the extent reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances, all existing requirements related to student progression, including retention, promotion, and grade assignment shall remain in effect as if virtual, blended, hybrid and/or distance learning had not replaced in-person instruction. Traditional letter grades shall continue to be issued in conformance with the District's grading scale. Appropriate efforts shall be made by all District personnel to ensure that the circumstances which effectuate this policy shall not negatively impact student grades.

### **Special Education**

While this policy is in effect, when appropriate, each student's IEP instructor shall make contact with the student's legal guardian(s) to discuss the student's individualized plan for virtual, blended, hybrid, or distance learning. Instructors and related service providers shall share learning resources with the student's legal guardian(s) that are appropriate for the student in order to provide a variety of activities and supports which may be utilized that promote continued progress toward the student's IEP goals. IEP meetings shall be conducted as needed via secure District-Approved Means and Mediums that are appropriate under the circumstances.

### **English Learners (EL)**

EL students shall continue to receive EL services. Unless otherwise designated, each student's EL instructor shall be the primary contact for the student's legal guardian(s) while this policy is in effect. In conformance to guidance from the OSDE, the District shall be intentional in ensuring instructors are providing appropriate plans, modifications and accommodations for EL students. Nothing in this policy shall prevent EL students or their legal guardian(s) from directly contacting the student's teacher regarding their educational progress.

### **INSTRUCTION GENERALLY**

#### **Method and Means of Instructional Delivery**

Depending on whether virtual, blended, hybrid, and/or distance learning is employed by the District, the superintendent or designee is directed to evaluate and select the means and mediums which shall be authorized for instructional delivery and communication with students and their legal guardian(s): the "District-Approved Means and Mediums." These shall be submitted to the board of education for approval prior to their implementation.

#### **Lesson Plans**

All instructors, including those who teach or coach electives, are responsible for creating lesson plans, recording attendance, and assigning and grading two (2) assignments per week per class. Appropriate lesson plans shall be developed by the teacher to ensure instruction aligned to Oklahoma Academic Standards. Instructors shall ensure that the maximum number of hours of work they assign conforms to OSDE guidance. EL, Reading, Language Arts, and other District specialists will work with grade level teams to develop appropriate lesson plans. All instructors shall provide their virtual, blended, hybrid, or distance learning lesson plans to their building principal or designee in conformance with this policy.

#### **Availability Hours**

Every virtual instructor and building administrator must be available during regular working hours to support instruction and student needs. District and building administrators shall

develop and distribute a schedule for virtual instructors to hold “availability hours.” During availability hours, each instructor is required to be available to provide instruction or otherwise provide immediate feedback to students and their legal guardian(s) via District-Approved Means and Mediums. A portion of these hours may be utilized to conduct interactive virtual learning lessons with students in conformance with this policy or tutoring.

### **Communication with Students and Parents**

Virtual Instructors are expected to communicate with students and their legal guardian(s) regularly, making actual communicative-contact with students at least one time per week. Electronic or telephonic messages left for instructors must be returned in a timely manner via District-Approved Means and Media.

District personnel who communicate with students shall do so in conformance with this and all other District policies and may do so only via District-Approved Means and Mediums, except when expressly approved, in writing, by an immediate supervisor. Such communications shall be limited to discussions regarding classroom, school, and school-related activities only. At all times, District personnel shall exercise their best professional judgment and act with integrity and concern for their students’ well-being.

**Communication with students for the purpose of fraternization is strictly prohibited.** Contact or communications between District personnel and students via personal phone numbers, personal emails, personal social media accounts, and group messaging apps (that are not District-approved) is expressly prohibited. **Students, legal guardians, and District personnel shall have no expectation of privacy when communicating via District-Approved Means and Mediums.**

### **Intellectual Property**

At no time shall either District personnel or students use, upload, post, mail, display, store, or otherwise transmit in any manner any such material that is protected by copyright, patent, trademark, service mark, or trade secret, or in violation of any Federal Communications Commission rules applicable to public broadcasts, except when such use or disclosure is properly authorized and bears the appropriate notations. District personnel shall consult guidance from the OSDE regarding compliance with applicable infringement laws, including fair use. Instructors shall use public domain resources when permission to use protected material cannot be obtained.

### **Privacy Laws and FERPA**

In all cases of virtual, hybrid, or distance learning, but especially in an online learning environment, District personnel shall conform with FERPA requirements and other applicable

privacy laws and District policies. **THE RECORDING OF CLASSROOMS (VIRTUAL OR OTHERWISE) AND/OR STUDENTS BY DISTRICT PERSONNEL, STUDENTS, OR THEIR LEGAL GUARDIAN(S) IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED.**  
**VIRTUAL LEARNING INSTRUCTION**

All virtual learning instruction shall be delivered only via District-Approved Means and Mediums. Virtual learning lesson plans for the following week shall be available to the building principal or designee by 4:00 p.m. on Friday.

**HYBRID LEARNING INSTRUCTION**

Instruction shall be rendered in accordance with a mix of traditional, in-person learning and distance learning provided via the learning management platform, utilizing the internet and computers and/or printed material using District-Approved Means and Mediums. The Hybrid learning lesson plan for the following week shall be available to the building principal or designee by 4:00 p.m. on Friday. Lessons must be posted by the teacher to the learning management platform no later than the day assigned.

**DISTANCE LEARNING INSTRUCTION**

Instruction provided via the online learning management platform, utilizing the internet, computers, and/or material, augmented by virtual contact/instruction with students via District-Approved Means and Mediums (e.g., video-conferencing) consistent with this and all District policies. Distance learning lesson plans for the following week shall be available to the building principal or designee by 4:00 p.m. on Friday. Lessons must be posted by the teacher to the learning management platform no later than the day assigned. appropriate locations at a to-be-announced time (e.g., District food distribution sites).

**PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TLE**

In anticipation that this policy may become effective, District personnel shall receive required professional development instruction on best virtual, hybrid, and distance learning practices, which shall include grade level and content area-specific training, in addition to training on any District-Approved Means and Mediums for virtual and distance instruction and communication. Building administrators shall conduct regular staff meetings via District-Approved Means and Mediums.

District administrators shall also receive appropriate training on how to supervise and evaluate personnel who are providing virtual, hybrid, and distance learning instruction under this policy. District personnel shall follow OSDE guidance regarding TLE observation and evaluation in virtual, hybrid, and distance learning instruction and shall monitor virtual learning instruction by joining classes in-progress and providing feedback to the instructor.

**SUPPORT SERVICES**

Whether virtual, hybrid, or distance learning is utilized by the District, appropriate support services will continue to be available to District personnel, students, and their legal guardian(s) including:

- **Technical Support** — The District shall provide basic technical support for instructors, students and their legal guardian(s) in accessing and using District-Approved Means and Mediums of communication and virtual and distance learning instruction.
- **Instructional Support** — Instructors should contact their immediate supervisor with any questions regarding virtual, hybrid, or distance learning instruction.
- **Social-Emotional Wellbeing Support** — To the extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances, the District shall provide information and resources to assist stakeholders in coping with the circumstances necessitating effectuation of this policy.
- **Special Education Resources and Support** — The Special Education Director or designee will provide support to students with disabilities or other special needs, along with their legal guardian(s), to help them navigate virtual, blended, hybrid, and distance learning instruction and compliance issues while this policy is in effect.

#### **ONGOING EVALUATION AND ADAPTATION TO EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES**

The District, in consultation with state, local, and federal officials, shall continuously evaluate this policy, and the procedures herein, and adapt the same based on guidance from appropriate agencies.

Reference: 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, 34 CFR Part 99