Walker County School System
Virtual School Option Policy

The Walker County Board of Education, in accordance with ACT 2015-89 of the Alabama Legislature, recognizes that not every student fits the "traditional" school model. The Walker County Virtual School provides an alternative education option for these students and their parents.

This program has no tuition costs and minimal fees (as required by ACCESS for certain courses). Students enrolled in the virtual school are eligible to participate in extracurricular activities at the school for which they are zoned and enrolled. Virtual students must adhere to the same requirements as all other students, including those of the Alabama High School Athletic Association.

Scope and Delivery

The Walker County Virtual School partnered with the Alabama State Department of Education's (ALSDE) *Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators, and Students Statewide* (ACCESS) program to provide a virtual curriculum option to high school students (9^{th} – 12^{th} grades). Students may also participate in courses at the Walker County Center of Technology with some guidelines (see local principal/counselor).

Virtual content will be delivered by ACCESS online educators and supervised by the Walker County Virtual School staff, which has met certification and highly qualified status, completed background checks and other ALSDE requirements for employment. Each course meets the Alabama Course of Study requirements for credit issuance and fulfilling graduation requirements.

Eligibility Criteria

All students residing in the Walker County School District, and enrolled with good standing in a Walker County high school, may enroll in a virtual school option. Students desiring enrollment should have no expulsions from any school and no more than one suspension from the previous or current academic year. Students must have a 70 average on core courses from the previous year, no more than 5 unexcused absences the previous year, and possess the maturity, organizational skills, motivation and dedication to be successful in this learning environment. Principals and counselors of local high schools will provide guidance to prospective students of the virtual school option.

Students must provide their own device (meeting ACCESS minimum qualifications), a reliable, daily Internet connection, and transportation to and from both the Walker County Virtual School and local school sites. The device must have legal copyrighted software. The Walker County Board of Education technology staff will offer technical support on a regular basis to address hardware and software needs for devices purchased through the Walker County Board of Education via the state of Alabama approved bid list.

Students must have weekly contact with their Walker County Virtual School facilitator and must schedule appointments for all tests, which will be administered under the supervision of the Virtual School staff.

Students must adhere to the Academic Integrity Contract of the Walker County Virtual School.

Students must maintain an overall GPA of 2.0 in core courses taken during an academic year in order to maintain enrollment in the virtual school the following year.

Students must maintain an appropriate course progression as measured by the completion of weekly assignments, quizzes and/or tests by both the ACCESS teaching staff and the Walker County Virtual School staff.

Students must remain in good disciplinary standing. Any discipline infraction resulting in suspension or expulsion will result in immediate removal from the Walker County Virtual School.

A student may accelerate his/her coursework in an attempt to accumulate credits for graduating early after completing the first year in the Virtual School. This requires good academic standing and the recommendation of the Virtual School administrator and local school principal.

Students and parents should be aware that course equivalency for traditional, face-to-face courses at local high schools are not guaranteed to students upon withdrawal from the Walker County Virtual School.

Monitoring Guidelines and Testing Protocol

All students will complete quizzes, tests, and other projects assigned by ACCESS teachers under the supervision of professional educators and/or paraprofessional staff employees of the Walker County Virtual School.

Students must have weekly face-to-face contact with the Virtual School staff for the purpose of testing, progress monitoring, attendance monitoring, counseling, and class assistance/intervention.

Students are responsible for scheduling testing appointments with the Walker County Virtual School staff.

Students will participate in all ALSDE required assessments and tests at the local school where enrolled.

Students who have a cumulative grade below 60 in a course, have excessive absences, or fall behind comparable course progress (as noted by ACCESS staff) will be placed on Academic Probation.

Scores earned on exams, quizzes, tests, or projects that are not taken at an approved site, with a proctor, are subject to invalidation with a grade of zero (0).

All ACCESS Distance Learning teachers utilize a variety of technologies to check student work for authenticity. If an instructor confirms that a student has plagiarized work in any manner, the student will be subject to consequences determined by the ACCESS Distance Learning administrative staff, the distance learning teacher, and the local school system. The student is subject to removal from the course with a failing grade and possible dismissal from the Walker County Virtual School.

Students will be monitored through a web filter, video camera, or other devices to ensure compliance with all policies while on Walker County Board of Education property.

Attendance

Students must complete coursework by logging in to their ACCESS courses daily in accordance with the Walker County Board of Education district calendar. Absences will be documented at the local school. Students may accumulate no more than five unexcused, full-day absences during the current academic year to remain enrolled in the virtual school option.

Aside from the rules and regulations set forth in this policy, the superintendent is authorized to establish procedures, periodically review said procedures, modify, and cause the said procedures to be published as necessary to the extent procedures are not in conflict with the policy language contained herein.

Walker County Virtual School

Academic Integrity Contract

The Academic Integrity Contract of the Walker County Virtual School combines the existing Academic Integrity Policy of Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators, and Students Statewide (ACCESS) Distance Learning and additional requirements posed by Walker County Public Schools.

ACCESS Distance Learning

ACCESS Distance Learning students must sign a commitment form attesting to academic integrity regarding each of the following topics:

- All work must be completed by the student alone.
- Any collaboration among students must be pre-approved by the teacher.
- Plagiarism will not be allowed in any form. This will include copying or using the ideas or words of others and presenting them as one's own.
- Students will not allow others to copy their work.
- Content from the Internet will not be misused or misrepresented.

If a student fails to abide by these policies, the student will be removed from the course with a failing grade and will be subject to other consequences as determined by ACCESS and local school system administrators.

All ACCESS Distance Learning teachers utilize a variety of technologies to check student work for authenticity. If an instructor confirms that a student has plagiarized work in any manner, the student will be subject to consequences determined by ACCESS Distance Learning administrative staff, the distance learning teacher, and the local school system, and will be subject to removal from the course with a failing grade.

Walker County Virtual School

Academic Integrity Contract

Walker County Virtual School students must take all unit tests, course examinations, and Alabama mandated assessments in an environment proctored by Walker County Board of Education staff. Students are responsible for the following:

- Completing unit tests and course examinations in the proctored environment without the use of study aids or computer help unless so allowed by the online teacher.
- Providing an appropriate device, broadband Internet connectivity capable of receiving all course content and reliable transportation to and from the testing site(s) designated by the Walker County Virtual School staff. The Walker County Board of Education will offer technical support on a regular basis to address hardware and software needs for devices purchased through the Board using the state bid list. However, students may purchase or use their own device.
- Verify the proctor records the student's test title, assigning teacher, test date, start time, and end time.

Scores earned on tests or exams not taken at an approved testing site with a proctor are subject to invalidation and review by the Walker County Virtual School Academic Integrity Committee. Additionally, in accordance with ACCESS Distance Learning policy, the student may be removed from the course with a failing grade and may be subject to dismissal from the Walker County Virtual School.

Student Signature_____ Date_____

Parent Signature _____ Date_____

Walker County Virtual School

Application Form

Student Information¶

Last Name:_____ First Name:_____ MI:____

Entering Grade Level_____: Base School Name: _____

:

Email:_____ Phone:_____

Parent Information:

Last Name:_____ First Name:_____MI:____

Email:_____ Phone:_____

Student Questions:

1. Why are you interested in attending a virtual School?

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_____

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2. Virtual learning, as opposed to traditional classroom learning, requires self-organization, Self discipline, and self-motivation. Describe your plan for becoming a Successful distance learner, (Items to to address may include: Daily schedule, academic assistance, studies habits, learning strategies, social interaction, transportation to test sites, etc.)

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To be completed and returned to the home school for approval.

Principal's Signature_____

Date:_____

Walker County Virtual School

Student Benefits, Expectations, and Requirements

Virtual schooling offers students numerous benefits in terms of time flexibility and program customization. Along with these advantages, students also assume increased responsibility in time management, organization, self-direction, and self-regulation.

Benefits

- Instruction from Alabama-certified teachers.
- No tuition and minimal fees.
- Accredited diploma upon satisfying all requirements for graduation.
- Flexibility and personalized learning experiences.
- Individualized academic and career preparation plan.
- Self-pacing and opportunity for accelerated advancement.
- Participation in extracurricular activities.
- Early graduation option upon meeting eligibility criteria.
- Flexibility to pursue interests intensively.

Expectations

- Technology--students may provide their own technology device compatible with ACCESS requirements and the requirements of the Walker County Virtual School. Most tablets, iPads, etc. are NOT compatible with ACCESS course platforms. To ensure tech support by WCBOE technical department, this device must be purchased through the WCBOE using the state bid list.
- Students will acquire and maintain consistent broadband Internet access capable of receiving all course content.
- Students will have regular attendance virtually in each course for which they are registered.
- Adhere to Walker County Board of Education's attendance policy.
- Students will adhere to the Walker County Board of Education Student Technology Usage Policy (www.walkercountyschools.com under the Parent and Students tab) while using Board owned devices and/or Internet access.
- Attend class daily in accordance with Walker County school calendar.

Attendance requirement is satisfied by logging into ACCESS courses daily.

Course Progression

• Students are required to progress through online courses at a rate comparable to the progression of a traditional class.

• Students are permitted to work ahead of the standard course progression and finish courses early after successful demonstration of abilities, efforts and completion of 8 academic units..

• Students who fall behind comparable course progress will be subject to Academic Probation.

Academic Probation (Intervention strategy)

• Through mid-quarterly and quarterly grade monitoring, students are expected to maintain a 60% overall average in their courses. When students fall below this overall average, they will be placed on Academic Probation which requires the following:

- Attendance will be taken two days a week by being physically present at the Virtual School as long as they are on Academic Probation.
- Weekly grade counseling with Walker County Virtual School Staff.

• Students remain on Academic Probation until the next grade monitoring, approximately four and a half weeks later.

- Students who achieve an overall average at or above 60% at the next grade monitoring will be removed from Academic Probation. Students who do not achieve an average at or above 60% at the next grade monitoring will be re-enrolled at their base school.

Proctored Examinations

• All tests, exams, and Alabama mandated tests must be taken in the presence of a proctor at the Walker County Virtual School. Students are responsible for scheduling testing appointments with the Walker County Virtual School staff.

• Scores earned on exams that are not taken at an approved testing site with a proctor are subject to invalidation and review by the Walker County Virtual School Academic Integrity Committee.

• Students must provide their own transportation to and from the testing site.

Walker County Virtual School

Walker County Public Schools

Student Benefits, Expectations, and Requirements

Minimum Requirements to Remain Enrolled

- Reside in Walker County, Alabama
- Enroll in a Walker County School
- Maintain consistent, daily broadband Internet access capable of receiving all course content (minimum 1.5 Mbs) with your own device that meets ACCESS requirements and the requirements of Walker County Virtual School (most tablets, iPads, etc. are NOT compatible with ACCESS course platforms). To ensure technical support from WCBOE, this device must be purchased through WCBOE from the state bid list.
- Maintain minimum overall GPA of 2.0 in core courses taken during the current academic year.
- Accumulate no more than 5 unexcused, full-day absences during the current year.
- Maintain appropriate course progression as measured by the completion of weekly assignments, quizzes, and/or tests.
- Adhere to the Academic Integrity Contract.
- Students will adhere to the Walker County Board of Education Student Technology Usage Policy (www.walkercountyschools.com under the Parent and Students tab) while using Board owned devices and/or Internet access.
- Remain in good standing as a student of the Walker County Virtual School.
- Students with discipline infractions resulting in suspension or expulsion will immediately be removed from the Walker County Virtual School.

I understand that failure to comply with the above stated expectations and minimum requirements could result in removal from the Walker County Virtual School. Removal from the Walker County Virtual School can occur at any time during the year. Students who are removed from the Walker County Virtual School and who are granted enrollment at their base school or any other school are not guaranteed course equivalents in the traditional, face-to face format.

Student Signature_____ Date_____

Parent Signature _____ Date_____