

## ONLINE INSTRUCTION

Online instructional programs offered for instructional purposes and/or high school credit shall be approved by and under the supervision of the Bethel Board of Education. The proposed course(s) may be evaluated by the State Department of Education. The district may provide a virtual instruction or distance learning program on dates to be determined by the Superintendent. This power shall be provided by the board of education so that the students of the district may be allowed to continue instruction in the event of a school closure for an emergency. Such dates shall be provided to parents and students on the school website with as much advance notice as possible under the circumstances. Students and staff will be expected to participate, and attendance shall be taken in accordance with district attendance policies and procedures for students and employees. The school district will provide resources to ensure that all student have access to virtual or distance learning programs. All instruction will be provided in compliance with Oklahoma's Academic Standards. Grades will be assigned which will reflect the progress of the student with regard to assignments and/or tests provided. Students will be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities in accordance with requirements set by the school district.

### Definitions

**Synchronous instruction** occurs when the instructor and student's primary interactions are in real-time. Regular classroom instruction is synchronous instruction, as well as two-way interactive video. Web-based instruction that requires real-time interaction between student(s) and instructor as the primary format of instruction is also synchronous instruction.

**Asynchronous instruction** is not dependent on instructor and student interaction in real time. Asynchronous instruction allows the student to engage in learning activities anywhere at any time. For instruction to be considered asynchronous, the primary format of instruction does not depend on real-time interaction of the participants.

**Supplemental online course** is an online program that allows students who are enrolled in a public school to supplement their education by enrolling part time in online courses that are educationally appropriate for the student, which are equal to the equivalent of classroom instruction time required by student attendance and participation in the district.

**Educationally appropriate** means any instruction that is not substantially a repeat of a course or portion of a course that the student has successfully completed, regardless of the grade of the student, and regardless of whether a course is similar to or identical to the instruction that is currently offered in the school district. The determination of educationally appropriate will be made at the local school district level.

**Distance learning plan** means a plan implemented under a public school or charter school's distance learning policy, describing any means by which instruction will be delivered to students outside a traditional school setting. A distance learning plan must meet the requirements set forth in the state accreditation standards.

**Two-way interactive video instruction** provides for real-time (synchronous) interaction between student(s) and instructor by means of an electronic medium that provides for both audio (sound) and video (sight) signal. Students and instructors participating in two-way interactive video instruction may both see and hear each other in an approximation of real-time.

**Virtual instruction** means the use of the internet or other such digital information transmission systems as the primary medium of instruction. Virtual instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous or may become synchronous or nonsynchronous instruction.

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In the event of an emergency declared by a federal or state government entity that impacts the operation of public schools in Oklahoma, or upon an action taken by the State Board of Education declaring such an emergency that leads to the temporary emergency closure of school campus or otherwise significantly impairs the operation of public schools in Oklahoma, the school district may implement distancing learning plans which provide for distance learning that is accessible to all students.

The district may provide for short-term implementation of a distance learning plan due to a localized emergency such as a weather-related school closure or a localized public health emergency. The school calendar may include one or more emergency closure “makeup days” to be delivered through the distance learning plan.

Prior to the implementation of virtual or distance learning plans the district will survey parents and guardians regarding educational services and technology capabilities. After surveying parents and guardians, the district shall make individualized determinations of which students would be able to access virtual instruction. Those students unable to access virtual instruction would be provided an equitable education through distance learning options.

Guidelines

Prior to offering an online instructional course, the board of education shall comply with the following guidelines recommend by the State Department of Education:

1. Virtual instruction, distance learning, and two-way interactive video instruction shall be viewed as methods by which the school district can expand the course offerings and access to instructional resources. These technologies should not be viewed solely as substitutes for direct, face-to-face student and teacher interactions, but as a means of expanding the ability of the district to bring the world of knowledge to the students.
2. The board of education will grant students credit for completion of courses offered by means of online instruction. School district policies governing grading scales and credits earned shall be applied to Oklahoma Supplemental Online Course Program courses under the same criteria as courses offered by the school district. A grade assigned for course credit that was completed through the supplemental online program shall be treated the same as any other course offered by the district.
3. Only students who are enrolled in this district, either as resident students or transfer students, will be granted access to supplemental online courses. Records of student enrollment and attendance shall be maintained through the school’s authorized student information system consistent with state accreditation standard requirements.
4. Requests for enrollment in supplemental online courses shall be as follows:
  - a. Interested students shall be required to fill out a request for enrollment in supplemental online course(s) form.
  - b. The principal or designee shall evaluate the application and determine whether the supplemental online course is educationally appropriate for the student.
  - c. If the supplemental online course is not deemed to be educationally appropriate, notification shall be provided to the student in writing as to the reasons in support of the principal’s recommendation and the student shall be afforded the opportunity to appeal the principal’s decision to the local school board. The decision of the local board with regard to whether a course is educationally appropriate is final and nonappealable. A copy of the notification shall be provided to the Director of Instructional Technology at the State Department of Education.

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5. If enrollment in the supplemental online course is allowed, the principal shall appoint a certified staff member to serve as the building level contact person to assist students enrolling in on-line courses and to serve as a liaison to the on-line teachers and provider(s). Students shall have a grace period for withdrawal from a supplemental online course of fifteen (15) calendar days from the first day of a supplemental online course enrollment without academic penalty. A written request for withdrawal should be provided to the principal from the student prior to the expiration of the fifteen (15) day period.
6. Students earning credit by means of virtual ~~online~~ instruction shall participate in required state-level academic assessments in the same manner as other regularly enrolled students within the district.
7. Courses offered for credit by means of virtual instruction shall be aligned with the Oklahoma Academic Standards (OAS).
8. Student progress shall be monitored on a weekly basis by the supplemental online course provider. Attendance/participation in a supplemental online course shall be monitored in accordance with local district policy and determined by documented student/teacher/course interaction that may include, but is not limited to, online chats, emails, posting/submission of lessons. The student may be counted “present” or “in attendance” when the supplemental online course provider provides evidence of student/teacher/ course interaction that demonstrates student progress toward learning objectives and demonstrates regular student engagement in course activity. Supplemental online course providers shall make available to students, parents, and the school district reports that reflect daily attendance/participation, progress reports, and grades. Such attendance/participation reports, progress reports, and grades shall be provided on a regular weekly basis to parents and the school district via electronic format. The district will review progress reports and grades twice per month.
9. The security of individual student data and records shall be maintained and receive the same protection afforded students under state and federal laws. No individual student data obtained through participation in online instruction courses shall be used for any purposes other than those that support the instruction of the individual student. Under all circumstances the provision of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) apply to student data held or accessed by any public school or its contractors or agents, including any contracted provider of virtual instruction or other distance learning media.
10. District level aggregated data obtained through participation in online instruction courses shall be utilized for education purposes only and shall not be provided to commercial entities.
11. All federal and state statutes and regulations pertaining to student privacy, the transmission or posting of images or other content on the internet or World Wide Web, copyright of materials, Federal Communications Commission rules pertaining to the public broadcasting of audio and video, and other such issues shall be adhered to by the district.
12. Prior to the beginning of instruction, cooperating school districts sharing courses by means of two-way interactive video technology shall, by means of contractual agreement, address such issues as the instruction costs, bell schedules, school calendars, student behavior, teacher evaluation, textbooks, class periods, student grades and grading policies, teacher load, and instructor employment.

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13. Contractual agreements shall be established between the school district and parent(s), or legal guardian, of students participating in alternative instructional delivery system courses prior to the beginning of instruction. These contracts may address such issues as grading criteria, time allotted for course completion, student attendance, and the responsibility for course costs and equipment.
14. Instructors of virtual courses shall be: (a) certified in Oklahoma or another state to teach in the content area of the course offered, or (b) a faculty member at an accredited institution of higher education, possessing the specific content expertise necessary to teach the course.
15. Participation in the distance learning plan must be accessible to every student regardless of household resources. If the school district delivers its home-based education program solely through virtual instruction, any participating student who does not already have access to the necessary connectivity and/or devices shall be provided the connectivity and devices necessary to access the instruction free of charge. If the district cannot provide connectivity and devices for all students due to limitations such as budget and/or geography, the distance learning plan must provide for alternative methods to deliver equitably equivalent instruction to all students.
16. Annually, the board of education shall establish fees or charges for the provision of alternative instructional delivery system courses. The district shall not be liable for payment of any fees or charges for any online course for a student who has not complied with district policies and procedures.

**REFERENCE: 70 O.S. §1-111**

***A POLICY ON THIS SUBJECT IS REQUIRED BY LAW.***