Virtual Instruction

Definitions

- *Academic pacing guide* means a document created or adopted by the school district which outlines the amount of course content covered during each portion of the school year.

- *Educational equity* means every student has access to the resources and educational rigor they need at the right moment in their education regardless of race, gender, ethnicity language, disability, family background, or family income.

- *Cancel hours of instruction* means that the school district has decided not to provide in-person instruction for one or more students for all or part of a previously scheduled school day. This may include one or more learners not being able to attend school due to extenuating circumstances because of weather or other conditions.

- *Virtual instruction* means teaching and learning that takes place through digital means and can be synchronous or asynchronous.

- *Virtual Academy (a.k.a. virtual school(s))* means an educational institution operated by a school district in North Dakota which offers virtual instruction. Virtual schools generally do not maintain a physical facility, and students and teachers are geographically remote from one another.

- *Weather or other conditions* means inclement weather, other unforeseen circumstances that render the school building unusable or inaccessible, or other conditions that temporarily warrant remote instruction for one or more learners.

Virtual Instruction for Weather or Other Conditions

The district must utilize the two school make-up days in the school calendar prior to utilizing virtual instruction for an emergency closure. Following the use of the two scheduled make up days, the district may temporarily offer virtual instruction when weather or other conditions require the Superintendent or designee to cancel hours of instruction. The district must ensure that affected learners make up all lost hours of instructional time if the absence will result in the school failing to meet the minimum number of hours required by state law.

Prior to offering virtual instruction, the district shall:

1. Identify the mode of virtual instruction to be provided to learners, method of content delivery, and process for monitoring learning when the decision is made to cancel hours of instruction because of weather or other conditions;
2. Establish procedures for transitioning students into and out of the virtual instruction period;

3. Establish procedures for ongoing communication with learners, parents or legal guardians during the virtual instruction period;
4. Establish processes for how districts will track participation and attendance of all learners during virtual instruction; and
5. Communicate roles and responsibilities for staff working remotely and providing learner services during virtual instruction.

At the conclusion of each school year, the district shall report to the Department of Public Instruction the days in which virtual instruction was provided in accordance with this policy.

Fargo Public School District Virtual Academy
The Fargo Public School District ("District") endorses the offering of full-time virtual instruction through the District's Virtual Academy (K-8 and 9-12). All virtual instruction provided by the District's Virtual Academy shall be in compliance with state and federal laws and rules and District Administrative Policy. The District's Virtual Academy is an academic environment for students who desire a different approach to the traditional school setting. The courses offered in the District's Virtual Academy align with the District's approved curriculum and standards for learning.

The District prioritizes educational equity by identifying and removing institutional barriers and other factors that obstruct access and opportunity to quality, virtual education. All District students regardless of race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, national origin, ancestry, disability, or age will have an opportunity to enroll in a District's Virtual Academy.

However, the District acknowledges that online learning is not for everyone. The District, in consultation with the parent/guardian and student, shall assess student readiness to determine if virtual instruction is right for the student. In accordance with state law, North Dakota students who are not a resident of the District shall be allowed to open-enroll into the District's Virtual Academy in accordance with the requirements outlined in Administrative Policy 6715 – Open Enrollment.

Students may transfer into or out of the District's Virtual Academy prior to the start of the school year, semester, or if a secondary student, at the quarter. An Associate Superintendent, in consultation with the Virtual Academy Principal and the building principal, may approve an exception to this requirement due to extenuating circumstances.

Students enrolled in the District's Virtual Academy must maintain expected progress in their courses for their age, grade, and ability level. Expectations will be communicated to students and parent/guardian by the District's Virtual Academy at the beginning of the course. Students unable to meet the expected progress in their courses may be required to return to in-person instruction.

Students participating in extracurricular and/or cocurricular activities must adhere to District policies, academic pacing guides, and grade requirements to maintain extracurricular eligibility.

Students enrolled in the District's Virtual Academy shall participate in appropriate state and district-wide assessments in the same manner as students enrolled in traditional instruction.

Student attendance will be recorded on a weekly basis. In addition, the District shall verify the attendance of students participating in virtual instruction by monitoring the student's progress on academic pacing guides.

Teachers employed with the Fargo Public Schools Virtual Academy shall receive professional development to support their instructional modality.

North Dakota Center for Distance Education
The North Dakota Center for Distance Education ("NDCDE") is a state approved provider of supplemental online courses. District students can enroll in courses through NDCDE at any time. However, the District is only responsible for payment of the cost of the course as required by North Dakota Century Code (N.D.C.C.) § 15.1-07-25.4 and as outlined in this policy.

1. **Enrollment Guidelines for Payment**
All students enrolling in an NDCDE course will be required to adhere to the two (2) week timeframe for adding classes that is established each semester. If a student elects to add an NDCDE course outside of the two (2) week timeframe, the student and their parent or guardian shall be responsible for the expense of the NDCDE course and not the District. The building principal may approve an exception to this requirement due to extenuating circumstances.

2. **Eligibility**
    a. Students must meet all NDCDE course prerequisites to be eligible to enroll.
    b. Elementary, middle, and high school students and parents must meet with a school counselor or administration prior to enrollment for consultation to ensure that the course aligns with their academic plan and is an appropriate choice. This meeting must occur during or prior to the course enrollment period.
    c. Students are required to be enrolled in the District and attend the minimum number of courses per semester to be considered full-time students. If a student elects to take an NDCDE course, the course will count towards the minimum number of courses required per semester.

3. **Course Location and Supervision**
Students may work on NDCDE coursework during designated open periods while on campus. However, the District retains discretion over where it allows students to complete NDCDE coursework while in District facilities. Students participating in an NDCDE course are fully responsible for the completion, monitoring, and assessment of the NDCDE course. The District does not assign staff to monitor student progress.

4. **Payment for District Offered Courses, Drops, Retakes, and Extensions**
The District is not responsible for payment of expenses attributed to the following:

a. District Offered Courses. Unless one of the following circumstances are met, students who enroll in an NDCDE course that is offered by the District will be responsible for payment:
    a. Scheduling issues prevent a student from taking a locally offered course;
    b. The student has previously failed a locally offered course and there is no other educator for them to retake the course from; or
    c. The student needs the course to meet the requirements of Graduation, or to Graduate Choice Ready, in order to graduate on time.
b. Course Drops. Students who drop an NDCDE course originally paid for by the District will only be authorized to retake the course if:
    a. The District receives a full refund for the original payment; or
    b. The course is paid for by the student and parent or guardian.
c. Course Extensions. Course extensions granting a student additional time to complete an NDCDE course originally paid for by the District are the responsibility of the student and parent or guardian.
d. Course retakes for failed courses. Students who fail an NDCDE course paid for by the District will only be authorized to retake the course if paid for by the student and parent or guardian.

The building principal may approve of an exception to these prohibitions due to extenuating circumstances outside of the student's control. If payment by the District is denied by the building principal, the denial may be appealed to the Associate Superintendent of Secondary Schools.

5. Registration and Payment Process

In order to facilitate accurate billing, the District must enroll students in NDCDE courses when the District is responsible for payment. The District will not reimburse a parent for self-paying for an NDCDE course. Parents may also elect to pay for NDCDE courses if they do not wish to adhere to the restrictions outlined in this policy. However, District students enrolled through self-payment are still subject to all conduct expectations, NDHSAA eligibility requirements, and grading requirements.

6. Academic and Conduct Expectations

Students are subject to all District policies while enrolled in NDCDE courses. This includes prohibitions on academic dishonesty, including cheating or plagiarism, which will result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct and District Administrative Policies. Students found to have committed academic misconduct may be withdrawn from an NDCDE course at the District's discretion. Repeated or serious violations of Districts Code of Conduct or Administrative Policies while enrolled in NDCDE courses may result in restrictions on future enrollment. In addition, the District will honor NDCDE's discipline policies.

7. North Dakota High School Activities Association Eligibility.

Students participating in a North Dakota High School Activities Association ("NDHSAA") sanctioned activity and enrolled in NDCDE courses must meet all NDHSAA eligibility student's progress beyond the recorded grade to determine eligibility. It is the responsibility

of the student to provide proof of their academic progress for purposes of NDHSAA eligibility to the building Activities Coordinator, or their designee. If a student fails to provide proof of their eligibility by the timelines specified by the building Activities Coordinator, or their designee, it may result in the student being ineligible for participation in NDHSAA activities.

8. Grading, Credit Transfer, and Diploma Standards

All NDCDE courses paid for by the District will be transcribed into the student's academic transcript. The District will accept credit from NDCDE and incorporate NDCDE grades into District records. Students are responsible for submitting evidence of their final grade in an NDCDE course to the building Registrar. If a student fails to provide the necessary information to the District, the final grade will not appear on the student's academic transcript.

9. Reporting Requirements

Building principals must track the number of approved and denied NDCDE courses.

Legal Citations
N.D.C.C. § 15.1-07-25.4

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