

# School Handbook



**2023 – 2024**

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## **WELCOME**

The administrators and teachers of Virtual Arkansas welcome you to the 2023 -2024 school year. Virtual Arkansas is committed to developing the full potential of Arkansas students by providing access to quality digital/online courses that incorporate interactive teaching to prepare students to be successful in their college and career educational pursuits and in the global economy. We will provide a rigorous, standards-based curriculum taught by Arkansas qualified teachers. Maintaining the academic integrity of the educational process through digital learning is a priority of the Virtual Arkansas team.

The Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit campus may have different policies due to the requirements of the partnering university.

Students are encouraged to participate in the live, interactive sessions. Important information concerning academics, upcoming events, and general updates will be disseminated to you by electronic and personal communication from Virtual Arkansas.

We appreciate your school's participation and know that our partnership will be successful. These coordinated policies and assurances are designed to equip students for success in our course opportunities. We thank you in advance for partnering with Virtual Arkansas.

## **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

Institutions are implementing policies and strategies to address academic dishonesty and to ensure that students do their own work and give credit to the originator of the ideas, when using the thoughts or work of others. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, using Artificial Intelligence programs or apps on assignments, plagiarism, stealing academic property, and cheating. Virtual Arkansas subscribes to online services to identify material that may have been plagiarized. Students identified as being in violation of our Academic Dishonesty Policy may not receive credit for that work and may suffer additional penalties based on local school policy. Depending on the severity of the academic dishonesty, as determined by the campus director and teacher, a student may receive a zero (0) for the assignment.

The Virtual Arkansas campuses may impose, but are not limited to, the following actions in situations involving academic dishonesty.

- The student may receive a lower grade, with the possibility of revision,
- The student may receive a grade of zero for the test or assignment,
- The student may be awarded a failing grade for the course, or
- The student may be withdrawn from the course.

## **ATTENDANCE**

In the online environment, students assume more responsibility for keeping up with the course requirements. It is critical that students access and interact with the online content on a daily basis and participate in the scheduled live interactive Zoom sessions. If a student is absent from a digital learning class, the student is responsible for making up the missed assignments.

When students put off accessing the course content, they soon discover that they are behind and then may not be able to satisfy the course requirements to pass a class. There will be times when students have to miss class for locally scheduled activities. If a school has scheduled an event that will interfere with a Virtual Arkansas course, please reinforce with the students the need to access the course content so they do not fall behind. Students absent from Virtual

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Arkansas classes are responsible for making up the missed assignments. Facilitators will not be responsible for reporting attendance to the Virtual Arkansas teacher, but they may need to provide this information to the appropriate individual at their schools. Teachers monitor student progress and if a student is not accessing the course content on a consistent basis, the school will be notified by the teacher.

Attendance for the Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit campus is specialized due to preparation for post-secondary involvement. Students are to communicate in advance with the teacher regarding absences and making up assignments/tests except in emergency situations. They must adhere to the specific guidelines given in each teacher's course syllabus.

Advanced Placement classes do not end until the Advanced Placement exam is given. In the event of absences due to extenuating circumstances (illness, medical emergency, etc.), the Virtual Arkansas campus will work on a case-by-case basis with the local administration to devise a plan for the student.

For Off-Campus Fully Online + ALE CORE students, attendance and participation are vital to course completion and success. Local schools should set policies, guidelines, and expectations regarding student attendance and participation. Local schools are also encouraged to have a "Return to On-site Learning" policy in place that outlines when and why a student must return to their local school to continue their courses.

Schools must assign an individual locally to monitor the students enrolled in the Off-Campus Fully Online + ALE CORE program. Local administrators should be alerted of those students who are not logging into courses and completing assignments.

## CALENDAR

Students enrolled in Virtual Arkansas courses will follow the Virtual Arkansas calendar for those enrollments.

## CLASSROOM DISCIPLINE

Classroom discipline will be in accordance with the policies of the local school district. Each teacher may establish his/her own class rules and procedures as long as they do not conflict with local school policy. In the event of serious student discipline issues, the name of the student and the specifics of the problem could be reported to the local principal. If action is merited, the procedure below may be followed:

1<sup>st</sup> offense – Upon request, the Facilitator will complete a local school Discipline Report and turn this into the principal.

2<sup>nd</sup> offense – Upon request, the Facilitator will complete a local school Discipline Report and turn this into the principal. The local school principal or designee should contact the parent and inform the parent of the issue.

3<sup>rd</sup> offense – Student will be disciplined according to local school policy.

4<sup>th</sup> offense – Student may be officially dropped from the class. If this occurs, the student may not receive credit for the digital learning course.

\*Please be aware that some actions may result in immediate removal from class, regardless of whether it is the first, second, or third offense. If a student is removed from class, he/she may be issued a W, F, or not receive a grade.

## CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

Schools are responsible for ensuring the digital learning classroom and/or student is equipped based on the Virtual Arkansas [technology specifications](https://virtualarkansas.technology) (<https://virtualarkansas.technology>). The goal is to provide a quiet classroom representative of a library that supports a healthy and optimal learning experience for students enrolled in Virtual Arkansas courses. When the classroom is not quiet, students may be less likely to interact with the teacher. A noisy background will also interfere with the ability of the teacher to understand questions from students or for the students to hear the teacher. On-going training and support on establishing and maintaining a classroom environment conducive to learning will be provided throughout the academic year. Local administration is encouraged to support the facilitator's efforts to design a safe, clean classroom environment that is conducive to learning.

Students must have the following to participate in Virtual Arkansas classes:

1. Access to the internet.
2. A district assigned email address. This email address is required for students to receive log in information and reset their password if needed. If students do not have a school assigned email account, communication with the teacher may be delayed.
3. A webcam.
4. A headset with a microphone.

## CLASSROOM FACILITATION

An effective facilitator is essential to the digital learning classroom. According to the [Arkansas Department of Education's Rules Governing Distance and Digital Learning](#) (Section 3.01), All digital learning courses shall have an "Adult Facilitator" (who) is the person responsible for supervising and assisting the students at a brick-and-mortar location. A facilitator is also required to monitor off-campus students. However, the time requirements of a facilitator to monitor off-campus is highly reduced due to Virtual Arkansas taking over proctoring responsibilities and the provision of wrap-around support services. The adult facilitator must be an adult approved by the school district or open-enrollment public charter school. The school should ensure that the facilitator completes the Virtual Arkansas provided training. Upon completion of the required training, facilitators will be issued a certificate for documentation. If your facilitator has six periods to facilitate a day, it is also recommended that a planning period be provided to prepare for their facilitator duties. Facilitators should have a personal computer in the digital learning classroom for instant communication with the teacher and to monitor student progress in classes.

## COMMUNICATION

Communication between local school personnel and the Virtual Arkansas administrators/teachers is important to the overall success of the digital learning program. Each participating school must designate a Registrar, who will be responsible for transmitting student records, handling communication issues, student enrollment, update the school administrator contact information, etc. This should be done prior to the first day of class.

## COMPUTER USAGE

The school district's computer usage policy will be enforced in the Virtual Arkansas classroom. In regard to digital learning applications, unacceptable usage includes, but is not limited to, using inappropriate language, cyberbullying, logging in using another student's username and

password, and trespassing in the files of others. These actions may result in the loss of access to these applications and websites. Any communication or content is subject to access and review by local school and Virtual Arkansas personnel at any time.

### **CONCURRENT CREDIT – INSTITUTIONAL CONFLICT**

The Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) Coordinating Board policy regarding off campus instruction provides a process by which ADHE will resolve any conflict between institutions related to the service area. Please contact the Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit Campus Director for details regarding this policy.

### **CONCURRENT CREDIT REGISTRATION LATE FEE**

Once the registration period has closed for Concurrent Credit courses, a late registration fee of \$50.00 per student will be charged for students who are enrolled after the deadline, provided seats are available in the course. Late charges will be reflected on invoices sent to schools each semester by Virtual Arkansas. The late registration period ends the fifth day of each semester based on the Virtual Arkansas calendar. This fee does not apply to students transferring into the district.

### **CONCURRENT CREDIT TRANSFER POLICY**

Based on the Virtual Arkansas calendar, students who have transferred to a new district will be allowed to enroll in a Concurrent Credit course, if seats are available, during the first five (5) days of the semester.

### **CONTAGIOUS DISEASE OUTBREAK AND NATURAL DISASTERS**

Every school has their own unique situation. Some schools need assistance with AMI, some want to know how students in our courses can take an assessment if the school is closed, some schools will need a long-term solution for **ALL** students in the case of an extended closure.

In the event of a contagious disease outbreak or a natural disaster that results in schools closing for the short-term or long-term, Virtual Arkansas, your State Virtual Program School (SVS), has the following contingency options for schools so their students may continue their education in a blended-online format:

- **7-12 GRADE CONTENT PARTNERSHIP**

If your school will be closed for an extended period of time and you want to utilize your own teachers in an online or blended learning format, we can provide your teachers and students access to the Virtual Arkansas online content, access to Canvas, and teacher training.

This will give your teachers, who already have a relationship established with their students, the ability to continue teaching those students from a distance during an extended schoolwide closure.

If you are expecting an extended school closure and you are interested in this option, please email Amanda Rauls at [amanda.rauls@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:amanda.rauls@virtualarkansas.org).

If you have a unique local situation that you would like to speak to Virtual Arkansas about, please contact Amanda Rauls at [amanda.rauls@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:amanda.rauls@virtualarkansas.org), or call the Virtual Arkansas Central Office at 501-477-2781.

### **COPYRIGHT OF VIRTUAL ARKANSAS CONTENT**

All original content contained in Virtual Arkansas courses and housed within the LMS is the property of Virtual Arkansas. Some content may be sourced from other creators and is used

under agreed upon licensing terms. Course content may include, but is not limited to: reading material, assignment/tests, images, course resources, videos, and Zoom recordings. This content is intended for the sole use of students currently enrolled in a Virtual Arkansas course and is not to be reproduced, copied, shared, used locally by districts, or posted to any outside services, e.g. social media, without the written permission of Virtual Arkansas.

## **COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT CLAIMS PROCEDURE**

Virtual Arkansas has implemented procedures for receiving written notification of claimed infringements as required by the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (17 U.S.C. § 512). An employee of Virtual Arkansas will serve as the designated agent for the reception of claims of copyright infringement. For all cases where copyright infringement is claimed, a notice of copyright infringement may be submitted by email or by written communication.

The electronic or written communication should include:

1. A signature of an individual authorized to act on behalf of the copyright claimant.
2. A description of the suspected copyright infringement.
3. A description describing where the material claimed as infringement is located within the course.

Contact information including your email address, mailing address, and telephone number.

Written correspondence can be sent to:

Virtual Arkansas

ATTN: PAULA MCDUGALD

Central Office

101 Bulldog Dr

Plumerville, AR 72127

USA

Or email [paula.mcdougald@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:paula.mcdougald@virtualarkansas.org)

## **DROP/ADD PROCEDURES - VIRTUAL ARKANSAS CORE AND CTE STUDENTS**

All drops/adds in Virtual Arkansas classes are done using the registration system.

As a courtesy to other schools, if you know a student will not be in a course at the beginning of the semester, please drop the student so that a student on the Waiting List may be enrolled in the course.

If a student is not enrolled in a requested class by the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) day of instruction, the school should place the student in another course locally or contact Virtual Arkansas to determine if there are openings in other courses that the student may be enrolled in for the semester.

**General Drop Policy** - Virtual Arkansas teachers will do everything possible to help students succeed in coursework, but there may be situations when a school should consider dropping students who are enrolled in Virtual Arkansas Core and CTE classes. These situations are usually failure to complete work, discipline, or an academic dishonesty violation. To be successful, students should not procrastinate in completing coursework, but do it on a timely basis. These policies are intended to minimize the adverse effects on students when they are not progressing in the course.

Schools should consider dropping students who continually fail to log into their course(s) and/or fail to make adequate progress in their course.

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At each invoicing round, Virtual Arkansas will look at the login data for students in the Off-Campus and Fully Online Program. Students who have not logged in for 10 or more days may be dropped from their Virtual Arkansas classes.

**Virtual Arkansas Drop Policy:** Virtual Arkansas students must meet attendance and participation requirements to maintain enrollment in Virtual Arkansas courses. The following policies will go into effect during the 2023-2024 school year:

Virtual Arkansas will have a Census Day on the 15th day of each 9 weeks. Students who have not logged in to their Virtual Arkansas course(s) for seven consecutive school days on Census Day will automatically be dropped from their Virtual Arkansas course(s) prior to invoice day, which is the twentieth day of each nine weeks.

## **DROP/ADD PROCEDURE - VIRTUAL ARKANSAS CONCURRENT CREDIT STUDENTS**

Please refer to your syllabi or contact the Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit office for information regarding university deadlines to add/drop classes. The school administrator or counselor has access to the withdrawal forms and must follow the university's procedures for dropping students from concurrent classes.

Students should be prepared for the academic rigor of concurrent credit courses.

- The partnering university may have different deadlines to drop a course.
- The student must be dropped from the course in the Virtual Arkansas registration system and through the university.
- Before withdrawing/dropping a course, a student should consider the impact on future financial aid.

College hours attempted in high school under pre-freshman status count toward the maximum number of hours a student is allowed to attempt under federal and state grant programs.

Students should use good judgment and consult the post-secondary institution they currently attend, as well as the post-secondary institution they plan to attend after high school graduation, for advice before withdrawing.

## **EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS**

Participating schools should ensure each student has the required text and resource materials (calculators, dictionaries, etc.) necessary for the Virtual Arkansas classes by the first day of class. Schools may have the option to lease/purchase the electronic version of a textbook. If an e-book is used, please ensure that students have access outside the academic day to the resource. If after-hours access is not possible, schools may elect to provide students with paper textbooks. For those students who do not have internet connectivity at home, facilitators may be able to print the current text material for those students. As always, please be aware of the copyright restrictions imposed by the publisher of the e-book. In addition to the required text and ancillary materials, schools will need to ensure access to whitelisted resources.

Virtual Arkansas is an online program. Students must access and complete assignments within the Learning Management System (LMS). Virtual Arkansas does not provide material in paper form. There may be rare occasions when a paper submission is the only method available and this must be approved by the teacher.

## ENROLLMENT

- The fee for all credit recovery courses will be the same as the initial credit fee as outlined in the Virtual Arkansas course catalog.
- Students cannot enroll in the Off-Campus Fully Online courses at the reduced fee for Credit Recovery.

Unlike planning and scheduling for one school, Virtual Arkansas coordinates the scheduling and delivery of instruction to over 280 Arkansas schools or programs. If issues arise enrolling students in classes, please be patient as we work to serve our students in the most efficient and effective manner possible. To schedule teachers efficiently, we ask schools to be diligent in registering and maintaining their student enrollments in the Virtual Arkansas registration system. **As your needs change**, please update the information in the Virtual Arkansas registration system as soon as possible so that students on the Waiting List may be enrolled.

## ENROLLMENT STATUS

Student enrollment is not guaranteed until the district confirms acceptance of the electronic Memorandum of Understanding and provides the required student information (IEP, 504 Modifications) to complete the enrollment. Enrollment in Concurrent Credit courses is not guaranteed until the Memorandum of Understanding is returned to the Concurrent Credit campus.

Each participating district must also assure Virtual Arkansas that each student enrolled in a Virtual Arkansas course has the required Audio-Visual Release/Memorandum of Understanding form, with a parent or guardian signature, on file with the district, **within the first 10 days of the student being enrolled in a Virtual Arkansas course**. If the required documents are not provided within the stated time frame, the student may be dropped from the course.

## EXPELLED STUDENTS

Students who have been expelled by a district may be enrolled in Virtual Arkansas courses under the Off-Campus Fully Online + ALE CORE service. Districts are encouraged to develop policies addressing the attendance, participation, and removal from the Off-Campus Fully Online + ALE CORE program for expelled students.

## WITHIN NINE-WEEK EXTENSIONS/EARLY TESTING

All extension requests MUST be approved by the local school administrators

For students under controlled pacing, there will be situations within a nine-week period when a school requests an extension or early testing. Extensions for the 1st and 3rd nine-week sessions will be for one (1) or two (2) weeks only from the end of the grading period. Students must have a legitimate extenuating circumstance that requires an extension.

1. Local administrators will be required to complete an Extension Request form providing the specifics of why the extension is required.
2. This does not apply to Concurrent Credit courses
3. If the local administrator is requesting an extension for a student, the request must be made by submitting the [Extension Request Form](https://bit.ly/3PpuJUT) - <https://bit.ly/3PpuJUT>

Incompletes for Concurrent Credit exams and assignments must be approved by the teacher in advance.

## FEE STRUCTURE

The fees for each course are stated in the course catalog. The cost per student for high school 9 through 12 Content + Teacher Supplemental courses, will range from \$110 to \$150, per .5 unit, per enrollment. All middle school Content + Teacher Supplemental courses are \$250 per enrollment, per semester. Nine-week Middle School courses are \$125 per enrollment.

There are two (2) fee options for the Off-Campus Fully Online + ALE CORE Program high school and middle school courses. If Virtual Arkansas proctors assessments, the fee is \$350 per .5 unit, per enrollment. If the local school proctors assessments for students enrolled in the Off-Campus Fully Online + ALE CORE Program, the fee is \$275 per .5 unit, per enrollment.

All summer school courses are \$100 per student, per .5 unit, per enrollment. The fee for all credit recovery courses will be the same as the initial credit fee as outlined in the Virtual Arkansas course catalog.

Schools that elect to use the Virtual Arkansas content-only Content Partnership Full-Service option will provide a local teacher as the teacher-of-record. Virtual Arkansas will provide the content, LMS hosting, assessments, training, and support for the local teachers and students for the duration of the course. The cost for the content-only Content Partnership Full-Service option courses is \$20 per student, per enrollment, per semester (or ½ unit).

The Content Partnership Program also has two (2) Self-Service options. Self-Service Option A enables districts to partner with Virtual Arkansas to house local teacher content or use Virtual Arkansas content, which does not include assessments, on the Virtual Arkansas Canvas LMS. The cost for Self-Service Option A is \$15 per enrollment, per .5 unit. Self-Service Option B is designed for schools who have their own LMS and Virtual Arkansas provides the course content, which does not include assessments. The cost for Self-Service Option B is \$10 per enrollment, per .5 unit. For more information on the Content Partnership Program Self-Service Option A or B, please contact Amy Kirkpatrick at [amy.kirkpatrick@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:amy.kirkpatrick@virtualarkansas.org).

Districts will be invoiced for the individual student enrollment fees for students enrolled in a class according to the Virtual Arkansas academic calendar after the 20<sup>th</sup> day of instruction for the Fall and Spring semesters, at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> nine-weeks, and on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> nine-weeks.

## FLEX PACED ENROLLMENT GUIDELINES

- Available ONLY for students enrolled in Core and CTE courses and for students who are on a Block schedule locally
- Not an option for Concurrent, AP, or Middle School enrollments
- Once the final exam for a nine-week session or the semester is taken, students are not permitted to go back and submit assignments

### Fall Semester

Flexible pacing is designed for students whose pacing is not controlled by the teacher. Flexible pacing is meant for those students who may not or cannot meet the course requirements by the end of the term or for students who are working at an accelerated pace. Flexible pacing allows students to progress at a steady and differentiated pace that is appropriate for them.

The request to move/change a student to Flexible pacing will only be approved on a case-by-case basis and should be made after the conclusion of the 1st nine-week period or after the conclusion of the 3rd nine-week period. To request a student pacing change to Flexible after

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the conclusion of the 1st nine-week period or the 3rd nine-week period, the local administrator or designee must submit the Flex Approval available at this URL - <https://bit.ly/3IXYRE5>.

Students who are under Flexible pacing and need additional time beyond the end of the first semester will have until January 15<sup>th</sup>, or the first school day following the 15<sup>th</sup> if it falls on a weekend or the MLK Jr. holiday, to complete the course requirements for that section or semester, or until the semester exam is taken. If incomplete on January 15<sup>th</sup>, the student may be enrolled in the same course content for the Spring semester or the student will receive an incomplete designation and will lose course access. The enrollment fee will apply if a student does not complete the course requirements by January 15<sup>th</sup> and is enrolled in a Spring section to continue in the course.

**Spring Semester**

Requests to change students from Traditional to Flexible pacing must be made prior to the conclusion of the 3rd nine-week period.

If, at the end of the Spring semester, the student has not completed the course or section requirements, the student will receive an incomplete designation. The student may be re-enrolled in the course during the summer session if the course is offered during the summer session, or the following fall semester if the course or section is offered.

**GRADE POLICY**

- Once the final exam for a nine-week session or the semester is taken, students are not permitted to go back and submit assignments
- Bonus points are not awarded for any assignment or assessment
- For students who transfer into your district and who are subsequently enrolled in a Virtual Arkansas course, please provide the transfer grades for the student using the [Transfer Grade Form](https://bit.ly/3czZSGB) - <https://bit.ly/3czZSGB>

Students should follow the course pacing guide and teachers should report updated grades by each Monday. Exceptions will be made for CR/Flex and students who are working significantly behind or ahead. Teachers will make every effort to provide prompt grading in these situations.

Students in a teacher-led course who do not turn in an assignment by a set deadline stated in the pacing guide and/or set by the teacher that is well communicated will receive a "0" (zero) for missing work. Once the student turns in the assignment the grade will reflect the grade earned on the assignment. In order for students to have an accurate understanding of their performance in the course, a "0" (zero) is awarded with the intent that it can be changed if the work is completed in accordance with the teacher's guidelines.\*\*

\*\*Concurrent Courses will follow Concurrent Grading Guidelines in this area.

**GRADE CHALLENGE PROCEDURES**

Challenges to an earned grade for an assignment or assessment need to be submitted to the teacher within the nine-week or semester the grade is being challenged. Students have ten (10) school/week days from the end of the nine-week session or semester to submit a challenge for a grade received for the grading period in a course.

**GRADE REPORTING**

In Core and CTE courses, teachers will provide numerical grades based on a range from zero to one hundred in four nine-week periods based on the Virtual Arkansas academic calendar. Semester averages will be calculated using the 45 – 45 – 10 formula.

Virtual Arkansas adheres to the Virtual Arkansas calendar posted on the Virtual Arkansas website and released through the newsletter. Official nine-week and semester grades are released on specific dates each semester. Grades accessed prior to the release of official grades may not reflect the official grade.

For concurrent credit courses, consult the course syllabus for the semester grade calculation.

**GRADE REPORTING - CONCURRENT CREDIT STUDENTS**

The Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit campus operates on semester calendars. College grades earned through the Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit campus are part of a student’s permanent college transcript. The grade will affect college grade point averages. The effect of pre-freshman status grades varies from one post-secondary institution to another. If a student is concerned about his/her grade assignment, the student is encouraged to check with the post-secondary institution he/she plans to attend after high school graduation for advice.

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

Most issues or questions can and should be resolved at the lowest level. Your first point of contact for classroom issues is the teacher.

There may be a time when you or someone from your school will need assistance beyond the teacher. Below you will find the steps to take when you need further assistance beyond the teacher:

**1. Contact the Virtual Arkansas instructor to seek a resolution.**

If you need further assistance, contact the applicable Virtual Arkansas campus supervisor to seek a resolution.

- CTE Campus Director/Principal:** Christie Lewis, CTE Campus Director  
Phone: 870-246-9063  
Email: [christie.lewis@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:christie.lewis@virtualarkansas.org)
  - Core Campus Principal:** Jason Bohler, Core Campus Director  
Phone: 501-477-2781  
Email: [jason.bohler@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:jason.bohler@virtualarkansas.org)
  - Concurrent Credit Campus Director/Principal:** Ellora Hicks, Concurrent Credit Campus Director  
Email: [ellora.hicks@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:ellora.hicks@virtualarkansas.org)
  - Off-Campus Fully Online Principal:** Dr. Nic Mounts  
Phone: 501-477-2781  
Email: [nic.mounts@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:nic.mounts@virtualarkansas.org)
- If a resolution is not reached through the individuals above, contact the Director of Curriculum and Instruction
- Deputy Superintendent, Curriculum and Instruction:** Dr. Brandie Benton  
Phone: 501-477-2781  
Email: [brandie.benton@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:brandie.benton@virtualarkansas.org)

## INCLEMENT WEATHER

Due to the number of districts served, if a district closes due to inclement weather, it may not be possible for Virtual Arkansas teachers to be present during all make-up days for a district. Virtual Arkansas will respect each local school district policy regarding inclement weather. If the Virtual Arkansas teachers are not online due to connectivity issues, students and facilitators should, if possible, access the course content within the LMS, and complete the required assignments.

## LATE ENROLLMENTS

There are two categories of students who may be added to a course after classes have begun.

1. A transfer student with a transfer grade.

For students with a transfer grade, students will begin at the point in the curriculum, which corresponds to their date of enrollment. If a local school claims that the student will have a transfer grade, but they have not received the transfer grade, the students will be placed at the point in the curriculum, which corresponds to their date of enrollment. A transfer grade must be provided for the coursework accomplished prior to a student receiving the final grade for that course. If a transfer grade is not provided, the student will receive a grade of incomplete.

2. A student who does not have a transfer grade.

The school assumes the responsibility of properly placing students without a transfer grade at the correct point in the curriculum to ensure the student satisfies the course requirements. If you encounter this situation, please contact Mindy Looney Denise Gonia at 501.477.2781 or by email at [mindy.looney@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:mindy.looney@virtualarkansas.org).

For students without a transfer grade who join a course after the first four weeks of a nine-week period, the student should have at least two periods per day to complete the course requirements if the student is enrolled in a Teacher-Led section of the course.

## LIVE INTERACTIVE ZOOM SESSIONS

These interactive sessions are scheduled Monday through Thursday or by appointment on Friday to permit the greatest number of students to participate in real-time interaction with the teacher. Virtual Arkansas teachers will provide opportunities each week for students to participate in live interactive Zoom sessions. The scheduled interactive sessions provide students the opportunity to receive clarification on instructions, content, and to connect with their teachers.

It is highly recommended that schools make the interactive sessions available to students. Teachers will have Zoom meetings available on those non-scheduled days to permit students and facilitators to contact them, if needed. Students need a webcam and a headset with a microphone to participate in the interactive sessions.

## ATTENDING LIVE ZOOM SESSIONS FROM LOCATIONS OTHER THAN THE LOCAL SCHOOL

If allowed by local district policy or as part of the Off-Campus and Fully Online Program, some students may attend live Zoom sessions from a location other than their local school. Any student attending a Virtual Arkansas Zoom session from a location other than their local school must be aware of the following guidelines:

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1. The environment from which the student attends the Zoom session should be appropriate and conducive to learning. Please be aware of the following expectations regarding the Zoom environment:
2. During live Zoom sessions, the background should be appropriate and not distracting. There should not be any visible offensive material.
3. Background noise should be minimal or non-existent during Zoom sessions.
4. Students should not eat or drink while in a Zoom session.
5. Other individuals not enrolled in the class should not be present during the Zoom session.
6. Pets should not be visible during a Zoom session.
7. The student should be dressed appropriately, according to the local school handbook, just as if the student was attending class on-campus.

The teacher may remove a student or turn the student's camera off regardless of where the student is located during the live Zoom session if that teacher feels the student is inappropriately dressed, displaying offensive behavior, or if distractions or the background view is/are considered inappropriate and/or interfering with other students who are in attendance.

If a student is removed from a live session, the teacher will document the incident immediately and send that documentation to their campus director. The campus director will then contact an administrator or school official and provide the documentation of the incident.

### **MAKE-UP POLICY**

For Virtual Arkansas Core and CTE classes, if a student has an excused absence, the student should complete all graded assignments as allowed by his/her local school's make-up policy. It is the student's responsibility to check with the facilitator/teacher for the materials needed to complete missed assignments. In cases of an extended excused absence, the Virtual Arkansas campus supervisor will consult with the local principal to develop a plan for a student to complete the coursework.

Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit courses must follow the guidelines set by the partnering institution of higher education in respect to make-up policies. These guidelines are included in each course syllabus.

### **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

Virtual Arkansas teachers utilize the information provided by local schools to attempt parent/guardian contact regarding student performance and achievement. If parent/guardian contact is not provided, Virtual Arkansas teachers will attempt to obtain this information from the local schools. The primary means of parent contact will be via email, but phone calls may also be made by Virtual Arkansas teachers.

Parent-Teacher conferences are an excellent time to provide parents an opportunity to experience the digital learning environment and to see how technology is integrated into their child's education. Local personnel should be involved in advocating these opportunities with parents and stakeholders whenever possible. The classroom facilitator or Registrar should be present during these conferences. At any time, parents may request that the Virtual Arkansas teacher contact the parent by telephone or email to discuss the grades or behavior of their child.

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Students and a parent/guardian of the Off-Campus Fully Online +ALE CORE Program will be sent information via messaging or email regarding Parent-Teacher Conferences attendance opportunities. To receive parent emails from Virtual Arkansas, the parent email information must be populated in the Virtual Arkansas Student Information System (SIS). It is the local school's responsibility to ensure parental contact information is correct within eSchool. Virtual Arkansas draws this information from the local school.

Virtual Arkansas concurrent credit teachers must abide by federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulations. FERPA is the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The regulations are found at [Ed.gov](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-A/part-99), (<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-A/part-99>).

For students who are eighteen (18) years of age or older, who do not want academic information provided to parents or guardians, it is the school's responsibility to remove the parental contact information from TRIAND (eSchool) so that the Virtual Arkansas SIS does not pull the parental contact information from TRIAND.

## PREREQUISITES

Many courses adhere to a set of prerequisites to increase student success. School administrators should ensure that students have met all prerequisites and are academically prepared for the intended course.

## PROCTORING

There are two (2) fee options for the Off-Campus Fully Online + ALE CORE Program high school and middle school courses. If Virtual Arkansas proctors assessments, the fee is \$350 per .5 unit, per enrollment. If the local school proctors assessments for students enrolled in the Off-Campus Fully Online + ALE CORE Program, the fee is \$275 per .5 unit, per enrollment.

## SCHEDULING COURSES

**Academic Calendar** – Virtual Arkansas will comply with current Legislation regarding the academic calendar requirements. Virtual Arkansas will begin classes on the earliest date possible on a traditional academic calendar.

**Bell Schedule** – In the asynchronous environment, strict adherence to a bell schedule is not as critical as in the synchronous environment. However, it is important that a district's bell schedule permit students enrolled in Virtual Arkansas classes to join the blended/interactive sessions in a timely manner to minimize disrupting the scheduled interactive instruction that is occurring.

## SCHOOL DISMISSAL

In rare cases, a school may not meet its responsibilities outlined in these policies. Communication between the Virtual Arkansas Executive Director and Superintendent and local school administration should take place to address concerns. When warranted, failure to abide by Virtual Arkansas policies and the ADE Rules Governing Distance and Digital Learning may result in the school being removed from receiving services.

## SEMESTER EXTENSIONS

- Local administrators will be required to complete an Extension Request form providing the specifics of why the extension is required.
- Extensions are not granted to students who are non-seniors at the end of the Spring semester due to Virtual Arkansas teachers being off-contract.

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For Core and CTE students who are controlled pacing, semester extensions will be considered on a per case basis. The request for a particular student must be made by a local school administrator. Fall semester extensions for controlled paced students will not extend past January 15<sup>th</sup> or the next school day of the Spring semester.

Students needing an extension to complete the course requirements at the conclusion of the Spring semester have two options:

1. The student may be enrolled in the Summer Session to complete the remaining course requirements.
2. The student may be enrolled in the Fall semester of the new academic year to complete the course requirements.

The Concurrent Credit Campus will follow the ATU semester final exam schedule policy. Students must have incompletes approved by the teacher in advance.

## STUDENT COMMUNICATION

Students must have a school assigned email account. This email account is required for students to receive their login and password, and to reset their password if needed. This will aid in communication with Virtual Arkansas staff. If students do not have a school assigned email account, communication with the teacher may be delayed. Students have the ability to reset their passwords. If a student does not have a school assigned email account, this will disrupt their ability to reset his/her password.

Virtual Arkansas contracts with a private vendor for our Student Information System (SIS), which is used for enrollment and reporting.

## STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

It is the responsibility of school administrators or their designees to inform the teacher of any necessary accommodations at the start of the course in any semester. Disability notifications must be made within the first (10) ten days of class. Student **ACCOMMODATIONS ONLY** shall be uploaded to the student's account within the Portal **within ten (10) days** of the beginning of the semester or when a student is enrolled in a course. Refer to the **ENROLLMENT STATUS** section for additional information.

Virtual Arkansas will follow accommodations documented on the IEP, 504, or ELL plan that fall within the scope of our online program's ability. Some accommodations listed in the IEP, 504, or ELL plan may not be conducive to VA's online learning environment and may not be provided. In these cases, it will be the responsibility of the local school to provide the particular accommodation in order to assist the success of the student.

Virtual Arkansas has an accommodations guideline document for schools to follow. This Accommodation Guide and official statement to supplement the guidelines document for schools to follow are included as Appendix B and C.

For Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit classes, the partnering university has specific statements in the course syllabi concerning accommodations for students with special needs. Please refer to the course syllabus for specific guidelines.

## TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES

Technical issues may occur during the academic year. For assistance in resolving student username or password issues, difficulty connecting to the Portal or Canvas, hardware, or software issues, please email the Technology department a description of the issue at

[techsupport@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:techsupport@virtualarkansas.org). If a school site is experiencing connection issues, the facilitator should notify the Virtual Arkansas teacher as soon as possible. Students are responsible for completing all course work that is missed due to not being able to connect to the local network or the Virtual Arkansas LMS.

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

Hardware— Participating schools are responsible for maintaining local equipment for their students enrolled in Virtual Arkansas courses. In order to support a 21st Century blended-learning experience, it is required that each student have daily access to a computer connected to the internet, a headset with a microphone, and webcam. We recommend computers be hard-wired to the network in the digital learning classroom. Schools may use a wireless configuration, but performance may be negatively impacted as the number of computer connections increase in a wireless setting. Districts should ensure that the technology requirements are satisfied prior to classes beginning. A computer specification sheet is available for all students at <https://www.virtualarkansas.org/technology>. Students' may need access to certain technology based on specific course enrollments. Please consult the textbook and resources list, as well as the course catalog, for any special hardware or software needed for a course.

Software – Some courses require specialized software be installed on the local digital learning room computers. To access the required software, go to <https://virtualarkansas.org/technology>. **Please check the Textbook List to see if the courses your students are enrolled in require specific software.**

Virtual Arkansas courses are not fully compatible with handheld devices or tablets such as iPads or smart phones. Students must have access to a computer, which include Windows based PC's, Macintosh, or Chromebooks.

Schools are requested to block internet access to any website or app that provides Artificial Intelligence assistance and to prohibit cell phones from being used in the digital classroom. Students who are suspected or known to have used AI technology to complete an assignment or assessment will be dealt with according to our Academic Dishonesty policy.

## TESTING POLICY

- Once the final exam for a nine-week session or the semester is taken, students are not permitted to go back and submit assignments.

Section 3.10.4 of the Rules Governing Distance and Digital Learning requires “The Teacher of Record shall be responsible for supervising the administration of student assessments or ensuring, through a designee, that appropriate supervision of administration of student assessments is provided.” Virtual Arkansas has designated assessments to be supervised by the local facilitator or other trained school employee for Content + Teacher Supplemental courses. For the Off-Campus and Fully Online Program, Virtual Arkansas will provide assessment proctoring. To ensure that assessments are administered with appropriate supervision, all facilitators are required to attend facilitator training.

All students enrolled in a Virtual Arkansas Core and CTE courses are required to take all nine-weeks and cumulative/semester exams as detailed by the teacher. Any assessment requiring a password **MUST** be taken under the supervision of a local school designee (proctor). All Concurrent Credit assessments must adhere to the Assessment Guidelines provided by each instructor.

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Family members and relatives are not permitted to proctor or supervise a student taking an assessment that requires a password.

**There are no exemptions for Virtual Arkansas Core, CTE, or Concurrent Credit**

**cumulative/semester exams.** However, students who take the AP Exam may substitute this for the second semester final exam. Students enrolled in an AP course and who do not take the AP Exam must take the second semester final exam for the AP course. If a student misses a major exam and does not make it up during the time frame allowed by district policy, the student will receive a zero for the exam. A school administrator must request that the student be provided the opportunity to make up the missed exam.

Students enrolled in Advanced Placement Courses must take the AP exam for each AP course in which the student is enrolled to receive weighted credit at the district level.

Semester final dates for Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit classes are established by the partnering universities and are listed in the course syllabus.

**TESTING RETAKES – EXIT AND MODULE TESTS**

The following criteria must be met to retake an exit test:

1. All coursework is completed in the applicable module
2. Exit test is completed for the applicable module
3. The exit test is within the current 9 weeks.
4. There must be some intervention between teacher and student as determined by the teacher.

\*\*Concurrent Courses will follow Concurrent Grading Guidelines in this area.

**TRANSCRIPT REQUESTS**

To request a transcript for students enrolled in Concurrent Credit courses, go to the post-secondary institution website. The institution has specific instructions for requesting a transcript with your college grades.

**TRANSFERS**

If a student enrolled in a Virtual Arkansas course transfers out of your district, please notify the Virtual Arkansas teacher as soon as possible. This will be important to our teacher when trying to identify late or missing assignments. Prior to dropping a student who transfers to a new school in the Portal, please contact the Central Office at 501-477-2781.

Please contact the Virtual Arkansas Central Office as soon as possible if a student transfers into your district and meets any of the criteria below:

The student was enrolled in a Virtual Arkansas course at their former district.

You need to request a new student be enrolled in a course that you receive from Virtual Arkansas.

For students who transfer into your district and who are subsequently enrolled in a Virtual Arkansas course, please provide the transfer grades for the student using the [Transfer Grade Form](https://bit.ly/3czZSGB) - <https://bit.ly/3czZSGB>

Based on the Virtual Arkansas calendar, students who have transferred to a new district will be allowed to enroll in a Concurrent Credit course, if seats are available, during the first five (5) days of the semester, and if a concurrent partnership exists with the new district.



## **TUITION REFUND**

After the invoicing dates, Virtual Arkansas will not refund the per student, per course, per semester fee to the district. Students withdrawn from courses prior to the invoicing dates will not be included on the school's invoice.



## VIRTUAL ARKANSAS CONTACT INFORMATION

### Virtual Arkansas Central Office

John Ashworth – Executive Director & Superintendent – [john.ashworth@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:john.ashworth@virtualarkansas.org), 501.477.2781

Dr. Brandie Benton – Deputy Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction – [brandie.benton@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:brandie.benton@virtualarkansas.org), 501.477.2781

Michael Lar – Director of Operations – [mike.lar@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:mike.lar@virtualarkansas.org), 501.477.2781

Amy McClure – Director of Technology – [amy.mcclure@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:amy.mcclure@virtualarkansas.org), 501.477.2781

Candice McPherson – Director of Design and Development – [candice.mcpherson@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:candice.mcpherson@virtualarkansas.org)

### Virtual Arkansas CTE Campus

Christie Lewis, Campus Director/Principal

Dawson Education Service Cooperative

711 Clinton Street

Arkadelphia, AR 71923

[christie.lewis@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:christie.lewis@virtualarkansas.org)

<https://virtualarkansas.org>

Phone: 870-246-9063 Fax: 870-403-0662

### Virtual Arkansas Core Campus

Jason Bohler, Principal - [jason.bohler@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:jason.bohler@virtualarkansas.org)

Samantha Carpenter, Assistant Principal - [samantha.carpenter@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:samantha.carpenter@virtualarkansas.org)

Arch Ford Education Service Cooperative

101 Bulldog Drive

Plumerville, AR 72127

Phone: 501.477.2781

<https://virtualarkansas.org>

### Virtual Arkansas Concurrent Credit Campus

Ellora Hicks, Campus Director/Principal

Southeast Arkansas Education Service Cooperative

1022 Scogin Drive

Monticello, AR 71655

[ellora.hicks@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:ellora.hicks@virtualarkansas.org)

<https://virtualarkansas.org>

Phone: 870-224-3299 Fax: 870-367-8179

### Virtual Arkansas Off-Campus Fully Online Campus

Dr. Nic Mounts, Principal

Arch Ford Education Service Cooperative

101 Bulldog Drive

Plumerville, AR 72127

[nic.mounts@virtualarkansas.org](mailto:nic.mounts@virtualarkansas.org)

<https://virtualarkansas.org>

Phone: 501.477.2781

## VIRTUAL ARKANSAS CHALLENGE TO INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS POLICY

### Definitions

“Curriculum” is defined as follows: “The sequences of public school student learning expectations, pacing, materials, and resources that are used to teach the Arkansas academic standards and the processes for evaluating mastery of the Arkansas academic standards at particular points in time throughout the kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) educational program.”

“Instructional Material” is defined as follows: “Instructional content that is provided to a public school student, regardless of its format that includes without limitation printed or representational materials, audio-visual materials, and materials in electronic or digital format, such as materials accessible through the Internet; however, instructional materials does not include academic tests or academic assessments.”

“Parent” is defined as follows: The parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of a student, or person standing in loco parentis for an enrolled student.

### Policy

[Virtual Arkansas’s](#) (VA) mission is to equip, engage, and empower students through unique digital opportunities. As the State of Arkansas’s Virtual School (SVS), we partner with local schools to provide course opportunities to students that might not otherwise be available with local resources. Virtual Arkansas is not an online school or a diploma-granting institution but serves as a resource for supplementing the education of local students. Virtual Arkansas’s program is implemented through a partnership between the Arkansas Department of Education and the Arkansas Education Service Cooperatives. This initiative is guided by Act 2325 of 2005: An Act to Provide Distance Learning. Additional information about Virtual Arkansas can be found in our [Program Informational Guide](#).

All course content, including but not limited to curricular materials, instructional materials, and assessments, are designed and developed, or vetted and selected by Virtual Arkansas’s Departments of Curriculum and Instruction and Design and Development and are adopted for their compatibility with Virtual Arkansas’s educational program and unique learning model. Curriculum and instructional materials are reviewed to ensure they are appropriate for grade-level learners, are in alignment with the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks, and that they fulfill our organization’s educational goals and objectives.

Arkansas Act 684 (§6-16-152) guarantees the right of a parent, legal guardian, person having lawful control of a student, or person standing in loco parentis to a student to inspect, upon request, any instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum for a public school student. The rights provided to parents under this policy transfer to the student when the student turns eighteen (18) years old.

### Request to Inspect Process

Parents (as defined above) may request to inspect any instructional materials used as part of the educational curriculum. In addition to all other inspection rights under this policy, the following shall be made available for inspection following a formal request:

Curricula

Materials

Surveys

Questionnaires

## Appendix A

## Activities

Instructional materials (as defined above) do not include academic tests or assessments. Additionally, Virtual Arkansas will not share any items that may violate the FERPA protections of other enrolled students (i.e., Zoom recorded synchronous sessions, discussion boards, etc.)

To make a formal request to access the materials, parents will follow the steps outlined below.

Email the teacher of record for the course. The teacher should communicate with the parent regarding access to Canvas via the Observer Role and send instructions.

The teacher should verify that the parent has been able to access the student's course via the Observer Role by looking in the People tab of the Canvas course.

If the parent is not satisfied with the Observer Role, the teacher of record will provide the "parent" with a link to the [Request to Inspect Curriculum Materials Form](#).

The "parent" will complete the form and indicate a variety of important information including relationship to student and specific curriculum components and course titles to be inspected.

The form response will be sent to the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the Director of Design and Development who will forward it to a Curriculum Review Committee composed of the appropriate campus director and others, to include the teacher of record.

The Curriculum Review Committee shall affirm that the requester meets the legal definition of "parent" as described in Act 684 and is enrolled in the course for the current academic term. If this cannot be determined by the information in the Virtual Arkansas student information system, an email will be sent to the local school affiliation to confirm the requester's relationship to the student.

The Curriculum Review Committee will make a determination regarding access to requested materials, specific to the type of material requested within the form.

If access to inspect is provided, the parent will have fourteen (14) calendar days to inspect requested materials.

The granted access is non-transferrable to other parties and is only given to the specific "parent" requesting the access. Once accessed, the "parent" is expected to honor the privacy and legal protections in relation to the content shared with them.

After fourteen (14) calendar days, "parent" access to inspect requested materials will be removed except for those access pieces already available to all parents for the duration of the enrollment through the observer role.

**Formal Challenge to the Curriculum Process**

Parents (as defined above) wishing to challenge or express concerns about curriculum, instructional, or supplemental materials including classroom events or activities associated with classroom instruction may do so by filling out a [Formal Challenge to the Curriculum Form](#) available upon request following the formal inspection process outlined above.

The following procedures will be followed once the form is received:

The form response will be sent to the Director of Curriculum and Instruction and the Director of Design and Development who will forward it to a Curriculum Review Committee composed of the appropriate campus director and others.

The Curriculum Review Committee shall consult with the teacher and others regarding the contested material. The committee shall decide whether to retain the material, limit the availability of the material, or remove the material from the curriculum. The committee's

## Appendix A

consideration in reaching its decision shall be if the instructional and supplemental materials including classroom events or activities associated with classroom instruction are as following:

Not aligned to the Arkansas Curriculum Frameworks and/or course objectives.

Misleading

Factually inaccurate; or

Otherwise inappropriate for the intended educational use.

Following the Curriculum Review, the campus director shall notify the “parent” of the outcome and if the curriculum item is retained, and inform him/her regarding the criteria used for the selection of the material and its relevance to the educational program as well as any other pertinent information in support of the use of the material.

If the “parent” is not satisfied with the campus director’s response, the “parent” shall be advised to contact the student’s school district of record to seek further resolution.

Regardless of the outcome, the campus director will have two (2) working days to write a summary of the concerns expressed by the individual and the Curriculum Review Committee’s response to those concerns. The outcome shall be shared with VA Leadership and maintained within a shared folder for future reference.

Legal Reference: A.C.A. §6-16-152

## Appendix B

**VIRTUAL ARKANSAS IEP, 504, AND ELL GUIDANCE**

Virtual Arkansas is pleased to serve a diverse student population, including those with special needs. Because of our unique course delivery model, however, some students may not be well-suited for enrollment in all Virtual Arkansas courses.

Virtual Arkansas is a supplemental program that provides Arkansas students access to a variety of courses. These courses are aligned to the respective Arkansas state curriculum frameworks. As a supplemental program, Special Education direct services and related services are not provided. All Special Education direct services, as well as related services, must be coordinated and provided by the local district.

If a student with an IEP, 504, or ELL plan is enrolled with Virtual Arkansas, it is the responsibility of the local school to ensure that the school meets all requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education (IEP) Act and Section 504. Virtual Arkansas will follow accommodations documented on the IEP, 504, or ELL plan that fall within the scope of our online program's ability (see VA Accommodation Guide for specifics).

According to the Arkansas Department of Education, both accommodations and modifications are implemented to increase student understanding of the curriculum, but they are defined differently.

Virtual Arkansas is able to provide most accommodations. Accommodations are variations in the way a student accesses learning, without modifying the standards or lowering learning expectations. They lessen the impact of a student's disability on the major life function.

Virtual Arkansas is unable to provide modifications. Modifications either change, lower or reduce learning expectations. The consistent use of modifications can increase the gap between the achievement of students with disabilities and grade level expectations.

Due to the setup of Virtual Arkansas, it is not possible for instructors to read content or assessments to students. Virtual Arkansas does provide tools such as text-to-speech in each course, and students also have access to other accessibility options freely available depending on their device, such as VoiceOver for MacOS, and various accessibility features from Chrome OS.

Prior to enrolling in online courses with Virtual Arkansas, the local IEP, 504, or ELL team, along with the guardian, should determine if online learning is the appropriate placement for the student.

## VIRTUAL ARKANSAS IEP, 504, AND ELL MODIFICATION/ACCOMMODATION GUIDE

Virtual Arkansas is pleased to serve a diverse student population, including those with special needs. Because of our unique course delivery model, however, some students may not be well-suited for enrollment in all Virtual Arkansas courses.

The local IEP, 504, or ELL team should make the determination whether Virtual Arkansas online courses are an appropriate placement for their student or child. Because Virtual Arkansas provides supplemental services, our teachers are able to provide input and documentation, but may not be able to participate in SPED conferences directly.

Virtual Arkansas does not employ special education teachers; therefore, it is the local district’s responsibility to ensure that those students with plans that require SPED minutes are provided for by the local school district. Local special education teachers are strongly encouraged to [utilize the observer role in Canvas](#). The local Special Education teacher(s) should be set up as facilitators in the Portal so they can easily access grade reports.

Prior to enrolling a student with an IEP, 504, or ELL plan, Virtual Arkansas is available to answer questions related to the accommodations we are able to provide. These accommodations apply to the Virtual Arkansas CTE and Core campus courses. *Concurrent Credit campus courses will follow guidelines indicated through that program agreement.*

### Accommodations vs. Modifications

According to the Arkansas Department of Education, both accommodations and modifications are implemented to increase student understanding of the curriculum, but they are defined differently.

Virtual Arkansas is able to provide most accommodations. Accommodations are variations in the way a student accesses learning, without modifying the standards or lowering learning expectations. They lessen the impact of a student’s disability on the major life function.

Virtual Arkansas is unable to provide modifications. Modifications either change, lower, or reduce learning expectations. The consistent use of modifications can increase the gap between the achievement of students with disabilities and grade level expectations.

**Reference:** [DESE Section 504 Guidance Manual](#), Equity Access Center Division of Legal Services, 2019

The following is a list of common accommodations found within these plans. This list is not all inclusive and is meant to assist local Special Education staff, administrators, and parents make informed decisions as to whether Virtual Arkansas online courses are appropriate for their student or child.

While Virtual Arkansas teachers are able to address many accommodations, depending upon the student’s IEP, the local school must maintain responsibility for others, including but not limited to:

Possible Accommodations on IEP, 504, or ELL	Abilities and Limitations of Virtual Arkansas to Address the Accommodation
Extended Time on Assignments	Virtual Arkansas courses are built to allow extended time on assignments and other coursework. It is possible that a grade of “0” could be entered into the gradebook if the assignment is not

Appendix C

	<p>completed by the due date. The student is not penalized for late assignments. Once the assignment is completed and graded, a score is entered.</p> <p><i>Extended time on assignments are built into the nine weeks and are not automatic beyond the end of a grading period for students with extended time listed in 504/IEP plans. Because this requires placing students in separate groups in order to continue working, an extension request before the deadline is still required.</i></p>
Extended Time on Assessments	Most Virtual Arkansas course assessments allow for extended time up to 90 minutes in one sitting.
Reduced assessment items/Scaled assessments	<p>All courses have A versions and B versions of major tests in addition to the main version.</p> <p>A Version = (Light Accommodation) features fewer questions than the main test.</p> <p>B Version = (Heavy Accommodation) features fewer questions, fewer answer options, and fewer writing prompts compared to the main test.</p> <p>Virtual Arkansas assessments do not allow for scaling of scored items.</p>
Preferential Seating	All students work from a computer. The seating arrangement is determined by the local school or the family.
Hearing Impaired/Hearing Support	All Virtual Arkansas courses include captions and/or transcripts for multimedia items containing audio components.
Visually Impaired/Visual Support	Virtual Arkansas content is screen reader accessible with most major screen reader software. The learning management system also includes a built-in screen reading tool called ReadSpeaker that can be used for most components of the course content. Teachers frequently include videos for students to watch that were selected or created to support student learning. These videos may include Zoom recordings from synchronous lessons. These videos may be paused or replayed multiple times allowing the student to take notes and work at his/her own pace.
Reduced Assignments	Courses are developed based on the State standards and while accommodations can be made, modifications which would result in a change to the grade-level standards by reducing complexity level (thus no longer meeting standards) cannot be made. This needs to be reviewed on an individual basis. When assignments cannot be reduced due to material either being new or necessary for future work, the local special education

## Appendix C

	teacher will be responsible for implementing appropriate accommodations.
Assistance with Organization	Virtual Arkansas' courses are designed and developed according to Quality Matters standards for online courses and the National Standards of Quality for Online courses. Our courses are highly organized by design. Students proceed through the course by adaptive release, so they are not able to skip lessons and assignments. The student has access to other organizational tools such as the course pacing guide, which can be utilized as a checklist of lessons and assignments. The local facilitator or local special education teacher can assist with further organization if needed.
9-Week or Semester Term Extension	Virtual Arkansas will allow 9 week and first semester extensions based on the procedures outlined in the student and school handbooks. There is a hard deadline for the second semester due to teachers going off contract.
Use of a Calculator	All students enrolled in Virtual Arkansas courses with math components are required to have a calculator, with batteries, supplied for their use by the local school for the duration of the course. Online calculators are integrated within some courses to supplement this requirement.
Modified Texts or Alternative Books	Virtual Arkansas courses and content are built for the reading level appropriate to the course and grade level. Courses do not have alternative books or modified text. Some courses may require additional resources which will be outlined in the syllabus or pacing guide.
Alternative Testing Location	Virtual Arkansas exams are taken at the school's or student's discretion of time and place. If the proctored test session is too distracting, then the student can request an appointment for an individual test session with his/her facilitator.
Frequent Breaks	Virtual Arkansas students are able to work at their own pace throughout the day and are able to and encouraged to take frequent breaks from the computer and seated position.
Use of Notes	Virtual Arkansas students with this accommodation are able to utilize notes when and where needed.
Use of Computer for Assignments	All courses must be completed using a computer or similar device.
Guided Notes	Some, but not all, courses provide guided and/or filled in notes. If not available, this need can be met at the request of the school.

## Appendix C

<p>Co-Taught Classroom</p>	<p>Virtual Arkansas does not provide special education services and does not have online co-taught courses. Any and all co-teaching services must be provided by the local school.</p>
<p>Self-Contained</p>	<p>As a purely supplemental program with only regular education courses written to the grade level Arkansas standards, Virtual Arkansas would not be an appropriate placement for self-contained students. Local special education instructors do have the option of utilizing our Content Partnership Full Service option and adapting the courses as needed.</p>
<p>Resubmission of assignments</p>	<p>Students should contact their Virtual Arkansas teacher for instructions and options available. The goal is to achieve Mastery Learning and our teachers will consider options for each student's request if applicable.</p>
<p>Larger print materials</p>	<p>Because Virtual Arkansas coursework is done on the computer, the font size can easily be increased by clicking [Control] [+] or applicable command on a Mac.</p>
<p>Teacher frequently checks for comprehension of test directions, tests, questions, test format, assignment, and/or understanding of curriculum</p>	<p>Virtual Arkansas courses are an online learning option chosen either as an alternative by the family or as a supplemental course at the local school. Teachers meet bi-weekly with students via Zoom, but are not on demand. Interaction with a student in a one-to-one setting is limited and can only be done virtually. Exams are proctored by school district facilitators. Please keep in mind that students who require weekly, or more frequent, contact with a teacher may not be well suited for an online course, which can lead to frustration.</p>
<p>Provide oral retakes of quizzes/tests</p>	<p>Virtual Arkansas courses are taught through the use of a computer and teachers are not on demand. Oral testing options are not provided through online courses and would be the responsibility of the local school district to arrange and conduct.</p>
<p>Assignments and Assessment read aloud</p>	<p>All Virtual Arkansas courses are screen reader compatible and include a screen reader tool called ReadSpeaker that can be utilized for most components of the course. If additional supports are needed, these supports must be provided by the local school. Virtual Arkansas teachers are not available to read aloud assignments or assessments.</p>
<p>Chunking of information into smaller segments with tentative due dates</p>	<p>Virtual Arkansas course lessons are divided into smaller sections. Each lesson contains multiple pages so students can work through the lesson learning small chunks at a time. This approach does not reduce the overall workload, but it allows a student to progress through the lesson in stages where they can start and stop as needed.</p>

Appendix C

Grade on completion	Virtual Arkansas provides numerical grades. Many assessments are automatically graded and completion grades cannot be given for incorrect items.
Provide Visual Aids	Virtual Arkansas courses include content with a variety of content representations, but not all content components are able to be represented visually.
Translation Tools	For some content, the built in ReadSpeaker tool may provide translation into the student’s native language.

- Modifications that reduce the grade-level complexity
- SPED minutes and related services (i.e., OT, speech, PT)
- Frequent restroom breaks
- Small group testing
- Read aloud tests
- Photocopy assignments for extra practice
- Printing of materials
- Alternative texts
- Modifications to accommodate reading level
- Assignment notebook/agenda with teacher initial
- Frequent reminders of rules
- Open book/open note testing
- Large screen computer and other specialized equipment
- Internet/Wifi access
- One-to-one instruction or support of paraprofessional