

2021-2022 School Year Planning for Districts

- Onsite Instruction: 178 six-hour instructional days of Teacher-Student Interaction (unless otherwise allowed by law/rule) .
 - Onsite Instruction **Required**
 - Schools must be open daily for in-person learning according to schedules that meet minimum requirements of Standards for Accreditation
 - School start date is outlined in law: **A.C.A. § 6-10-106**

Pivoting to remote learning: AMI

- A public school district and open-enrollment public charter school may develop a plan for ***alternative methods of instruction*** to be used on days when the superintendent closes school due to exceptional or emergency circumstances such as: a contagious disease outbreak, inclement weather or other acts of God, or a utility outage.
- The Commissioner of Education may grant up to the equivalent of ten (10) student attendance days for public school districts that have an alternative instruction plan approved by the Commissioner of Education for the use of alternative methods of instruction, ***including without limitation virtual learning***.
- The public school district's alternative instruction plan shall demonstrate how teaching and learning in the public school district will not be negatively impacted by the use of alternative methods of instruction.

Additional Consideration- School Calendar

- A school district shall adopt an academic calendar that includes **five (5) make-up days**, in addition to the number of student-teacher interaction days required by the Standards for Accreditation of Arkansas Public Schools and School Districts established by the State Board of Education, for days unavoidably lost due to exceptional or emergency circumstances resulting from a contagious disease outbreak, inclement weather, or other acts of God.

2021-2022 School Year Options for Districts

- Digital programming that includes **Virtual (Online)**, **Remote (Distance)** or **Blended (Hybrid)** programs are an **Option** for districts to implement
 - Digital programming options may be implemented as part of any LEAs instructional programming
 - Waivers may be necessary to provide the needed flexibility for digital program options
 - DESE is developing a streamlined process for waiver applications

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Virtual (Online), Remote (Distance)

Teachers and students are not in the same place. Instruction and learning may take place asynchronously and/or synchronously.

Blended (Hybrid)

Students learn at least in part through virtual (online) learning, with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace; and at least in part in a supervised, brick-and-mortar location away from home (school or learning center).

Non-negotiables- Digital Programming Must...

- 1.Be thoughtfully planned with specific goals and expected outcomes clearly defined
- 2.Deliver high-quality content and instruction
- 3.Provide opportunity for participating students and teachers to access the proper device and connectivity
- 4.Provide necessary support for teachers, students, and parents to meet goals of the digital model
- 5.Clearly communicate expectations, policies and guidelines
- 6.Allow for regular communication and interaction

Application For Digital Program and/or AMI Plans

- Streamlining the process for approval
 - DESE review applications and recommend approval to SBE
- Flexibility and types of waiver are based on type of programming implemented
- LEAs may implement more than one type of digital program to meet goals for digital learning opportunities

Support

- DESE and Team Digital partner with co-ops to conduct technical assistance sessions for districts as they design digital programs and to complete the Application for Waiver Requests
- Technical Assistance begins in January/February with sessions throughout the spring semester

Timeline:

- Seek SBE approval of process- January
- Technical Assistance-Begins in January/February
- Applications submitted beginning in March- May 2021
 - Application includes AMI plan submission
 - Applicants will be due by May 1, 2021 to be considered as part of the streamlined process
- Review of digital programs beginning in the fall of 2021
 - Non-negotiables will form the basis for quality assurance