



Distance Learning Program

Frequently Asked Questions

This is a fluid document based on current information. The below information is subject to change if new guidance is issued by education, government and/or health officials. This information can also be found on the Marion County Schools website.

General

How do I find information about the Distance Learning Program? Anyone can access the website here for information about the [Distance Learning Program](#).

Parents and/or guardians are encouraged to frequently check the FAQ document as questions and answers will be added. Parents and/or guardians must complete the Marion County School District (MCSD) registration process and the Opt-out Distance Learning form/application. Students and parents will not be contacted about the Distance Learning Program if they have not completed registration.

Typical school day/time of activities for students

What will the typical Distance Learning Program school day be like? Will my child's schedule be similar to that as if they were in the building? How will they be counted present?

Students must participate in 240 minutes of instruction/activities daily (4 hours) , as required by the Mississippi Department of Education. The student's participation of those 4 hours as part of the student's Distance Learning Program with Marion County staff/school will only occur during traditional school hours on school days (Monday-Friday 7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.). Student Attendance will be documented through our Learning Platform (Google) and our Learning Management System (Google Classroom). Inactivity or failure to participate and complete assignments could result in an absence being recorded if the 240 minute daily requirement is not met.

Sample Distance Learning School Day

Elementary Students (Pre-Kindergarten – 6th Grade)

- A. **Time** – An equivalent of 240 minutes of instruction will be offered. This could include recorded or live teaching from the classroom teacher, instructional videos, tasks, assignments, and/or activities. Students will log time and engagement through the various programs that are part of our Learning Platform (Google) and our Learning Management System (Google Classroom) as well as through CLEVER, our single sign in portal for all other programs. The mode of instruction may vary by school, grade level and/or course.
- B. **Procedures and learning expectations** – Academic procedures and expectations will mirror the traditional classroom as much as possible. Parents and students will be provided training on how to maximize distance learning success through our educational partner, Kids First.
- C. **English/Language Arts** – Google Classroom will house lessons including new instruction and review of standards and learning targets, independent practice (offline), and some virtual small group and/or one on one instruction to meet the needs of students.
- D. **Math** - Google Classroom will house lessons including new instruction and review of standards and learning targets, independent practice (offline), and some virtual small group and/or one on one instruction to meet the needs of students.
- E. **Science and Social Studies** – Google Classroom will house lessons linked through various sites and/or online texts. Science and social studies topics will be incorporated in English/language arts as much as possible.
- F. **Assessment** – Students will participate in both progress screeners through i-Ready as normal, whether distance learning or in class. This will allow for skills recovery and individualized instruction/intervention. Additionally, formative checks and summative assessments used in the traditional school model will be adapted to allow for online access/participation. Students may also be required to take district and state assessments periodically throughout the year. See assessment section on this FAQ for more details.
- G. **Teacher Check-ins** – All students will be provided feedback and guidance through Google Classroom. Parents and/or students may reach out to teachers with questions and requests for help at any time. Teachers will respond to requests by the end of the next school day.

Sample Distance Learning School Day

Secondary Students (7th – 12th Grade)

- A. Time** – An equivalent of 240 minutes of instruction will be offered. This could include recorded or live teaching from the classroom teacher, instructional videos, tasks, assignments, and/or activities. Students will log time and engagement through the various programs that are part of our Learning Platform (Google) and our Learning Management System (Google Classroom) as well as through CLEVER, our single sign in portal for all other programs. The mode of instruction may vary by school, grade level and/or course.
- B. Procedures and Learning Expectations** – Academic procedures and expectations will mirror the traditional classroom as much as possible. Parents and students will be provided training on how to maximize distance learning success through our educational partner, Kids First.
- C. All Secondary Courses** – I-Ready and The Study Island programs will house instructional lessons including a review of previous material and learning targets, direct instruction, and independent practice (offline). Direct instruction could consist of pre-recorded instructional videos, narrated SlideShows, guided practice, or independent reading of content or textbooks all organized through Google Classroom.
- D. Assessment** – Students will participate in both progress screeners through i-Ready as normal, whether distance learning or in class. This will allow for skills recovery and individualized instruction/intervention. Additionally, formative checks and summative assessments used in the traditional school model will be adapted to allow for online access/participation. Students may also be required to take district and state assessments periodically throughout the year. See assessment section on this FAQ for more details.
- H. Teacher Check-ins** – All students will be provided feedback and guidance through Google Classroom. Parents and/or students may reach out to teachers with questions and requests for help at any time. Teachers will respond to requests by the end of the next school day.
- E. Parent Communication** - Parents will be notified of student progress through Google Classroom and through normal mail-out progress reports, etc. Parents and Students will be able to access student grades through Active Student/Parent.

Questions and Answers

Why has the 240-minute requirement been put in place by the Mississippi Department of Education? Mississippi law makes education for any child between the age of 6 and 17 compulsory and requires schools to report daily attendance for truancy purposes.

Will my student be assigned to a teacher? Yes, all students will be assigned to a teacher for each core class and the majority of elective classes. Certain high school elective classes could be completed through Study Island with a certified teacher if the class is not offered by the school with a Marion County School District teacher available.

Scheduling

Will all courses offered in schools be available in the Distance Learning Program? Core courses will be offered. Because elective offerings for the Distance Program will be built based on course selections and the availability of teachers, it is difficult to definitively identify exactly which specific courses will be available at this point. This magnifies the importance of the July 24th deadline.

What should I do if I need to discuss my student's schedule? Please contact the school as you would if the student was in the traditional setting.

Technology

How is technology going to be handled? Will students get devices if needed? Through the Distance Learning Opt-out form, parents can indicate whether their students have devices. Parents are responsible for providing a device and connectivity (internet) for students who opt-out of the traditional classroom. District officials will work with individual families in the upcoming weeks to address needs and procedures.

Can students use a personal-owned device for distance learning? Yes, any internet capable device can be used to access Google. Windows Laptops/PCs, Macbooks/iMacs, Chromebooks, iPads, and Android tablets can be used to access Google, Google Classroom, and all learning resources through Clever. While, with most resources, phones can access Google, devices with a larger screen are preferred.

Special Education

Will my student receive Special Education services if enrolled in Distance Learning? A student's IEP was written to provide services in a traditional school setting to provide personalized instruction to support that student. Some special education services and related services along with supplementary aids and services may not be appropriate or feasible in a virtual learning program. An IEP meeting will be held at the beginning of the school year to determine the services that can be provided while the student is using the distance learning platform.

Gifted Education

Will my student receive Gifted services if enrolled in the Distance Learning Program? Yes. Gifted students will receive services/assignments through Google Classroom similar to other classes. The student's Gifted teacher will be in contact after school begins.

English Learners

Will my student receive English Learner services if enrolled in the Distance Learning Program? Yes. English Learner students will receive services as outlined in their language service plan. The student's Teacher or English Learner teacher will be in contact after school begins.

504

Will my student receive 504 services if enrolled in the Distance Learning Program? A student's 504 plan was written to provide accommodations in a traditional school setting to provide equity due to that student's disability. Some accommodations may not be appropriate or feasible in a virtual learning program. A 504 meeting will be held at the beginning of the school year to determine the accommodations that can be provided while the student is using the virtual learning platform.

Changing From Distance to Traditional or vice versa

Will students be able to go back to the traditional setting at any point in the year? Students have until July 24th to apply through the Distance Learning opt-out Form. After July 24th, students will be able to enroll or withdraw at the end of every 9 weeks. Distance Learning students will automatically be enrolled in the distance learning program each 9 weeks unless a request is made by the guardian to remove the student from the program, and reenter the traditional in-class program. Requests to be removed from the program at the end of a 9 weeks period can be made by using the [Distance Learning Contact Form](#). Grading, attendance, scheduling and other factors are reported to the Mississippi Department of Education. Therefore, these factors cannot be altered except at certain points in the year.

Will students be able to get into the Distance Learning Program at any point in the year? Students have until July 24th to enroll or withdraw freely. After July 24th, students will be able to enroll or withdraw at the end of every 9 weeks. Students are automatically enrolled in their current program unless a request is made by the guardian to remove the student from the program. Requests to enter the Distance Learning Program at the end of each 9 weeks period can be made by using the [Distance Learning Contact Form](#). Grading, attendance, scheduling and other factors are reported to the Mississippi Department of Education. Therefore, these factors cannot be altered except at certain points in the year.

If my child changes to the traditional setting from the Distance Learning Program or vice versa, will his/her teacher(s) and/or schedule change? It is possible that the schedule and/or classroom teacher(s) could change if a student is changed from the distance learning setting to the traditional setting or vice versa. This will vary by school, grade level and/or course.

Learning Platform and Learning Management System

What is the Learning Platform for Marion County Schools? The Learning Platform for the Marion County School District will be **Google Suite**.

What is the Learning Management System for the Marion County School District? The Marion County School District will use **Google Classroom** for our LMS.

What is Google Suite? Google Suite is an online collection of tools such as gmail, Google docs, Google Slides, Google Forms, Google Classroom, Google Sheets, just to name a few, that work

under the Google umbrella and are stored in Google Drive (cloud) --that allow for students to work on assignments collaboratively.

What is Clever? Clever is a single sign-on portal (allows students only to have to log in once) for students to access a multitude of learning programs that will be used by all teachers and students for all classroom assignments.

How do I learn about Google, Google Classroom, and Distance Learning? Parents and students will receive more information prior to the beginning of school and will be offered multiple training opportunities to promote successful learning and student growth.

How will assignments be posted and submitted? All assignments will be posted and submitted through the Google Classroom.

Extracurricular

Will students enrolled in Distance Learning be able to participate in extracurricular activities? Those who participate in school extracurricular activities and some elective courses (CTC) do not have an option for online (distant) learning unless quarantined or tested positive. They must be a traditional student.

If a student goes back to the traditional setting during the year, could the student participate in extracurricular activities? This will be a school-based decision at the time of re-entry into the traditional setting.

Career Tech

Will students enrolled in the VIP be able to participate in Career Tech? For Career Tech programs, much of the curriculum requires hands-on learning and use of tools, equipment, and lab space that is provided to our students on campus. Because Career Tech uses a hands-on learning model, students can only be served in a face-to-face environment. Therefore, if students choose to apply for distance learning, they will not be able to participate in their Career Tech program.

Assessment

Which assessments do students in the Distance Learning Program take? Not all students take a state assessment. Students in 1st grade or 2nd grade do not take a state assessment unless they are in the English Learner program. All students in all grade levels (K-12) that are in the English Learner program take a state assessment. Students in high school only take a state assessment if they are enrolled in Algebra I, English II, Biology I, U.S. History or are an 11th grader. All students in kindergarten and grades 3-8 take a state assessment regardless of subjects or programs. Students in grades 1-8 will take a benchmark assessment. Students enrolled in Algebra I, English II, Biology I or U.S. History will take a benchmark assessment. Students in grades K-3 will take a universal screener required by state law. Details for the different assessments that are required are being worked out and will be communicated as the time for each assessment approaches.

Child Nutrition

Can my student receive lunch if enrolled in the Distance Learning Program? Yes. Meals will be available each day at a designated pick up time and place at each school location. Parents will be asked to sign up for meals weekly.