Rolla
Public Schools

Virtual Learning

Parent/Student Handbook

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Introduction

This guide is for parents, guardians, counselors, and others who want to help students first decide whether virtual learning is a good option for them and, if so, how to proceed. In the pages that follow, you will find information about:

- Missouri Course Access and Virtual School Program (MOCAP)
- the characteristics of a successful virtual learner,
- how to enroll in virtual courses and,
- the impact coursework may have on academics and activities.

What is MOCAP?

The Missouri Course Access and Virtual School Program (MOCAP) offers courses for students in Kindergarten through 12th grade. Eligible students may take courses from any Internet-connected computer, available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. MOCAP's mission is to offer Missouri students equal access to a wide range of high-quality courses, and interactive virtual learning that is neither time nor place dependent.

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the State Board of Education oversee the administration and quality assurance activities such as related content and delivery of courses. Missouri certified teachers facilitate MOCAP courses and provide students with equal access to a wide range of coursework. For more information, visit the MOCAP website.

Local school districts may select a preferred virtual provider. For students K-6, RPS does not have a preferred provider; as such, parents/guardians may choose from any of the approved providers listed on the MOCAP website. Due to graduation requirements, the RPS preferred provider for students grade 7-12 is Edgenuity®. Students wishing to take advantage of virtual learning opportunities will do so through Edgenuity and may enroll at their home building.

RPS parents/guardians will follow the procedures listed in the Enrollment Process section on page 6 of this document to begin virtual learning enrollment.

Why Consider Virtual Learning?

Students take virtual courses for a variety of reasons. For some students, it expands the range of courses and opportunities, particularly if a student cannot access a face-to-face course due to scheduling conflicts. For others, it allows students to take courses not offered at the local level. Other students may use virtual course opportunities for credit recovery or as a viable homebound option. And, still, others may simply prefer the virtual learning format.

From a student's point of view, virtual learning may be attractive because it is:

- Personalized to individual needs and learning goals.
- Flexible so a student can try different ways to learn.
- Interactive and engaging because students will be meeting people from other school districts in a safe, monitored environment.
- Relevant to the virtual/online life many students lead.
- Collaborative with faculty, peers, and others.
- Responsive and supportive when a student needs extra help or time to learn.
- Available to all students 24 hours a day.

Profile of a Successful Virtual Learning Student

The most important question to answer is whether or not the student is well suited to be in a virtual learning environment. Parents and students should be aware that the demands of virtual courses are equal to and often exceed those of traditional seated courses. Virtual instruction places much more responsibility on the student. A student should plan to spend at least one hour a day, five days a week, on each course. In other words, at least five hours per week on each course. This is similar to the amount of time a student would spend in a course at the local school building. Instructors with virtual teaching experience agree that students who are successful at virtual learning have the following critical characteristics:

- **Technologically Prepared**
  Does the student have consistent, reliable internet access?
- **Strong Parent/Guardian Support**
  Does the parent/ guardian understand the demands and expectations of a virtual learner? Are they prepared to help support the virtual learner?
- **Good Time Management**
  Can the student create and maintain a study schedule throughout the semester without face-to-face interaction with a teacher?
- **Effective Communication**
  Can the student ask for help, contact other students and instructors online and describe any problem they have with the learning materials using email?
- **Independent Study Habits**
  Can the student demonstrate persistence in overcoming obstacles and willingness to seek assistance when needed?
- **Self-Motivation**
  Does the student have a strong desire to learn skills, acquire knowledge and fulfill assignments in virtual courses because of their educational goals?
- **Academic Readiness**
  Does the student have the basic reading, writing, math, and computer literacy skills to succeed in a virtual learning course?

The Stanford Research Institute examined the accessibility of virtual learning for students, especially those at risk of failure. Their report cautions that students who have failed

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face-to-face classes may face unique challenges that will affect virtual learning success. For example, many students do not realize they will be even more accountable for their time, performance, organization, and productivity in a virtual learning class.

Making the Decision

In this process, a crucial role of the parent is to help the student decide if virtual learning is the most effective way for them to learn. Using the profile in the previous section is a starting point for making this determination. Once a parent decides if a student is likely to be successful, there are other questions to consider.

Technology
- Is there high-speed, reliable internet access available to the student?
- What are the technical requirements for the courses the student wants/needs to take?
- How technologically savvy are the parents/students?

Learning Environment
- Is there a quiet area in the home where the student can work on the virtual course? If not, does the student have access to a facility where they may work, such as the public library?
- Will there be a regular, designated time of day in which the student will work on the course(s)?

Considering the Course
- Does the course meet academic/graduation requirements?
- Has the course been approved for credit by the school?
- Are there prerequisites for the virtual courses? Has the student met these requirements?
- Does the course meet the NCAA Eligibility Requirements for potential Division I and II student-athletes?
- How rigid are the course assignment/test dates?
- What is the time commitment (daily and length of term)?
- How do students/parents receive grade updates and the final grades?
- When can a student drop the course if they find it too difficult?
- Are there dual credit options available?

Traditional Virtual Learning
- Designed for students earning first-time credits
- Students earn a letter grade and percentage
- Starts and stops with the traditional calendar; has set due dates
- Transfer grades are accepted after the first 20 days of school
- NCAA and MSHSAA approved
- Course(s) can be taken over a quarter (RJH) or semester (RHS)
- Advanced Placement (AP) courses are available. Students will sign up to take the AP test at Rolla High School.

Enrollment Procedures

Upon determining that virtual learning may be a viable option for a student, parents must contact the school principal or designee to pursue possible enrollment. A team consisting of administrators and counselors will determine eligibility for MOCAP. Applications for MOCAP must be completed and turned in to the school principal or counselor.

Once your application is received and you've successfully completed the building-level meeting, administration will provide a determination within 10 days; however, district administration may deny access if it is not in the student's best academic interests and/or outside of the application window.

The school district may deny a student/parent request to enroll in a virtual course at district cost if one or more of the following is true:

- The student has previously gained the credits provided from the completion of the virtual course.
- The virtual course is not capable of generating academic credit.
- The virtual course is inconsistent with the remaining graduation requirements of the student.
- The student has not completed the prerequisite coursework for the requested virtual course.
- The student has failed a previous virtual course(s).
- The course enrollment request does not occur within the enrollment period.

The list above is provided to parents/guardians as a guide, but other factors could exist which result in denial of virtual learning school enrollment. Should a student meet the eligibility expectations and the course requests are aligned to graduation requirements, he/she will be enrolled in the courses agreed upon.

All RPS virtual applications must be completed and submitted at least 10 days prior to the start of the semester for the requested virtual course; new students must request within 5 days of enrolling.

For more information regarding virtual courses, including course completion, state assessments, and the appeal process, please see our District Board Policy IGCD: Virtual Courses.

Click here to download the MOCAP Virtual Learning Enrollment Form

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Probation and Dropping a Course

Throughout the course, should the student's grades drop significantly, they may be on probation until the student shows improvement in academic achievement. A meeting with the school administrator may be scheduled.

Students have 10 days from the beginning of coursework to decide if the online platform is appropriate, and to return to seated learning. Students have 20 school days from the start date to drop a semester course without a report of the grade on their transcript.

No-Show Procedure

Regular and punctual patterns of attendance are expected of each student enrolled in the school district. In a virtual school environment, attendance is taken through the student logging into and engaging with the academic content daily. Frequent absences of students from regular classroom learning experiences disrupt the continuity of the instructional process, and the same applies in a virtual school environment. The benefit of regular classroom instruction is lost and cannot be entirely regained. The school cannot teach students who are not present. The entire education process requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and study to reach the goal of maximum educational benefits for each student. Students who do not engage in their virtual classes will be referred to the school principal for truancy per RPS **Board policy JED and regulation JED-R1.**

If your student participates in a MOCAP program, their provider will report attendance, participation, and academic success to the Rolla 31 Public School District. Providers may make recommendations to the school district regarding the student's continued enrollment in the program.

The school district shall evaluate enrolled students' progress and success in any course or full-time virtual school offering. The district may terminate or alter the course offering if it is found the course or full-time virtual school is not meeting the students' educational needs enrolled in the course. If the district determines online enrollment is not meeting the educational needs of a student, the student can be removed. The district criteria monitored are (1) attendance, (2) completion, (3) mastery engagement (*including state assessment and district benchmarks*), and (4) least restrictive environment.

Progress Monitoring

Parents/guardians are given access to Edgenuity to monitor the progress of their students. If you are working with another provider, please contact them to inquire about this option.

RPS students enrolled in virtual education may be required to participate in district benchmark assessments.

State Testing

All virtual students must participate in the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) Grade-Level and MAP End of Course (EOC) testing when appropriate. MAP Grade-Level and MAP EOC tests measure students' progress toward mastery of the Missouri Learning Standards, which are the educational standards in Missouri. All testing is conducted at the local school site in which the student resides.

- **MAP Grade-Level:** All students in grades three through eight in Missouri will take the MAP test in communication arts and math. Students in grades five and eight will also take the MAP test in science.
- **MAP EOC:** End-of-Course assessments are taken when a student has received instruction on the course-level expectations for an assessment, regardless of grade level (but typically in high school). EOC tests are required in the subject areas of Algebra I, Biology I, English II, and Government.

Graduation Requirements

To earn a Rolla School District diploma, students need to successfully complete the 25 credit requirements defined in the Career and Educational Planning Guide. In addition, students and parents need to work closely with the school counselor to make sure they are on track to graduate.

School Information

The district invites students participating in virtual classes to all school events such as pictures, yearbook photography, dances, and award ceremonies. In addition, schools will share announcements and communications with virtual parents.

A+ Program

Students enrolled in the A+ program who take virtual courses will have their attendance recorded as 95%, allowing them to meet the A+ program attendance requirements. Students enrolled in seated coursework will have the attendance recorded based on actual seat time. Regardless of whether a student is enrolled in virtual or seated coursework, all A+ program expectations apply. A+ program requirements include:

- Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident;

- Attend an A+ School for two years prior to graduation (being enrolled in NHS and taking RPS Virtual classes would apply in this situation);
- Graduate with an unweighted, unrounded cumulative GPA of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale;
- Graduate with a minimum cumulative 95% ADA (Average Daily Attendance) record;
- Maintain a record of good citizenship, avoid the use of alcohol and unlawful drugs, and avoid violation of the safe school act;
- Perform 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring to other students in our district;
- Meet the A+ math requirement: Score proficient or advanced on a math EOC or meet the qualifying score on the math section of the ACT;
- Apply for non-payback scholarships by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA);
- Male students of 18 years of age must register with the selective service.

IEP/504 Students

If a student with a disability served under an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan was enrolled full time in a LEA for the preceding semester, the student can register for a MOCAP course, if it has been determined that registration for MOCAP is the best educational interest of the student (MOCAP, 2021). The IEP team or the Section 504 Committee will determine if virtual education is appropriate for the student to receive Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).

School Athletics and Activities

Students that desire eligibility to participate in activities or sports at a Rolla school must meet the requirements set forth in Section 2 of the MSHSAA Handbook, entitled *Student Essential By-Laws*. A student who enrolls in virtual classes through the Rolla School District Virtual program may meet eligibility requirements outlined in By-Law 2.3.2.

Parents are strongly encouraged to review the [MSHSAA handbook](#) for further clarification regarding eligibility. For specific questions, please contact the Rolla School District Activity Director at 573-458-0149.

Summer School

High School students may also take virtual courses during the summer term. Expectations and requirements remain the same as the regular school year for summer courses. Enrollment in courses must be done through the student's counselor. Students may only enroll in a maximum of two courses per term during the summer session at the district's expense.

Technology

Any K-12 virtual student in need of a device will be issued a Chromebook from your child's assigned school. The district, however, will not provide internet access; this is the responsibility of the parents/guardians.

Final Advice for Parents

Throughout the student's enrollment in the virtual course(s), it is best practice to do the following:

- Set up a study space, including the technology required.
- Be prepared for any technical issues that may come up.
- Review the syllabus or course expectations with your student.
- Define expectations for when and where your student will work on the course.
- Agree on incentives and consequences.
- Reinforce that virtual courses are as important as seated courses and become part of the educational record.
- See that your student establishes a routine for working on their virtual course.
- Help your student maintain a regular study schedule.
- Monitor your student's progress.

Contacts

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