

South Nodaway R-IV School District



Virtual Education Handbook

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Introduction

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

- the characteristics of a successful online learner
- how to enroll in online courses
- the impact coursework may have on academics and activities

Senate Bill 603 At a Glance

In the spring of 2018, SB 603 was passed, thereby expanding the online learning opportunities for students in Missouri. Highlights of this legislation are below.

- The school district must adopt a policy that creates a process for students to enroll in virtual courses and may include consulting with a school counselor.
- The school district must pay for eligible K-12 students to take virtual courses as long as the student: one, resides in the district; two, is currently enrolled in the district, three, was enrolled full-time in a public school the previous semester, and fourth, it is in the best educational interest of the student. **Exceptions for homeschool students who reside in the district is referenced below in the ‘homeschool student’ section of this document.
- School districts are not required to pay for courses beyond full-time enrollment. Therefore, if a student is already enrolled in seven courses in a semester during the regular year (or one course during the summer school session), the district will not be required to pay for additional courses.
- **School districts are able to determine a student’s eligibility to enroll in an online course and can refuse enrollment based on ‘the best educational interest of the child’. Should the parent/guardian disagree with the district’s decision, an appeal may be made to the local school board.**

What is MoCap? What is Launch?

Missouri Course Access and Virtual School Program (MOCAP) was established in 2007 as the state’s online school. It was previously known as Missouri Virtual Instruction Program (MOVIP). Currently, MOCAP offers courses for 9th through 12th grade and plans to expand to grades K-12. Students can take courses from any Internet-connected computer, available 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

MOCAP's mission is to offer Missouri students equal access to a wide range of high quality courses, and interactive online learning that is neither time nor place dependent.

Local school districts and charter schools may use their own preferred online provider. The South Nodaway R-IV School District's preferred provider is LAUNCH. LAUNCH is operated and overseen by the Springfield, MO R-XII School District and currently offers over 120 courses. Courses are designed by Missouri teachers and aligned to the state standards. A formal review process is built into all course development to ensure high quality and rigor. Students wishing to take advantage of online learning opportunities will do so through Launch. All information/procedures that follow in this document are in reference to Launch.

If a student wishes to pursue an online class offering through other MoCAP options outside of LAUNCH, he/she will need to contact the counselor or administrator to begin the appeal process. More specifics on that process are at the end of this document.

Profile of a Successful Online Student

The most important question to answer is whether or not the student is well suited to be in an online learning environment. **Parents and students should be aware that the demands of online courses are equal to or exceed those of traditional 'face to face' courses. Online 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 "brick and mortar" school. Instructors with online teaching experience agree that students who are successful at online learning have the following critical characteristics:

- **Good Time Management**
Can the student create and maintain a study schedule throughout the semester without the face-to-face interaction with a teacher?
- **Effective Communication**
Can the student ask for help, make contact with other students and/or instructors online and describe any problem he/she is having with the learning materials using email?
- **Independent Study Habits**
Can the student study and complete assignments without direct supervision and Maintain the self discipline necessary to stick to a schedule?
- **Self-Motivation**
Does the student have a strong desire to learn skills, acquire knowledge and fulfill assignments in online courses because of their educational goals?
- **Academic Readiness**
Does the student have the basic reading, writing, math and computer literacy skills to succeed in an online course?

- **Technologically Prepared**

Does the student know how to open, create and/or save a document, use various technology tools and identify file formats (e.g., doc, xls, pdf, jpg)?

The Stanford Research Institute examined the accessibility of online learning for students, especially those who were at risk of failure. Their report cautions that students who have failed face-to-face classes may have challenges that will affect their success in an online course as well. More information: <https://edpolicy.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/scope-pub-using-technology-report.pdf>

Making the Decision

In this process, a crucial role of the parent is to help the student decide if online learning is the most effective way for him/her 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

- What are the technical requirements for the courses the student wants/needs to take?
- Can the parent/guardian provide internet access that the student needs?
- How technologically savvy are the parents/students?

Learning Environment

- Is there a quiet area in the home in which the student can work on the online course or does the student have easy access to a facility that provides this form of environment (such as the public library)?
- Will there be a regular, designated time of day in which the student will work on the course(s)?
- Is the student willing and able to ask for help when needed?
- Will the student be able to complete the work without a teacher at hand to ask questions?

Considering the Course

- Does the course meet academic/graduation requirements?
- Has the course been approved for credit by the school?
- In the case of foreign language and/or math courses, has the student thought about the additional rigor that comes with these courses simply by having them online and not taught in a seated environment?
- Are there prerequisites for the online courses? Has the student met these requirements?
- Does the course meet 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 he/she finds it too difficult?

Enrollment Procedures

In order to enroll in an online course under the provisions of Senate Bill 603, students must be a resident of the South Nodaway R-IV School District, have attended the previous semester and be willing to enroll/stay in the district.

Upon determining that online learning may be a viable option for a student, parents should contact the school counselor to pursue possible enrollment. A meeting will be scheduled with the student's counselor and administrator and student eligibility will be determined. **The school district may deny a student/parent request to enroll in an online 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 online course.
- The online course is not capable of generating academic credit.
- The online course is inconsistent with the remaining graduation requirements of the student.
- The student must have been enrolled in the district the semester prior to the semester courses are requested
- The student has not completed the prerequisite coursework for the requested online course.
- The student has failed a previous online course(s).
- The course enrollment request does not occur within the same timeliness established by Launch and/or the school district.

****If a family works directly with Launch and not through our district educational team to enroll in a Launch class the family WILL be responsible for the cost of the course(s) in which they enroll their student(s). In addition, South Nodaway R-IV School District may NOT accept the credit from these courses.**

Homeschool Students

If a student who resides in the Strafford R-VI School District was homeschooled the prior semester and wishes to take online courses at the district's expense, there are allowances for this. The following criteria must be met:

- The student resides in the district (and provides proof of residency).

- The student must have been enrolled in the district the semester prior to the semester courses are requested.
- The student must consider the district's preferred provider.
- The student must meet all of the online course expectations (regarding prerequisites, etc.).
- The student may only enroll in a total of seven courses a semester during the school year or one course during the summer semester (but may enroll in less than seven).

Enrollment Process

1. Student/Parent/Guardian obtains a Virtual Schooling Application Form and Handbook from the counselor's office
2. Virtual School Application completed and returned to counselor office
3. Application Reviewed by District Admin Team and Counselor. Parents/Student may be contacted for more information.
4. Virtual School Application approved or denied / Decision dictates next steps
5. If denied, directions will be provided on the official appeals process.

Academic Information

Launch offers various types of online coursework. All coursework is aligned to the Missouri State Standards. Content is reviewed annually to ensure updated resources as well as access to high-quality digital resources.

● Traditional Virtual

- Designed for students earning first-time credit
- Students earn a letter grade and percentage
- Starts and stops with the traditional calendar; has set due dates
- NCAA and MSHSAA approved
- Course can be taken over a quarter or semester
- Requires a proctored final exam conducted via web conferencing
- Curriculum built in a project-based learning format to include individual and group work delivered via individual assignments, culminating events, group discussions, etc.

Dropping a course - regular school year

Traditional Virtual, regular school year: Students have 5 school days from the start of the semester to drop a course without grade penalty. Snow days will not factor into this count.**

**If a student starts the semester in a virtual course but drops it before 2 days, he/she may request a transfer to a corresponding face-to-face course if space allows.

**If a student wishes to drop a face-to-face course, he/she must do so within 2 school days from the start of the semester and must enroll in an equivalent online course. The online course will be offered in the same time period as the face-to-face course (i.e., if the student is dropping a 2nd hour course then the student will be expected to work on his/her online course during 2nd hour and, if he/she has a 1st hour, will be expected to stay on campus for this work). A student's schedule may not be rearranged to 'fit' the online course into a more convenient time slot.

****If a student drops a course after the district determined drop date, the student will earn an F for the course and will lose future eligibility to take virtual courses.**

No-Show Procedure

Students will be dropped from courses if they fail to log in and participate for 20 consecutive days.

In an effort to maintain accurate attendance records for online courses, the following no-show procedure will be implemented for all students participating in virtual education courses through the South Nodaway R-IV School District's preferred provider, Launch. Students are considered a "no-show" if they do not log into and participate in their Launch course for the specified times outlined in the policy.

- A student is considered a "no-show" if he or she has not logged into and participated in their course prior to the stated district course drop date. Students will be dropped with zero days of attendance reported with the counselor or liaison being notified at least 2 school days prior.
- After the drop date, a student can be dropped and is considered a "no-show" if he or she has not logged into and participated in his or her Launch course for 20 consecutive calendar days. The last date of attendance will be reported as his or her last date of login and participation. When using the district's preferred provider, counselors or district liaisons will receive notice of potential drop at calendar day 15 of no consecutive login and participation. If the student's last date of attendance is after the stated district course drop date, the student will receive an F for the course in addition to being dropped.
- For students participating in Launch credit recovery, they must login and participate in at least one credit recovery course or the no-show policy will apply with the last date of login reported as their last date of attendance.

Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty

Using someone else's work and claiming it as your own, even if it is unintentional, is plagiarism. It is important that students cite sources and use quotation marks appropriately to avoid plagiarism. The South Nodaway R-IV School District's preferred provider, Launch, has a specific plagiarism policy and list of consequences. These same consequences can be invoked for cheating and/or forging/falsifying documents.

- 1st offense: Student will be allowed to redo the assignment for full credit and a formal warning will be issued.
- 2nd offense: Student will be allowed to redo the assignment for half credit and a second formal warning will be issued.
- 3rd offense: Student will receive a zero for the assignment and be referred to the Launch principal for possible additional consequences.

Each online course provider will have a plagiarism policy in place. If not using Launch, the student is responsible for knowing and following the policy of their online provider.

State Testing

All MOCAP students are required to participate in the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) and End of Course (EOC) testing when appropriate. MAP and EOC tests measure a student's progress toward mastery of the Show-Me Standards, which are the educational standards in Missouri. All testing is conducted at the local school site in which the student resides and must be taken within the school district testing window/schedule. The student and/or parent/guardian must contact the guidance office to schedule testing dates and times (a good timeframe for this contact is around October 10th for the high school Civics EOC and March 10th for all other state testing). To earn a credit in an EOC tested course, the EOC test must be taken in the semester in which the student completes the course.

- **MAP:** In the state of Missouri, all students in grades three through eight will take the MAP test in communication arts and math. Students in grades five and eight will also take the MAP test in science.
- **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, English II and Government.

Dual Credit Courses

Dual credit is a way of earning high school and college credits simultaneously for a college level course. **Students wishing to obtain college credit must officially enroll for the course and**

pay the college tuition. Dual credit is open to juniors and seniors who have accumulated a 3.0 GPA or 2.5 with a recommendation. The high school grade earned will be the grade recorded on the high school transcript. The grade received for the college class will be reported on the college transcript permanently. ***Students and parents must check with their preferred provider regarding dual credit offerings and make sure to follow all enrollment procedures/timelines or else dual credit will not be granted.***

Class Rank

All virtual education coursework obtained through a preferred provider will be calculated into a student's class rank equivalent to a seated course taken at South Nodaway. This will only apply to seven courses a semester, one course per summer school session, plus two additional credits from correspondence courses if applicable.

A+ Program

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

- Being a U.S. citizen or permanent resident;
- Entering into a written agreement with SHS expressing the desire to be a part of the A+ program;
- Graduate with a 2.5 (or above) unweighted grade point average;
- Attend an A+ designated school for 3 years prior to graduation (being enrolled in SHS and taking Launch virtual classes would apply in this situation);
- Have a 95% attendance record for grades 9-12;
- Perform at least 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring (must be approved by A+ coordinator prior to engaging in the activity);
- Maintain good citizenship; and
- Achieve a score of proficient or advanced on the Algebra I end of course (EOC) exam or higher level DESE approved end of course (EOC) exam in mathematics.

IEP/504 Students

The district's preferred provider, Launch, has instructors who are trained in accommodating students' needs. The school's process coordinator will email your student's IEP or 504 to Launch so that it can be distributed to the student's teachers. Accommodations will be made accordingly.

Each online course provider should have an IEP/504 policy in place. If not using Launch, the student is responsible for knowing and following the policy of their online provider as well as providing the information to the school so the student's IEP or 504 can be sent.

School Athletics and Activities

Students that desire eligibility to participate in activities or sports at a South Nodaway R-IV School District school must meet the requirements set forth in Section 2 of the MSHSAA Handbook, entitled *Student Essential By-Laws*. The Strafford R-VI School District follows the MSHSAA Handbook policies for all school sponsored extracurricular activities (clubs, sports, etc). A student who is already enrolled in the South Nodaway School District and enrolls in online classes through the South Nodaway School District Launch program may meet eligibility requirements outlined in By-Law 2.3.2 through meeting ALL of the following:

1. To be eligible in the following semester, students must earn a minimum of 3 full credits the semester prior.
2. The student is an enrolled and regularly attending student of the public middle/high school of residence, as defined in By-Law 3.10, and is taking a minimum of six credit-bearing, seat-time for a minimum of 3.0 units of credit at the school.
3. All classes/assignments must be completed by the high school /middle school's close of the semester, as per By-Law 2.3.11, in order for those classes/credits to be considered toward activity eligibility.
4. Online courses offered **by** and **at** the member school, which are completed no later than the close of the semester with credit placed on the transcript, can be counted toward activity eligibility.

Parents are strongly encouraged to review the [MSHSAA handbook](#) for further clarification regarding eligibility. For specific questions, please contact the South Nodaway R-IV School District Athletic Director, Mr. Dustin Skoglund at 660-652-3727 or dustin.skoglund@southnodaway.k12.mo.us

Summer School

Students may also take up to three online courses during the district's summer term (June). 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.

****If a family works directly with Launch and not through our district counselors to enroll in a Launch class the family will be responsible for the cost of the course(s) in which they enroll their student(s). In addition, South Nodaway R-IV School District may not accept the credit from these courses.****

Technology

Any full-time students, with seated courses in a district building, will be issued a chromebook through the district. Any student who is not enrolled in seated classes, but enrolls in the district's preferred online provider, Launch, will be issued a Chromebook from Launch. Any student not enrolled in seated classes with the district, that uses their non-preferred online provider, will have to provide their own device. **The district, however, will not provide internet access; this is the responsibility of the parents/guardians. South Nodaway may be able to help with access, but it is not guaranteed.**

Students who are enrolled with the district's preferred provider, Launch, are provided with HELP Desk Support through Launch, available from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., 7 days a week. There are three ways to access help:

1. Send an email to support@fueledbylaunch.com (typical response is within 30 minutes)
2. Use your Canvas inbox to send a message to HELP.
3. Call the Launch office at 417-523-0417. The office is only open from 7:30-4:00 Monday through Friday.

Final Advice for Parents

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

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

Important Enrollment Dates

Regular Year Traditional Virtual Education Course Dates:

Per the 2020-21 South Nodaway R-IV School District Calendar, courses will run from January 5th to May 20th (additional days may be added due to snow/inclement weather). Enrollment Deadline for Spring 2021 is January 6th. Last day to drop a virtual course will be January 12th, 2021, or 5 days from the start of your course, whichever comes 1st.

Schedule Changes:

Virtual Schedule changes will not be made after the semester has been in session for 5 or more days. Summer session changes must be made within one day of the start of the session.

Drop Courses:

In order to drop an online course, students must be within the drop date established by South Nodaway R-IV School District and fill out a South Nodaway R-IV Virtual Course Drop Course Form.

Contacts

Please contact your student's main building office for more information regarding Virtual Education. If you have questions regarding Virtual Education, please contact Nick Wray @ 660-652-3727 or nick.wray@southnodaway.k12.mo.us

High School Course Offerings

The most up to date list of course offerings for LAUNCH can be found at <https://fueledbylaunch.com/courses/>

Virtual Education Vocabulary

Accreditation - A review of a school's quality and performance in regards to a set of educational standards, including national, regional, and state accreditation standards

Blended Schedule - An instructional method that combines in person and online learning activities.

Canvas - An interactive learning management system that provides students access to Launch courses

Credit Acquisition - Courses designed for students transferring or re-entering during a semester, Credit Acquisition offers a way to gain credit with a pass or fail grade. Course progress is monitored.

Credit Recovery - Courses that offer to make-up credit from a past failing grade. Courses are MSHSAA approved and have flexible start dates. Priority standards are assessed at 80% mastery and course progress is monitored.

District Educational Team - Comprised of members of the school district including, but not limited to, building administrators, building school counselors, and/or building teachers.

Launch - Virtual course access program designed and developed for Missouri students, using Missouri State Standards, and delivered by Missouri Educators

Traditional Virtual - Courses are NCAA and MSHSAA approved and start and stop with the traditional school calendar. Final exams require proctored online video conferencing and all course progress is monitored.

Virtual Classroom - A digital learning environment

Virtual High School - An institution that offers courses fully online or supplemental online instruction