

**District:** Holmes County Consolidated School District  
**Section:** I - Instructional Program  
**Policy Code:** IA - Distance Learning, Blended Learning, and Online Courses

## **DISTANCE LEARNING, BLENDED LEARNING, AND ONLINE COURSES**

This policy provides guidance regarding the use of distance learning, blended learning, and online courses through the Digital Education Network (DEN) and courses approved through the Mississippi Online Course Application (MOCA) process, and other distance learning/online course providers not already approved by the Mississippi Department of Education.

### DEFINITIONS

Distance Learning – A technological delivery model in which regularly scheduled real-time instruction occurs during school where students and instructors are not in the same place and in which a Mississippi-certified teacher is responsible for providing instruction.

Online Learning – A course delivered through an interactive computer-based and internet-connected learning environment by a vendor/provider in which students are separated from their teachers by time or location or both and in which a Mississippi-certified teacher is responsible for providing instruction.

Blended Learning – A hybrid instructional delivery model where pupils are provided face-to-face instruction in part at a supervised school facility away from home and in part in a computer-based, internet-connected learning environment with some degree of pupil control over time, location, and pace of instruction and in which a Mississippi-certified teacher is responsible for providing instruction.

These courses must be approved through the MOCA process. Currently approved courses in which the content is adapted into a learning management system, delivered by a district employee/classroom teacher, and used with their students virtually or in a blended model do not require approval through the MOCA process. These online courses would be subject to district review and would qualify for use of the face-to-face course codes found in MSIS and the Approved Courses for Secondary Schools of Mississippi.

### GENERAL

The Digital Education Network (DEN) is a distance learning system that has been approved by the MDE. This system links certified teachers in one school with classes of students in other schools or

districts as a means of delivering real-time instruction. These courses are listed in the Mississippi Student Information System.

Courses listed below do NOT require prior approval from MDE:

1. Blended learning courses in which the district provides a face-to-face instruction with a Mississippi certified teacher;
2. Online programs or computer assisted instruction in which the district is using for the sole purpose of credit recovery; and
3. Online dual enrollment courses through a Mississippi Community College or Institution of Higher Learning.

For all online courses other than the delivery methods listed above, secondary courses (grades 6-12) must go through the MOCA process for approval. The Holmes County Consolidated School District will submit an application to MDE for approval to ensure that the vendor/provider's content, curriculum, and assessments are aligned to Mississippi's course standards. Courses that are reviewed and denied MOCA approval may not be resubmitted to the MDE for review for three (3) years. To count as a credit toward graduation, course codes must be listed in the Mississippi Student Information System. Additionally, online courses can only be listed upon MOCA approval. There is no limit to the number of courses a student may take. Enrollment in such courses must have prior approval by the principal.

For any course that requires MOCA approval, the district will ensure at a minimum that:

1. Teachers are licensed by the MDE to teach the respective course;
2. Background checks are conducted for the teachers;
3. The content, curriculum, and assessments for each course are aligned to the competencies, objectives, and standards of the respective Mississippi course;
4. Appropriate course codes are used;
5. A facilitator is assigned to assist students;
6. Students have access to the technology needed for courses;
7. Students have all instructional materials needed for courses;
8. The district grading policy is followed;
9. Students enrolled in the course take the required state assessments where applicable; and
10. Documentation is maintained on file at the central office.

The Holmes County Consolidated School District will ensure the student handbook will include, at a minimum:

1. The process for notifying parents about the program;
2. Minimum criteria to determine eligibility for participation;

3. The number of distance learning/online courses that students can take at one time;
4. If the distance learning/online course program can be used for credit recovery and/or remediation;
5. The courses by grade level and content area for the distance learning/online program; and
6. The process for monitoring student progress and notifying parents of student progress during the course.

Additional references may be found on the Mississippi Department of Education's website.

LEGAL REF: MS Code. § 37-1-3

**Adopted Date:** 9/12/2018

**Approved/Revised Date:** 6/24/2022