CENTRAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL SYSTEM

VIRTUAL ACADEMY

HANDBOOK
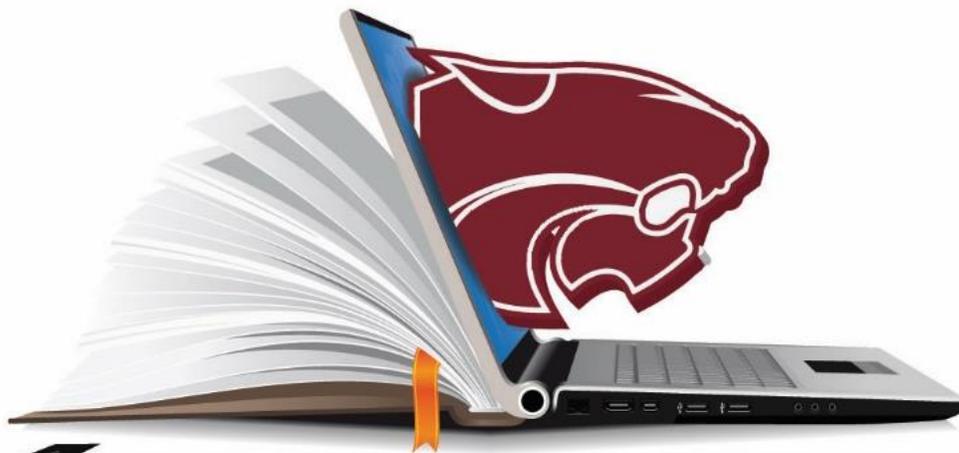
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Introduction
This handbook provides general guidance for parents and students enrolled in the Central Community School System Virtual Academy. The CCSS Virtual Academy is subject to the rules and regulations of the Louisiana Department of Education. The CCSS Virtual Academy follows the Central Community School System's academic calendar.

Mission Statement
The Central Community School System Virtual Academy is committed to broadening the educational choices for students in a virtual setting with a rigorous, relevant, and engaging instructional environment.

Overview
The CCSS Virtual Academy is a non-traditional educational option. Courses are delivered through a web-based program which is available to students twenty-four hours a day, seven days per week. Students view and complete lessons electronically. These courses can be completed anytime and anywhere that Internet access is available. Student progress in online courses will be monitored by Virtual Academy staff. Students complete a series of benchmarks, as well as midterm and culminating exams. Students may also be required to complete some assignments from the traditional classroom (reading specific books, completing projects, writing papers, etc).

Target Audience
The Virtual Academy is open to students in grades 6-12 who reside within the Central Community School System attendance zones. Students need not be enrolled in the Central Community School System prior to applying for the Virtual Academy. Once a student is accepted into the CCSS Virtual Academy, however, they must complete residency paperwork to complete final enrollment.

Students who can answer YES to the following questions, might be a candidate for the Virtual Academy:

❖ Do you stay on task without direct supervision?
❖ Can you prioritize your own workload?
❖ Do you usually understand written instructions?
❖ Are you good at assessing your own progress in your classes?

Admission and Entrance Requirements
Students who wish to attend the CCSS Virtual Academy must complete the online application process. The application can be found at http://virtualacademy.centralcss.org. An Admissions Review Team will make final enrollment decision based on factors related to student success in the virtual environment. Students and parents will be notified of the Admissions Review Team decision by mail. An appeal process will be available.

Hours of Operation
The CCSS Virtual Academy will operate Monday – Friday from 7:00AM – 2:30PM.

Location
The CCSS Virtual Academy is located at 10510 Joor Road in Central.

What enrollment options are available?

1. Full-time Virtual for grades 6-12
   ❖ Students complete all coursework from home, and may use the Virtual Academy lab for additional assistance during operational hours. Students are required to take all tests at the CCSS Virtual Academy lab. **First time full-time virtual students will also be required to attend a minimum of 3-hours per day at the Virtual Academy lab during the first two weeks of the semester.** Bus transportation is not provided.

2. Hybrid Virtual for grades 6-8
   ❖ Students attend Central Middle School and utilize the on-site virtual lab for specified courses. Students complete specified courses through the Virtual Academy, and attend PE, electives, and lunch with other students at Central Middle School.

3. Hybrid Virtual for grades 9-12
   ❖ Students complete some classes on the campus of Central High School, and complete some classes at the Virtual Academy lab. A schedule will be determined by the high school where students are either on the campus of CHS in the morning and at the Virtual Academy lab in the afternoon or at the Virtual Academy lab in the morning and at CHS in the afternoon. Bus transportation to and from the Virtual Academy lab will be provided.

Dress Code
Students must adhere to the dress code guidelines provided in the CCSS Student Handbook.

Attendance Requirements
The Central Community School System Virtual Academy is designed and intended to be a virtual learning environment. Instruction is primarily computer-based. Therefore, students can work anywhere there is an Internet connection.

The CCSS Virtual Academy requires that students **work in their online courses daily**. Student progress will be monitored closely. Although flexibility in choosing instructional times is a hallmark of virtual learning, students must maintain progress in all courses.

Full-time virtual students must meet attendance conditions. The Virtual Academy will track absentees daily. A student will be reported to Student Services upon receiving excessive absences as outlined in the CCSS Student Handbook. If a student is accumulating excessive absences, a conference will be requested with the parent and student to determine if the student should return to their home-based school.

Below are attendance guidelines for full-time virtual students:
❖ **If a student is ahead in ALL courses, absentee will not be counted.** This is a flexible program, if you keep pace.
❖ Students should be "on target" to complete their courses on time. Students who are more than 5% behind "target" may be required to attend the CCSS Virtual Academy lab.
❖ If students are behind "target," they must complete a minimum of five lessons/activities a day to not be considered absent.

Hybrid students' attendance will be kept through Central High School. Students should complete at least one entire lesson each day (at least one hour) for every course they are enrolled in (maximum of four courses). Hybrid students may need to work at home to stay on track. If hybrid students are behind for two consecutive weeks, a conference with a parent/guardian will be scheduled to determine a plan of action.

Note: If a student is unable to work in their course(s), a parent should notify the CCSS Virtual Lab office either by phone or email. Inactivity can be approved for a limited time if a student is making satisfactory progress in all courses. Extended periods of inactivity, coupled with unsatisfactory student progress, may be considered grounds for removal from the virtual school and/or a student being turned over to Student Services for truancy issues.

There are certain components of the CCSS Virtual Academy that require students to physically come into the Virtual Academy lab, located at 10510 Joor Road in Central. Our lab has a student lounge where students can come to work, study, and interact with other virtual students. We also have an instructional center that is staffed by a Central Community School System Louisiana-certified teacher dedicated to exclusively supporting and assisting Virtual Academy students. Additionally, subject-specific tutors will be available to assist students at specified times.

CCSS Virtual Academy courses are comprised of assignments, quizzes, unit tests, and exams. Students are **required** to come into the CCSS Virtual Academy to take their tests and exams under the supervision of a teacher. If a student is coming into the lab, the exam needs to coincide with our published hours.

Students must also attend an initial orientation session in the CCSS Virtual Academy lab.

Finally, students are **required** to come in for certain district and state-mandated testing. For all of these mandatory attendance events, timely transportation to and from the CCSS Virtual Academy lab must be provided by the parent/guardian.

In the case of unsatisfactory progress, the CCSS Virtual Academy staff will make every attempt to schedule and provide face-to-face assistance to students in the lab. In cases where students are not taking advantage of the help offered, CCSS Virtual Academy staff reserve the right to **require** students to come in for assistance.

Students can come and work on their courses in a virtual environment that is inviting, supportive, and helpful. Parents and students are welcome to come by during our posted hours to talk with our teachers. In addition to excellent instructional support available through the online courses, our local teachers will offer resources for enrichment and preparation for district and state tests.

Attempts Policy – Quizzes, Topic (Unit) Tests, & Cumulative Exams

Students will be allowed two automatic attempts on each quiz. After two failed attempts, the student should contact the Virtual Academy teacher. If notes have been taken and/or effort/progress has been demonstrated by the student, the teacher may activate an additional attempt. This would result in a maximum limit of three attempts on a quiz.

After a quiz is taken, a student may choose quiz questions that a teacher can review with them. Teachers should use their professional judgment at all times.

Students will be allowed a maximum of two attempts on topic (unit) tests and cumulative exams. Both attempts must be activated by the teacher. Topic (unit) tests and cumulative exams **can only be taken at the CCSS Virtual Academy lab**. Students must show their school ID to take topic (unit) tests and cumulative exams. Students should contact CCSS Virtual Academy staff to set up a test-taking time.

What happens when a student fails a quiz, topic (unit) test, or cumulative exam and the maximum number of retakes have been reached?
When all attempts have been used (and a student cannot move to the next section), the teacher should select "Pass with Grade" and type in the highest score the student has earned on that particular assessment. **The assessment should not be bypassed.** The student will then be able to move to the next lesson.

Extension of Courses

If a student needs to extend their timeline beyond the course timeline (which coincides with the CCSS academic calendar by semester), a **$150 charge per course** will be required. The fee and extension paperwork must be paid 5 working days prior to the course deadline. This charge is for a two-week extension. Only one extension is allowed per course. If a student does not apply for an extension prior to 5 days before the course deadline, it may result in failing the course. CCSS Virtual Academy staff have the ability to waive the fee for certain unforeseen and/or extenuating circumstances. Once the course deadline has been reached, the course will no longer be active.

Completion of Courses

A student must have 80% or greater course completion to be eligible to schedule and take their exam. All incomplete assignments and/or exams will be graded as a zero (F). Course credit will be considered after exam completion.

Incomplete Courses

Courses that are not completed by the course deadline will no longer be active. If 80% of the course has been completed, the final grade will be determined by assigning zeros for unfinished work. The virtual software will determine a relative grade. **This final grade will go on the student's official transcript.**

Withdrawal from a Virtual Course

A student will not be allowed to drop a course after the first two weeks of the semester. After the first two weeks of the semester, students will not be able to re-enroll in Central Middle School or Central High School and must remain in the CCSS Virtual Academy until the semester ends. After two weeks, a student who does not complete the course (meaning the course remains incomplete at less than 80%) will receive an "F" in the course, and/or not be allowed to take further courses through the CCSS Virtual Academy.

Integrity in Scored Assignments and Assessments

A strength of virtual instruction is the abundance of real-time assistance available to the student. We encourage help from family, friends, online teachers, our own staff, etc. However, when an assignment is scored, we expect the work to be the student's work alone so that the score is meaningful. Scored assignments and assessments are important because they provide information regarding student progress and the effectiveness of instruction.

All scored assignments and assessments are assumed to be the student's original work, whether completed at home or in the CCSS Virtual Academy lab. If a student is in the CCSS Virtual Academy lab to take a supervised unit exam, all cell phones must be turned off and stored. Each student is expected to honor the following guidelines while completing scored assignments and assessments.

❖ Students will complete assignments and/or assessments alone;
❖ Students will not copy or redistribute any part of the assignments and/or assessments in any way – electronically, verbally, or on paper;
❖ Students will take assessments without any aids – meaning you may not use textbooks, references, or other materials (printed or electronic) – unless your teacher or the specific assessment states otherwise;
❖ Students will not log in to a second course or open course related materials on another browser on another computer during testing; and
❖ Students will not confer with others (students, family members, teachers, or acquaintances) either in person or through electronic communication, during assessments.

All Academic Honesty policies will be followed as outlined in the CCSS Student Handbook.

Notification of Grades and Student Progress

Parents and students are able to review grades and percent completion of courses at all times using the online course dashboard. Therefore, the CCSS Virtual Academy staff will not print and mail quarterly progress reports. Only the final course grades will be provided upon completion of each course.

Grade Determination

Final grades will be determined on the 100-point scoring scale. Grading will follow the Central Community School System Grading Scale and Policies:

$$A = 100 - 93$$
$$B = 92 - 85$$
$$C = 84 - 75$$
$$D = 74 - 67$$
$$F = 66 - 0$$

Graduation

Any student wishing to graduate and "walk" with Central High School must **complete all coursework by seniors' last day (refer to CCSS academic calendar)**. All additional requirements set forth by the Central Community School System School Board and the State of Louisiana must be met.

GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS

- ❖ Students must follow district and school rules as stated in the Central Community School System Student Handbook.
- ❖ Students entering the CCSS Virtual Academy lab must report in full approved uniform and must sign in and out in the front office.
- ❖ Students must attend the CCSS Virtual Academy lab (by appointment only) to complete tests.
- ❖ Students in good standing are able to participate in all extra-curricular activities offered by the school and district, for which he/she is eligible.
- ❖ Students who meet LHSAA (Louisiana High School Athletic Association) guidelines will be eligible to participate in all LHSAA sponsored activities. (It is the student/parent's responsibility to obtain clearance from LHSAA.)
- ❖ Students eligible for college athletic scholarship consideration will need to check with the appropriate university for course acceptance prior to enrolling in classes.
- ❖ For full-time virtual students, transportation will not be provided.

A student with an IEP may enroll in the Virtual Learning Program once the student's IEP team agrees that such a placement is educationally appropriate. If the Committee recommends the placement of the student in the CCSS Virtual Academy, the student will be admitted and /or exited under the same conditions applicable to regular education students, inclusive of 504.

In the event that students with disabilities are not progressing in the CCSS Virtual Academy, the IEP committee should be reconvened to address the individual concerns and modify the program and/or service.