



Suspension of Voluntary Remote Learning Guidelines and Procedures

Updated November 6, 2020

Rationale for Suspending Voluntary Remote Learning Options for Identified Students:

Since the beginning of school, the administration has been reviewing student academic performance and attendance data on all of our students in the PISD. Unfortunately, large portions of voluntary virtual learners are not fulfilling the expectations for academic engagement and attendance as clarified in the Pampa Academic Virtual Experience (PAVE) agreement ([LINK](#)). In fact, more than 50% of the voluntary virtual learners are not attending regularly and in some cases, not at all. Additionally, more than 60% of the voluntary learners are not making adequate academic progress.

System for Support and Removing Barriers to Success in Remote Learning:

Prior to the beginning of the 20-21 school year, the PISD worked closely with numerous stakeholder groups to gather input and feedback on Back to School Safety Procedures as well as Asynchronous Learning options ([LINK](#)). Together, we developed systems to provide clarity around expectations for Virtual Learners and their at-home support providers. Additionally, we provided clear, systematic guidance on the support systems in place such as internet connectivity, devices, and at home learning strategies. These steps are outlined in detail in the PAVE document ([LINK](#))

Protocols for Identifying Students for Suspension of Remote Learning Option:

As outlined in the PAVE document referenced above, the expectations for student attendance and academic engagement are clearly defined. Support systems, helpful links, email addresses, and contact information are provided on the website and through numerous outlets additionally described in our published Asynchronous plan that was approved by TEA ([LINK](#))

Additionally, since school began on August 24, 2020 teachers, administrators, and family and student engagement liaisons have been communicating and working with families to ensure that parents and students understood the expectations and were provided opportunities for both live and asynchronous support to meet attendance and academic engagement expectations. After the first six-weeks grading period, campus principals and district truancy staff began communicating via phone, email, and US mail to communicate our concerns with the lack of progress and the risk of failing courses, and in many cases, the risk of being retained and repeating an entire grade level. Beginning October 5, 2020, letters were mailed explaining our Behavior Intervention plans to prevent truancy and our protocols for filing truancy. Truancy is our last attempt to engage the parents and students, but it is an important step in communicating the urgency and importance of all children having the opportunity to receive a quality education. Sample letters are available at the campuses.

Procedures for Communicating Notice of Suspension to Parents/Guardians/Students:

In addition to the numerous communication processes explained above and the parent letters from October, the Board of Trustees made the decision to officially suspend voluntary virtual learning to students in PK-5 and any students in 6-12 who was not being academically successful (passing all courses with a 70 or above) or not attending as expected (90% attendance rate in the previous grading periods) on October 26, 2020. Following this decision, a massive media blitz was shared through all outlets to inform all students and parents in the PISD about this change in policy.

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Additionally, all families received letters in English and Spanish through US Mail. Campus principals and teachers are also in the process of communicating with each student/family if they have been identified as a student who will no longer be able to access voluntary virtual learning. The letter that went out on social media and through the mail is at the bottom of this guide as well for your reference. In the letter, we communicate the two-week window for the transition. Additionally, the letter explains the exemptions and instructs parents to contact the campus administration to request a conference to discuss an appeal.

Procedures for Exemptions, Appealing Suspension, and change in learning environment decisions:

Campus Administration will continue to work with parents/guardians to explain the exemptions and to begin the appeal process. The exceptions include those students who receive a positive COVID-19 test result, are quarantined due to exposure risks, have documented medical reasons, or meet other specific and unique criteria such as be an identified medically fragile student in a special education program or be a 6-12 student who is meeting the definition of success in their current educational setting. Documentation received from medical professionals as well as forms signed by the appropriate professionals and parents are being utilized in the exemption process. Copies of these forms are available at the campus level. Links to the appeal and grievance process are provided at the end of this document as well.

Timelines Associated with Suspension of Voluntary Remote Learning:

- July/August 2020 Stakeholder input/feedback and published expectations, protocols for PAVE (Virtual Learning) through social media, website, remind, and US mail in English/Spanish.
- August 24-current Ongoing communication through email, CANVAS LMS, phone, home visit, and US mail explaining concerns with academic success and attendance with each student/family identified.
- October 5, 2020 Letters to identified students/parents through US mail to communicate concerns with academic and attendance issues along with Behavior Intervention plans for Truancy mailed.
- October 26, 2020 Board of Trustees voted to Suspend Voluntary Virtual Learning options under certain conditions and exemptions (explained above). Minutes from Board Meeting available here ([LINK](#))
- October 30, 2020 Formal communication was shared with stakeholders, parents through social media and US mail in English/Spanish (copy of communication at the bottom of this guidance document).
- November 16, 2020 End of 2-week transition period for parents/students/teachers to make final transitions to face to face learning environment for identified students and file for exemptions and appeal decisions.

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Official Published Communication for Canceling Voluntary Remote Instruction

October 30, 2020

To the Parents and Guardians of Pampa ISD Students,
Learning

Notice: Suspension of Voluntary Virtual Remote

Since the beginning of school, the administration has been reviewing student academic performance and attendance data on all of our students in the PISD. Unfortunately, large portions of voluntary virtual learners are not fulfilling the expectations for academic engagement and attendance as clarified in the Pampa Academic Virtual Experience (PAVE) agreement. In fact, more than 50% of the voluntary virtual learners are not attending regularly and in some cases, not at all. Additionally, more than 60% of the voluntary learners are not making adequate academic progress. We have attempted to work closely with all of the virtual learners to remove barriers such as internet connectivity, devices, and at home learning strategies. We believe it is in the best interest of students to return to in-person, on campus instruction as soon as possible.

Please know that the decision to end voluntary options was not taken lightly. After much deliberation, the Board of Trustees took action to suspend voluntary virtual learning options for students in the PISD with only a few exceptions. The exceptions include those students who receive a positive COVID-19 test result, are quarantined due to exposure risks, have documented medical reasons, or meet other specific and unique criteria such as be an identified medically fragile student in a special education program or be a 6-12 student who is meeting the definition of success in their current educational setting.

Beginning Monday, November 16, 2020, Pampa ISD will end voluntary virtual instruction and expect all students who selected this option who do not meet the exceptions to return to in-person instruction as soon as possible. Additionally, all students regardless of success factors who choose to participate in any school related and University Interscholastic League (UIL) events/activities must return to face-to-face, on-campus instruction beginning November 16, 2020.

During the coming days, campus administration will be contacting voluntary virtual students and their families to ensure a smooth transition to return to face to face, on campus instruction. Should you have questions or want to inquire on special circumstances, please contact your campus. **Students and staff have been and will continue to follow all COVID-19 safety guidelines established in the Start Strong, Stay Safe Back to School Plan, including wearing masks during the school day and school-sponsored events and activities.** Our data indicate that our efforts to minimize the exposure to and spread of the COVID-19 virus are working. We feel that it is a safe and academically sound decision to encourage students to return to on-campus learning.

We recognize and respect that some parents and students may prefer a different option. We are not mandating that your family return to school. We suggest that you make a decision that is right for you and your student(s). If you plan to withdraw your child, please make arrangements with your child's campus to return all district-owned technology and resources. Should you choose to pursue alternative means of education for your student, below is a partial list of available educational possibilities that meet compulsory education laws:

- Come to school for in-person, on-campus learning
- Withdraw your child to homeschool (a signed form is required for this)
- Transfer your child to another district offering voluntary virtual instruction
- Utilize the Texas Virtual Academy or another online school program (public or private)

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We genuinely hope that you choose to return to in-person, on-campus learning. We will continue to monitor our data and the situation and will make modifications as necessary for future decisions. Thank you for your patience and understanding as we navigate these unprecedented situations for our students, staff, and our families. The Pampa ISD and the Board of Trustees are committed to our mission of producing learners who are compassionate, competent, confident, and future-ready!

Respectfully,

Dr. Tanya Larkin, Superintendent Pampa Schools

Exemption and Appeal Process

In the parent communication, instructions are provided to contact the campus principal for a conference to discuss exemptions and provide documentation as needed. To ensure consistent decision making under exemptions, the Superintendent's office or designee will make final decisions on documentation and exemptions. Additionally, if parents are not satisfied with the outcome of the district's decision, they are encouraged to follow local policy and procedures for grievances as outlined in FNG (Local) ([LINK](#))

Process Steps

Step 1:

Campus Administration/Teachers notify suspension status to students/parents/guardian in appropriate language (English/Spanish). Family and Student Engagement Liaison may assist as needed for translation.

Step 2:

Student transition as soon as possible, but not later than November 16, 2020 as instructed.

If parents/guardian wish to apply for an exemption, they will contact the campus administration to set up a conference and provide appropriate documentation.

Step 3:

Students receive either an approval or denial of exemption from Superintendent's office as soon as possible or within 3 school days of request.

Step 4:

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If parent/guardian is not satisfied with the decision, they may contact the campus administration to begin the grievance/appeal process. Grievance/Appeals will follow procedures and timelines as explained in FNG (Local) policy.

Internal District Forms

[Pampa ISD Medical Exemption Form](#)

[Approval Letter](#)

[Denial Letter](#)

[Appeal Form](#)

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