

Sparta R-III School District



6th-12th Grade Student/Parent Online Course Handbook

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Sparta Virtual Program	2
What is MoCAP? What is LAUNCH?	3
Why Consider Online Learning?	3
Profile of a Successful Online Student	4
Making the Decision	5
Enrollment Procedures	5
School Calendar	6
Homeschool Students	6
Scheduling Process	7
Academic Information	7
Dropping a Course	8
No-Show Procedure	8
Navigating Canvas	8
Plagiarism/Academic Dishonesty	9
Progress Monitoring	9
State Testing	10
Graduation Requirements	10
Senior Information	10
IEP/504 Students	11
School Athletics and Activities	11
A+ Program	11
Technology	12
Final Advice for Parents	12
Contact Information	13

Introduction

This guide has been prepared for parents, guardians, counselors, and others who want to help students 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, and
- ❖ the impact coursework may have on academics and activities.

Senate Bill 603 At a Glance

In the spring of 2018, Senate Bill 603 was passed, thereby expanding online learning opportunities for students in Missouri. Highlights of this legislation are as follows:

- 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; and, three, was enrolled full-time in a public school the previous semester. **Exceptions for homeschool students who reside in the district are 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 two courses 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 disagree with the district's determination, an appeal may be made to the local school board.

Sparta Virtual Program

The Sparta School District's preferred virtual instruction option is the Sparta Virtual Program (SVP). The SVP is designed and facilitated by highly qualified Sparta teachers utilizing Sparta curriculum aligned to the Missouri Learning Standards. Lessons are engaging and customized to fit individual student needs and include the opportunity for face-to-face learning support in one-on-one and small group settings. Students are provided with district devices and programming offers multiple course formats along with flexible scheduling to meet individual student/family needs. All of this is powered by the innovative Learning Management System called Google Classroom.

Sparta Virtual Program Expectations:

1. **Attendance** will be based upon assigned work completion. Teachers will offer Google Meets during the actual seated class for those virtual students who can join. This lesson will also be recorded and made available to students to watch and then complete the given assignment by the provided due date.

2. **Behavior expectations** are the same for Google Meet as they are when in a seated class at school. If behaviors are an issue during Google Meet, the teacher can remove the student from the class. They will also send me a referral and I will be connecting with the student.
3. **Work completion** is important. The expectation for virtual work is the same as it is for seated assignments. Students will be expected to turn assignments in on time and regularly. Anything graded can be retaken by a student. The student is required to connect with the teacher to make arrangements to relearn the content and then retake the assignment or assessment. Grades will reflect the students' effort in their assignments.
4. **Check your email** multiple times daily. Emails from and to teachers is an important communication tool for both teachers and students. Teachers also connect with parents through email.
5. **Remind** is being used by teachers. Students who are not on Remind, please email your teacher for the code. Parents can also access these Remind messages by emailing the teacher for the code.
6. **Login** and participate daily. It is important to treat virtual learning just as in-person learning. Students must log in daily to see assignments and complete them on or by the due date.

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). MoCAP offers courses for Kindergarten through 12th grades. 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 Sparta R-III School District's preferred provider is LAUNCH. LAUNCH is operated and overseen by the Springfield, MO School District and currently offers over 120 courses. Courses are designed by Missouri teachers and are aligned to the state standards. A formal review process is built into all course development to ensure high quality and rigor. Sparta 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/administrator to begin the appeal process.

Current LAUNCH course offerings can be found at: <https://fueledbylaunch.com/academics/course-catalog/>

Why Consider Online Learning?

Students take online 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 even offered at the local level. Other students may use online course opportunities for credit recovery or as a viable homebound option. And, still others may simply prefer the online learning format.

From a student's point of view, online 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 online life many students lead.
- ❖ Paced by individual progress so students can move as quickly or as slowly as needed in order to attain learning goals.
- ❖ 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 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 will be spent 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 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 his/her 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 online courses as well.* Many students do not realize that they will have to be even more accountable for their time, performance, and productivity in online classes.****

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 the internet access 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 during which the student will work on the course(s)?
- Is the student willing and able to ask for help when needed?

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 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 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, the student must be a resident of the Sparta R-III School District and be willing to enroll in the district.

Upon determining that online learning may be a viable option for a student, parents should contact their school building counselor to pursue possible enrollment. A meeting will be scheduled with the student's 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 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 has not completed the prerequisite coursework for the requested online course.
- The student has failed a previous online course.
- The course enrollment request does not occur within the timelines established by LAUNCH and/or the school district.

Should a student meet the eligibility expectations and the course requests are aligned to graduation requirements, he/she will be enrolled in Sparta Virtual Program (preferred virtual option) or LAUNCH courses agreed upon.

Launch ONLY information:

****If a student receives a passing grade in a course but wishes to retake it in hopes of attaining a higher grade, the district will not pay for the retake.** For example, if a student receives a 'D' in Algebra 1 and wants to retake it for a higher grade, the district will not pay for the retake as an online course. However, if the parent wishes to pay for the retake and the student receives a higher grade, the district will accept the improved grade but not for additional credit (a student can only receive credit for Algebra 1 once).

****If a family works directly with LAUNCH and not through 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, Sparta R-III School District may not accept the credit from these courses.**

School Calendar

Sparta Virtual Program students will follow the 2024-25 Sparta R-III School District [Calendar](#) for breaks and days off.

LAUNCH students follow the 2024-25 Springfield Public Schools (SPS) [Calendar](#) for breaks and days off.

Homeschool Students

If a student who resides in the Sparta R-III School District was homeschooled the prior semester and wishes to take online courses there are allowances for this. The following criteria must be met:

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

If taking the online courses at Sparta R-III School District's expense the following criteria must be met:

- The student must enroll in LAUNCH courses only.
- The student must meet all of the LAUNCH expectations (regarding prerequisites, etc.).

Programming ~ Grade 6

SPARTA Information:

Sixth grade students are enrolled in the courses provided by highly qualified, Sparta teachers. The courses are aligned with Missouri Learning Standards and parallel to the seated course content. Students will be enrolled in Math, ELA, Science, and Social Studies courses as well as 3 elective courses of their choice.

6th Grade students will still receive Standards Based Grades in the Sparta Virtual Program.

LAUNCH Information:

Sixth grade students are enrolled in the Middle School LAUNCH program. They will be enrolled in four core classes: ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies. They will also be enrolled in three electives; Physical Education, Visual Arts and Music Journeys.

Sixth grade LAUNCH is asynchronous learning, meaning that the students do not have to be logged in at the same time as the teacher. It is self-paced and allows students to work during the time period that fits their schedule.

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

Scheduling Process

7th-12th Grade Students

- Students or Parents/Guardians express interest in online learning.
- Principal contacts the family to discuss learning options.
- Determination is made if virtual learning is in the best interest of the student.
- Schedule is created for the student based on transcript and grade level.
- Enrollment into the online program is completed.
- Students receive login information after enrollment in Sparta Virtual Program or LAUNCH is complete.

Dropping a Course

SPARTA Virtual Program:

Schedule changes will need to be made by the end of the first week of the semester.

LAUNCH:

Traditional Virtual, regular school year: Students have 8 school days from the semester start date to drop a semester course without grade penalty. Snow days would not factor into this count.

No-Show Procedure

SPARTA Virtual Program Information:

Students will be required to return to seated courses if there are 10 consecutive days without course participation and work completion.

LAUNCH Information:

Students will be dropped from courses if they fail to login for 20 consecutive days. If dropped, the student will receive an "F" on their transcript.

In an effort to maintain accurate attendance records for online courses, the following no-show procedure will be implemented for all students participating in LAUNCH. Students are considered a "no-show" if they do not log into their LAUNCH course for the specified times outlined in the policy. Student login is monitored by the counseling office weekly.

- A student is considered a "no-show" if he or she has not logged into and participated in the online course prior to the stated 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.

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

Progress Monitoring

Sparta Virtual Program:

Students enrolled in the Sparta Virtual Program will be required to come onsite for proctored evaluations:

- Unit Assessments
- Monthly Benchmark Assessments (Evaluate/USA Test Prep)

LAUNCH:

Parents are given parent observer accounts to monitor the progress of their students. Instructors communicating with students through the inbox can copy parents here. Please check your observer email for individual assignment updates. Parents who want to receive updates about graded assignments need to turn on the feature that supplies the grade with the notification.

State Testing

All MoCAP, Sparta Virtual Program and/or LAUNCH students are required to participate in 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 preferred to occur during course schedule proctoring sessions. Students should reach out to building counselors to receive information about testing dates and times.

- **MAP:** 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.
- **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.

Graduation Requirements

To earn a Sparta R-III School District diploma, students need to successfully complete the credit requirements defined in the High School Handbook. Students and parents need to work closely with the school counselor to make sure they are on-track to graduate.

Class Rank

All online course grades through the Sparta Virtual Program and/or LAUNCH will be calculated into a student's class rank equivalent to a course taken face-to-face at SHS. For example, an AP course taken through Sparta Virtual Program and/or LAUNCH will receive the same weight as an AP course taken face-to-face as long as the student takes the AP exam in May.

IEP/504 Students

Involvement in virtual learning is an IEP/504 team decision. Prior to enrollment in online coursework, the IEP/504 team will meet to discuss whether online coursework is appropriate. If the IEP/504 team determines that virtual learning is in the student's best educational interest, the IEP/504 plan will be updated to address virtual learning. Upon enrollment in online coursework, the school's special services coordinator will email the student's IEP or 504 plan to Sparta Virtual Program and/or LAUNCH to be distributed to the student's teachers. Accommodations will be made accordingly. If the IEP/504 team determines adequate progress is not being made, an IEP/504 meeting will be held to update the student's plan for transition back to on-campus learning.

Sparta Virtual Program instruction will be designed to accommodate student needs; however, the regular education teachers are not the provider of specialized instruction. Special education services and minutes to be provided by the special education teacher will be determined by the IEP team.

LAUNCH instructors are trained in accommodating students' needs; however, they are not providers of specialized instruction. Coursework will not be modified to reduce standards or to lower the level of information presented (e.g., an 8th grader will not receive 4th-grade math work because the student is performing at that level).

School Athletics and Activities

A student must enroll in the Sparta R-III School District and register for a minimum of six credit-bearing, seat-time courses that equal at least three high school credits with the district each semester in which the student seeks to participate in an extracurricular or co-curricular activity. The student must regularly attend and pass the courses in which he or she is enrolled in order to remain eligible for extracurricular activities. Students seeking to participate in band, orchestra, choir, debate or other co-curricular activities must enroll in, regularly attend and pass the class associated with the activity.

Parents are strongly encouraged to review the [MSHSAA Handbook](#) for further clarification regarding eligibility.

Students enrolled in seated courses, SVP, or LAUNCH courses are eligible to participate in all clubs, events, and school activities if they meet other guidelines set forth in established student handbooks.

A+ Program

Students who are enrolled in the A+ program and take virtual courses will have their attendance recorded as 95%, thereby allowing them 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 included:

- ❖ 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 Sparta Virtual Program and/or 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.

Technology

Any online student enrolled in Sparta Virtual Program and/or LAUNCH is eligible to be issued a chromebook through the district. The chromebook will meet the technology requirements for any online course taken through either provider.

All Sparta Virtual Program courses are delivered in Google Classroom and LAUNCH courses are hosted by Canvas.

Students are provided with HELP Desk Support through:

Sparta Virtual Program students will follow the procedure below to receive technology support:

1. Contact your course instructor with specific issues and questions.
 - a. Be as specific as possible with the information that you are providing the teacher (ie. error code, etc)
2. Your teacher will send an IT ticket for the problem to be solved.

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 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. 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 come up.
- 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.

Contact Information

The first point of contact for these opportunities will be your student's school counselor.

Sparta Middle School Principal • Mr. Parker	Email: eparker@sparta.k12.mo.us Phone: 417.634.5518
Sparta High School Principal • Ms. Barton	Email: gbarton@sparta.k12.mo.us Phone: 417.634.3224

Additional questions beyond what the school counselor may be able to answer should be directed to the Director of Curriculum, Mrs. Paige Waterman, at 417.634.5518 ext. 4219.

Online Learner Readiness Rubric

Name _____

Developed by



Student Readiness	Technology Skills	Work & Study Habits	Learning Style	Technology/Connectivity	Time Management	Interest/Motivation	Reading/Writing Skills	Support Services
	Student has little, if any, experience using a computer or the Internet, and has minimal desire to develop more skills in this area.	Student often needs reminders to complete routine assignments, often turns homework in late and is not able to spend 5-10 hours per week on each online course.	Student is not a self-directed learner and often requires real-time feedback from teachers regarding basic directions and follow-up support.	Student does not have consistent access to a computer and a reliable connection to the Internet at home or at school.	Student does not manage his or her time effectively in doing research, basic studies and preparing for tests or quizzes.	Student has little or no interest in the content area of the online course offering and has a negative or unrealistic attitude toward online learning.	Student is reading below grade level and has experienced difficulty with routine writing assignments.	In general, parents and school personnel do not actively support online learning and are unable or unwilling to provide support assistance.
	Student has limited experience using a computer and the Internet, and has expressed a strong interest in developing more skills in this area.	Student sometimes needs reminders and assistance in completing routine assignments and has pledged to spend 5-10 hours per week on each online course enrollment.	Student beginning to demonstrate a behavior of self-directed learning and sometimes requires real-time feedback from teachers regarding basic directions and follow-up support.	Student has limited access to a computer with low-speed Internet service at school or at home.	Student is beginning to demonstrate effective time management skills in doing research, basic studies and preparing for tests or quizzes.	Student has an interest in the content area of the online course offering, but has expressed concerns about enrolling in an online course or has an unrealistic attitude toward online learning.	Student is reading at grade level and has demonstrated limited proficiency with writing assignments.	Student support system is limited, parents and school personnel are somewhat supportive of enrollment in online courses.
	Student has strong computer skills and more than adequate experience using a word processor, email application and web browser.	Student rarely needs reminders and assistance in completing routine assignments and has demonstrated good independent study habits.	In general, the student is self-directed and does not require real-time feedback from teachers regarding basic directions and follow-up support.	Student has consistent access to a computer with moderate-speed Internet service at home or at school.	Student has demonstrated effective time management skills in doing research, basic studies and preparing for tests or quizzes.	Student has an interest in the content area of the online course offering, and has a positive and realistic attitude toward online learning.	Student is reading at or above grade level and has demonstrated success with a variety of writing assignments.	Student has open access to school-based mentoring/counseling service and parental support.
	Student has excellent computer skills and significant experience using a word processor, email application and web browser, and is comfortable downloading information from the Internet and using other technology tools and applications.	Student does not need reminders or assistance in completing routine assignments, usually finishes homework ahead of time and has successfully completed an independent study experience or taken an online course.	Student is a self-directed learner and demonstrates a high level of comfort and skill in learning new material without requiring real-time feedback from teachers regarding basic directions and follow-up support, and deals well with ambiguity.	Student has daily access to a computer with high-speed Internet service at home and at a convenient location in the school building before, during and after regular school hours.	Student has demonstrated outstanding time management skills while participating in a variety of clubs, student organizations, sports and work activities.	Student has a strong interest in the content area of the online course offering, is highly motivated to enroll in an online course and has a positive and realistic attitude toward online learning.	Student is reading above grade level, has strong reading comprehension skills and has demonstrated success with complex writing assignments.	Student has regularly scheduled access to school-based mentoring/counseling services, parental support is strong and district has adopted policies and identified best practices to support students as online learners.
Comments:	Comments:	Comments:	Comments:	Comments:	Comments:	Comments:	Comments:	Comments:

Note: This rubric was not designed to be used as a tool to determine eligibility for enrollment in online courses, but instead to be used as a resource to help identify specific areas where students may need additional support to better ensure success.