

**NORTHWEST TECHNOLOGY CENTER
2025-2026 POLICY MANUAL
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DISTANCE INSTRUCTION

THIS POLICY MAY BE USED IF STUDENTS ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND SCHOOL OR ABLE TO ATTEND SCHOOL ONLY ON A PART-TIME BASIS FOR VARIOUS HEALTH OR SAFETY REASONS. COMPLETE SCHOOL CLOSURE IS NOT A PREREQUISITE TO USE OF THIS POLICY.

The Technology Center may choose to engage in distance learning when permitted by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) and its promulgated rules and regulations. When the Technology Center engages in distance learning, instruction can be delivered via a number of Technology Center-Approved Means and Mediums, but in all cases, instructional delivery methods will comply with requirements and guidance from the OSDE and the ODCTE. These methods can include, but are not limited to, means and mediums already implemented or may be implemented in the future by Technology Center administration which may or may not include use of technology. Although the student may not be on campus, programs will continue, and the Technology Center shall continue to engage students with instruction and experiences that provide opportunities for continuous learning while allowing them to stay connected with their instructors.

EQUITABLE CONSIDERATIONS

Whether provided through virtual, hybrid, or distance instruction, the Technology Center shall, to the greatest extent practicable, provide its students with quality educational opportunities and continuity of instruction that is consistent with the Technology Center's vision and mission. As a part of its commitment to providing quality education to all students the Technology Center states that:

- When making decisions regarding the means and mediums utilized for distance learning, the Technology Center shall strive to bridge any equity gaps between those students with and without the technology and resources necessary to access distance learning.
- The Technology Center will ensure that all students have access to all required supplies (including any necessary textbooks, writing paper, pencils, and other supplies as appropriate) for participation in distance learning. If students lack these, the Technology Center shall provide them free of charge.¹
- If the Technology Center only offers distance learning to students, the Technology Center will ensure all students have access to distance learning and will provide

¹Students or parents of students who do not have access to such supplies may request that their classroom teacher provide such supplies or may contact the school site administration. Each classroom teacher will coordinate with the Administration on providing necessary supplies to students in need.

the necessary equipment and connectivity free of charge to those students who do not have access to the necessary equipment and connectivity.

- If the Technology Center offers distance learning instruction to students, it will ensure that all students have access to equitably equivalent instruction and content. It may do this by either:
 - Ensuring that all students have the necessary equipment and connectivity to access any distance learning component of the student's assigned curriculum or courses and providing access to that necessary equipment and connectivity to any student who does not have access to them.
 - The Technology Center will provide access to necessary equipment and connectivity to all students in need in order to equitably access distance learning instruction. If the Technology Center is only able to provide access to necessary equipment and connectivity to a limited number of students, it will determine which students receive that access in the most equitable manner.
- In no case shall a student have their grade lowered or be otherwise penalized (including attendance measures) for failure to engage with instructional supports the student does not have the resources to access (e.g., telephone service, internet access, transportation).

The Technology Center shall utilize all available funding sources and means to bridge these gaps in compliance with federal and state law.

DEFINITIONS

- **Distance Learning:** Instruction provided via electronic means, utilizing the internet, computers, and or printed materials for the delivery of instruction, evaluation, and interaction. Instructional delivery may include video or audio means, online instructor interaction using Technology Center-Approved Means and Mediums and printed materials.
- **Technology Center-Approved Means and Mediums:** Equipment and electronic programs and platforms for instructional delivery and communication/interaction with students and their legal guardian(s) appropriate to the grade level and subject matter concerned.
- **Social Media:**
 - **Generally:** Online platforms, websites, or networks on which users share information, communications, or other content and includes, but is not limited to, sites used for media sharing and social networking (e.g., YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.).
 - **Technology Center Social Media:** Authorized Technology Center-related social media that is either school-based (e.g., approved, established and/or monitored by the building principal or designee) or Technology Center-based, Technology Center computer network-based, or subject area/department-based.
 - **Personal Social Media:** Social media that is not Technology Center Social Media, which is established by a user for his/her personal or private use and objectives.

- o **Non-Technology Center Social Media:** Social media that is not Technology Center Social Media, which is established by a third party or other organization.

IMPACT ON EXISTING POLICIES, RULES, AND SERVICES

Once this policy is effectuated, though instruction will be provided via distance learning, the Technology Center’s instructional program(s) will continue. Therefore, the rules and responsibilities of students, their legal guardian(s), and Technology Center personnel, unless otherwise expressly stated in this policy, are the same as if students were present at school during the instructional day. Unless specifically noted in this policy, existing provisions of the Student Handbook, “Acceptable Use” policies and agreements, privacy policies, and related Technology Center policies shall remain in effect. For example, students shall attend scheduled online meetings or classes in a timely manner (attendance), prepare for class in advance of the day’s lesson (homework), meaningfully and appropriately participate in instruction (program participation), and shall also adhere to all existing rules concerning behavioral (e.g., bullying, harassment, violations of the Acceptable Use Policy) and academic misconduct (e.g., cheating, unauthorized group work on individual assignments). When students are visible to Technology Center personnel or other students, they shall dress in conformance to the school dress code.

Attendance

Students must continue to meet all state-mandated compulsory attendance requirements and are not exempt from state truancy laws, except to the extent permitted or required by the OSDE. Technology Center attendance policies shall remain in effect, and student attendance and participation shall be monitored. Attendance for students receiving Title IV funds will be recorded in accordance with Title IV Federal Regulations. Attendance and participation shall be measured by means appropriate in a distance learning environment which may include, but are not limited to, Technology Center-Approved-and-monitored chatrooms and message board posts, emails, submission of assignments, or other Technology Center-Approved Means and Mediums.

Teachers shall make contact with each of their students a minimum number of times per school week, as determined by Technology Center administration, and count these contacts toward full-time attendance. These contacts may include, but are not limited to, student participation in distance learning platforms, submissions or posts to approved message boards, instructor confirmation with a student or the student’s legal guardian(s) that the student did participate, and physical or electronic submission of assignments. The Technology Center shall ensure that any attendance measures used for distance instruction comply with any requirements set by the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

When the Technology Center provides virtual (distance learning) instruction (as defined by O.A.C. 210:35-21-2), the Technology Center shall ensure that its attendance measures will meet or exceed the minimum requirements set by the Oklahoma State Department of Education and mandated by O.A.C. 210:35-21-2, and 70 O.S. §§ 3-145.8, 3-145.8(B).

Grading, Class Rank, Promotion and Retention

In conformance with guidance from the OSDE and to the extent reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances, all existing requirements related to student progression, including retention, promotion, testing, and grade assignment shall remain in effect as if distance learning had not replaced in-person instruction. Traditional letter grades shall continue to be issued in conformance with the District's grading scale. Teachers shall ensure that, regardless of medium of instruction, that the curriculum presented aligns with any applicable Oklahoma Academic Standards for their subject matter. Appropriate efforts shall be made by all Technology Center personnel to ensure that the circumstances which effectuate this policy shall not negatively impact student grades.

Special Education

While this policy is in effect, when appropriate, each student's IEP instructor shall make contact with the student's legal guardian(s) to discuss the student's individualized plan for distance learning. Instructors and related service providers shall share learning resources with the student's legal guardian(s) that are appropriate for the student in order to provide a variety of activities and supports which may be utilized that promote continued progress toward the student's IEP goals. IEP meetings shall be conducted as needed via secure Technology Center-Approved Means and Mediums that are appropriate under the circumstances.

English Learners (EL)

EL students shall continue to receive EL services. Unless otherwise designated, each student's EL instructor shall be the primary contact for the student's legal guardian(s) while this policy is in effect. In conformance to guidance from the OSDE, the Technology Center shall be intentional in ensuring instructors are providing appropriate plans, modifications and accommodations for EL students. Nothing in this policy shall prevent EL students or their legal guardian(s) from directly contacting the student's teacher regarding their educational progress.

INSTRUCTION GENERALLY

Method and Means of Instructional Delivery

When distance learning instruction is deployed by the District, the superintendent or designee is directed to evaluate and select the means and mediums which shall be authorized for instructional delivery and communication with students and their legal guardian(s): the "Technology Center-Approved Means and Mediums."

Lesson Plans

Instructors are responsible for submitting lesson plans, recording attendance, and assigning and grading two (2) assignments per week per class. Instructors shall ensure that the maximum number of hours of work they assign conforms to OSDE guidance. All instructors shall submit their distance learning instruction lesson plans to their building principal Assistant Superintendent or designee.

Office Hours

Every instructor and building administrator must be available during regular working hours to support instruction and student needs. Technology Center and building administrators shall develop and distribute a schedule for instructors to hold “office hours.” During office hours, each instructor is required to be available to provide instruction or otherwise provide immediate feedback to students and their legal guardian(s) via Technology Center-Approved Means and Mediums. A portion of office hours may be utilized to conduct interactive virtual distance learning instruction lessons with students in conformance with this policy or tutoring.

Communication with Students and Parents

Instructors are expected to communicate with students and their legal guardian(s) regularly, making actual communicative-contact with students at least two (2) times per week. Electronic or telephonic messages left for instructors must be returned in a timely manner via Technology Center-Approved Means and Media.

Technology Center personnel who communicate with students shall do so in conformance with this and all other Technology Center policies and may do so only via Technology Center-Approved Means and Mediums, except when expressly approved, in writing, by an immediate supervisor. Such communications shall be limited to discussions regarding program, school, and school-related activities only. At all times, Technology Center personnel shall exercise their best professional judgment and act with integrity and concern for their students’ well-being.

Communication with students for the purpose of fraternization is strictly prohibited. All technology center personnel will adhere to the policies pertaining to professional conduct with students. **Students, legal guardians, and Technology Center personnel shall have no expectation of privacy when communicating via Technology Center-Approved Means and Mediums.**

Intellectual Property

At no time shall either Technology Center personnel or students use, upload, post, mail, display, store, or otherwise transmit in any manner any such material that is protected by copyright, patent, trademark, service mark, or trade secret, or in violation of any Federal Communications Commission rules applicable to public broadcasts, except when such use or disclosure is properly authorized and bears the appropriate notations. Technology Center personnel shall consult guidance from the OSDE regarding compliance with applicable infringement laws, including fair use. Instructors shall use public domain resources when permission to use protected material cannot be obtained.

Privacy Laws and FERPA

In all cases of virtual, hybrid, or distance instruction, but especially in an online learning environment, Technology Center personnel shall conform with FERPA requirements and other applicable privacy laws and Technology Center policies. **THE RECORDING OF CLASSROOMS (VIRTUAL OR OTHERWISE) AND/OR STUDENTS BY TECHNOLOGY CENTER PERSONNEL, STUDENTS, OR THEIR LEGAL GUARDIAN(S) IS STRICTLY**

PROHIBITED WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL OF STUDENTS OR IN THE CASE OF MINORS, LEGAL GUARDIANS.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION

In anticipation that this policy may become effective, Technology Center personnel shall receive required professional development instruction on best and distance learning instruction practices, which shall include grade level and content area-specific training, in addition to training on any Technology Center-Approved Means and Mediums for distance learning instruction and communication. Building administrators shall conduct weekly staff meetings via Technology Center-Approved Means and Mediums.

Technology Center administrators shall also receive appropriate training on how to supervise and evaluate personnel who are providing distance learning instruction under this policy. Technology Center personnel shall follow OSDE guidance regarding observation and evaluation in distance learning instruction and shall monitor virtual instruction by joining classes in-progress and providing feedback to the instructor.

SUPPORT SERVICES

When distance learning instruction is utilized by the District, appropriate support services will continue to be available to Technology Center personnel, students, and their legal guardian(s) including:

- **Technical Support** — The Technology Center shall provide basic technical support for instructors, students and their legal guardian(s) in accessing and using Technology Center-Approved Means and Mediums of communication for distance learning instruction.
- **Instructional Support** — Instructors should contact their immediate supervisor with any questions regarding virtual, hybrid, or distance instruction.
- **Social-Emotional Wellbeing Support** — To the extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances, the Technology Center shall provide information and resources to assist stakeholders in coping with the circumstances necessitating effectuation of this policy.
- **Special Education Resources and Support** — The Special Education Director or designee will provide support to students with disabilities or other special needs, along with their legal guardian(s), to help them navigate distance learning instruction and compliance issues while this policy is in effect.

ONGOING EVALUATION AND ADAPTATION TO EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES

The Technology Center, in consultation with state, local, and federal officials, shall continuously evaluate this policy, and the procedures herein, and adapt the same based on guidance from appropriate agencies.

Reference: 20 U.S.C. § 1232g
34 CFR Part 99

**TELEWORK DURING EXTENDED TECHNOLOGY CENTER CLOSURE
[OR FOR INTERMITTENT USE]**

THIS POLICY SHALL BE IN EFFECT WHEN TECHNOLOGY CENTER SITES ARE CLOSED FOR AN EXTENDED PERIOD DUE TO EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES [OR WHEN INTERMITTENT TELEWORK ARRANGEMENTS ARE WARRANTED]; THESE PROCEDURES WILL NOT BE USED WHEN THE TECHNOLOGY CENTER IS OPEN FOR IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION [EXCEPT AS DETERMINED NECESSARY BY THE SUPERINTENDENT].

The board of education, while preferring that all technology center employees perform their work duties at their Primary Work Locations, does recognize that under certain extenuating circumstances it may be necessary to require or authorize some technology center employees to work from an alternative work location.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the technology center is able to effectively continue educating and serving its students when it is required to temporarily close technology center work sites for an extended period due to extenuating circumstances, including, but not limited to, pandemic health emergencies and closure orders from federal, state, or local authorities [or when the Superintendent determines that intermittent telework arrangements are necessary and meet technology center needs].

DEFINITIONS

- **Technology Center Work Location:** A location, either on or off technology center property, to which a Teleworking Employee must physically report to complete a task or work assignment by his/her supervisor.
- **On-Call:** A work assignment where the employee is considered “at work,” though not physically present at his/her Primary Workplace, by being immediately available and accessible by electronic or telephonic means during the employee’s regular work hours, including any other designated hours due to a staggered or alternate work schedule, and who is required to physically report to a technology center Work Location or the Teleworking Employee’s Primary Workplace when directed by their supervisor.
- **Primary Workplace:** The Teleworking Employee’s usual and customary workplace or work site.
- **Telework/Teleworking:** A flexible work arrangement in which the superintendent or designee directs or allows Teleworking Employees to perform their essential job functions at pre-approved Telework Locations in accordance with their same performance expectations.
- **Telework Employee(s)/Teleworking Employee(s):** technology center personnel who have been authorized by technology center administration to Telework during a

Telework Event to produce an agreed upon work product and/or complete work-related duties. This includes support personnel who are working On-Call.

- **Telework Event:** A potentially recurring situation during which time designated employees may Telework in lieu of physically reporting to their Primary Workplace.
- **Telework Location:** A work site or space not owned or leased by the technology center, but which is an approved location from which Teleworking Employees may perform their assigned job functions, which can include an employee's home. A Telework Location is one which is safe, secure, free of undue distractions, adequately equipped to allow the Teleworking Employee to complete assigned work tasks and duties, and one which allows the employee to be immediately available and accessible by electronic or telephonic communication means during regular work hours and any other assigned or designated hours (e.g., required office hours pursuant to any virtual or distance learning policy).

GENERALLY

In circumstances which necessitate extended cessation of in-person instruction and/or closure of some or all technology center work sites, the technology center considers Telework to be a viable alternative work arrangement for the delivery of instruction and services to students from designated certified employees and support staff. Therefore, under certain circumstances, the board of education (board) delegates authority to the superintendent or designee to designate employees, individually or collectively, who may or must Telework until further advised.

Teleworking, in part or whole, will continue as an acceptable work arrangement as long as, in the superintendent's sole discretion, such conditions continue to exist which necessitate the use of Teleworking as a means to deliver instruction and/or services to students. The superintendent will consider local, state and/or federal guidance related to the Telework Event when making this determination.

The decision of whether Telework is appropriate or required for a particular employment position is at the sole discretion of the superintendent. The superintendent or designee is authorized to establish any necessary guidelines or procedures to be used in identifying suitable work positions and employees who are eligible to Telework and may require any employee to Telework or not Telework. Teleworking arrangements may be discontinued at any time with reasonable advance notice.

Telework may be appropriate for some employment positions and employees; however, Teleworking is not an entitlement. Telework may be denied to certain employees at the sole discretion of the superintendent or designee, and any such denial is not appealable to the board. The superintendent's discretion under this policy shall, in compliance with federal and state antidiscrimination laws, be exercised in a non-discriminatory manner.

Notwithstanding the provisions above, if the assignment or denial of Telework to an employee effectively results in a demotion, suspension, or termination, this policy shall not prevent a qualified employee from exercising due process rights under the technology center's policies related to that demotion, suspension or termination.

Not all employees may be eligible for Teleworking. Employees who may not be eligible to Telework can include, but are not limited to, those employees that are identified as emergency personnel, members of critical infrastructure pursuant to any federal or state order, or employees whose physical presence at their Primary Workplace is essential to the performance of their duties (e.g., food service, maintenance, administrative personnel, etc.). If an employee is not eligible for Telework and the employee is unable to work during assigned hours, the employee may be required to take any available accrued leave, whether paid or unpaid, in compliance with relevant technology center leave policies, unless the employee is eligible for other state or federal leave benefits available at the time.

Neither this policy, nor the procedures outlined herein, are intended to and do not confer additional employment rights on any technology center employee, including the right to Telework or be assigned to a position that is eligible for Teleworking under this policy.

TELEWORK LOCATION APPROVAL:

Any and all telework locations must be approved prior to the employee beginning telework assignments. It is the duty of the employee to provide the address of the telework location to the superintendent/designee and to receive written approval within a reasonable time frame prior to commencing telework. No employee shall commence telework without written prior approval of the telework location by the superintendent or designee. The requested telework location may be denied to employees at the sole discretion of the superintendent or designee. Telework out-of-state will not be approved due to the myriad tax, employment and other issues presented when employees seek to work in out-of-state locations.

If an employee wishes to work from an alternative location, other than the pre-approved location, the employee must give notice to the superintendent/designee including the new address of the location and reason for the relocation. The employee must receive written approval prior to commencing telework in the new location.

All teleworking employees must be available to report to the technology center worksite location at all times during work hours unless a health consideration exists.

CONDITIONS OF TELEWORK

Employees may not Telework on a full-time, permanent basis. Teleworking Employees shall adhere to all applicable technology center policies and procedures, unless specifically preempted pursuant to this policy. The technology center may, but is not required, to give the employee a list of directives regarding teleworking in relation to this policy.

Employees who Telework via electronic means must be computer literate and have access to a pre-approved, appropriate Telework Location, along with the required computer and telecommunications resources necessary for completion of work responsibilities.

Employees must seek prior approval to remove center technology or equipment from the pre-approved telework location. Absent approval, teleworking employees may not remove technology center technology or equipment from the pre-approved telework location for any reason.

Teleworking Employees must be available by phone and email during their regularly-scheduled work hours and during any alternate or staggered schedule hours as necessary

under the circumstances and assigned by the employee's supervisor (e.g., scheduled office hours pursuant to any virtual or distance learning policy). Attendance at the employee's Primary Workplace for mandatory on-site meetings, training sessions, or other official technology center business activities is required when scheduled by the technology center.

On-Call Employees must be immediately available and accessible by electronic or telephonic communication means during the employee's regular work hours, including any other designated hours due to a staggered or alternate work schedule, from their Telework Location and are required to physically report to a technology center Work Location or the Teleworking Employee's Primary Workplace when directed by their supervisor.

All technology center and professional standards of performance and conduct that apply in the employee's Primary Workplace continue to apply at Telework Locations. Furthermore, employees shall adhere to all technology center policies, rules, and regulations while Teleworking. Employees with questions as to how a specific policy or procedure will be effective in the Telework environment should contact their direct supervisor for guidance.

Any work-related injuries that occur while the employee is teleworking must be reported to the technology center immediately.

IMPACT ON SALARY AND BENEFITS

Any change in salary and hourly pay or benefits will be done in accordance with Oklahoma law. Teleworking employees unable to Telework due to illness or other reasons should contact their supervisor in accordance with technology center leave policies.

TELEWORKING AS AN ADA ACCOMMODATION

This policy does not apply to employees who Telework as an accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Should the technology center determine that Teleworking is a reasonable accommodation under the ADA and does not impose an undue burden on the technology center, the technology center and employee shall follow the technology center's applicable ADA accommodations procedures and policies with respect to such accommodation.

Reference: 29 U.S.C. 201-209; 42 U.S.C. 12101 *et seq.*, 28 C.F.R. pt. 35