

**VIRTUAL COURSES**  
*(Enrollment and Best Educational Interest Determination)*

A student or the student's parent/guardian must notify the student's principal or designee in writing on the approved MOCAP request form before the student may enroll in a district-sponsored virtual course or a Missouri Course Access Program (MOCAP) virtual course through the district.

The principal or designee will educate the student and the student's parents/guardians about how virtual instruction is provided and the key differences between virtual and in-person instruction. The principal or designee will discuss the virtual course options available to the student, determine which course or courses interest the student and how the course or courses will assist the student in meeting his or her academic and personal goals. The principal or designee will also inform the student and the student's parents/guardians of whether the course is available in a traditional setting, whether the student must complete any prerequisites prior to taking a particular course and whether the prerequisite courses are offered by the district virtually or traditionally.

**Enrollment Guidelines**

Students applying to take a MOCAP course must be enrolled in the district and have been a full-time student in a public school in the prior semester. Exceptions may be granted, according to policy, to students with medical necessity. The district defines a full-time student for MOCAP purposes as a student who is enrolled in eight full periods of attendance in grades 7-12 or a full day of attendance in grades K-6.

MRH will only cover the enrollment fees for MOCAP approved courses and vendors. Courses from MOCAP approved vendors that are not MOCAP approved courses will not be paid at district expense. Courses from non-approved vendors will not be paid at district expense. *(Courses outside of approved MOCAP are required by law to be vetted solely by the district, for the district to be responsible for the teacher of record, and may not be reimbursable if they don't meet statutory requirements. MRH does not have the human resources available to vet other vendors and courses outside of MOCAP to ensure that all statutory requirements are met.)*

**MRH is unable to offer any MOCAP listed courses that require a district staff member to serve as the online instructor, unless an appropriately certified staff member has time available in their daily schedule that could accommodate an additional course assignment as part of their regular teaching contract. (MRH does not have the staffing resources to provide appropriately certified teachers to run MOCAP courses for individual students. This option may be available only in very specific circumstances.)**

MRH will not pay for enrollment in MOCAP approved courses that exceed a full course assignment defined as 8 credit bearing classes per semester for grades 7-12.

**MRH, per DESE guidelines, does not pay for MOCAP courses during summer.**

**Students wishing to take MOCAP courses beyond a full schedule may do so at the parent/guardians expense.**

**Students taking more than two MOCAP courses must have an individual educational learning plan on file as part of the LEA student record.**

**Students enrolled in MOCAP courses that do not actively participate or are unsuccessful may be removed from the course and may be denied enrollment in future courses.**

**Students enrolled in MOCAP courses are required by policy to take all state mandated assessments.**

**MOCAP courses must be requested in writing on the MOCAP request form during the enrollment period. Changes may be considered until MOCAP enrollment is submitted or 10 days after the start of the semester. No MOCAP changes will be made after enrollments have been submitted or on the 11<sup>th</sup> calendar day after the first day of the semester. Exceptions to the enrollment period cut-offs may be made in the event of significant health issues or long-term suspensions.**

**The principal or designee, in consultation with the student's parents/guardians and other relevant staff, such as the school counselor or the district's special education director, will determine whether there is good cause to refuse the student enrollment in the course. If a MOCAP request is denied, the student will be notified in writing stating the reasons for the best-interest determination. Students or parents/guardians who disagree with the principal's or designee's determination about a MOCAP course can appeal the decision to the Board of Education and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). For all other virtual courses, students or parents/guardians may appeal the decision to the superintendent or designee, and the superintendent's or designee's decision will be final. In accordance with federal law, if a student receives special education services, the student's individualized education program (IEP) team may determine that a virtual course is not appropriate for the student even if the course has otherwise been approved by the district.**

**If district staff determine that it is not in the best educational interest of a student to take a virtual course, that decision will be documented in writing and provided to the student and the parents/guardians.**

### **Best Educational Interest Considerations**

**District staff should minimally consider the following when deciding whether a virtual course is in the best educational interest of a student but may consider other factors not listed. It is**

the belief of MRH that it is in a student's educational best interest to work directly with a highly qualified teacher if the course is available and accessible to the student.

- a. *This ensures that the student has access to a curriculum that is aligned to standards and the MRH course trajectory/scope and sequence. It also ensures that differentiated instruction can occur and support services can be enlisted onsite. Online coursework may be in the educational best interest of the child if MRH can't offer the course that a student needs, if the student is unable to take the course, or if the student has extenuating circumstances such as health or behavioral needs that would prohibit taking the course in the traditional format.*

#### *District Course Availability*

1. **If the course is offered onsite by the district, are there extenuating circumstances that make it difficult or impossible for the student to take the onsite course offered by the district?**
  - a. *If the course is offered on site and there no extenuating circumstances to prevent the student to take the course when offered, it will be determined that it is in the best interest of the student to remain in the district offered course.*
2. **If the course is offered onsite by the district and the student is able to take that course, what are the reasons the student wants to take the virtual course?**
  - a. *If the student is able to take the course and there are significant safety considerations for self and/or others a MOCAP course may be considered.*
  - b. *Students will not be able to take a MOCAP course because they prefer to bypass an MRH course or teacher. Personal preference is not considered an extenuating circumstance in and of itself.*

#### *Virtual Course Characteristics*

1. **Does the course meet or exceed district curriculum standards and graduation requirements?**
  - a. *Courses that do not meet or exceed the MRH graduation standards will not be allowed.*
2. **Does the course align with the student's career goals and the student's individual career and academic plan (ICAP)?**

- a. *Courses that duplicate coursework already achieved at MRH or that don't allow the student to meet the requirements of the student's academic 6 year plan will not be allowed.*
3. **If the course is for remediation, will it personalize instruction to the student's specific needs?**

*MOCAP courses will not be used as credit recovery if the student is able to recover credit by working with the classroom teacher as described in the HS handbook. The method outlined in the MRH handbook for eligible students is a more efficient option that allows students to make up only the standards needed to show proficiency instead of retaking an entire class. In situations where students need to retake an entire course, MOCAP may be a viable option if the student meets other criteria that make MOCAP success likely.*

4. **Is the district aware of any complaints or concerns regarding the quality of the course, and have those complaints or concerns been resolved?**
- a. *MOCAP courses may be denied if there are issues with the course quality or delivery that prevent students from meeting MRH standards expectations.*
5. **Has the district had difficulty working with the course instructor or provider to ensure a student with disabilities receives the required accommodations or modifications?**
- a. *MOCAP vendors will be expected to honor all accommodations or modifications as needed as outlined in a student's IEP.*

#### *Student Skills Necessary for Success in Virtual Courses*

1. **Has the student demonstrated time-management skills that indicate that the student is capable of submitting assignments and completing course requirements without reminders? Has the student demonstrated persistence in overcoming obstacles and a willingness to seek assistance when needed? If the student has previously attempted a virtual course and struggled with or failed the class, have the issues that caused the student to struggle or fail been identified and addressed?**
- a. *MOCAP will not be considered in the educational best interest of a student who failed a similar class due to incomplete assignments or failure to complete assignments/engage in coursework.*
  - b. *MOCAP teachers are not affiliated with MRH, therefore, MOCAP success requires the ability to independently set deadlines and complete assignments without MRH staff support.*

2. Has the student demonstrated verbal or written communication skills that would allow the student to succeed in an environment where the instructor may not have sufficient nonverbal cues to indicate the student's level of understanding?
  - a. *MOCAP will be considered for students who has the ability to independently read and write at grade level. MOCAP may not in the educational best interest of a student who has insufficient verbal or written communication skills.*

*Other Relevant Factors*

2. Does the student have adequate access to computers, Internet and other necessary technology resources to participate in a virtual course and complete assignments? Does the student have the necessary computer or technical skills to succeed in a virtual course?
  - a. *MRH will provide a take home computer to all MRH students in grades 6-12. MRH will not provide take home computers for students in K-5. MRH will not be responsible for internet access outside of regular access in district facilities. MOCAP enrollments will be unsupervised and completed off campus unless otherwise arranged as part of an educational plan.*

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*Note: The reader is encouraged to review policies and/or forms for related information in this administrative area.*

**Implemented: July 23, 2019**

**Revised:**

**Maplewood Richmond Heights School District**