

**SOUTHERN
YORK COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT**



**K-6
DIGITAL ACADEMY
Information**

2021-2022

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Important Information

All information in the Southern York County Elementary Students Handbook is applicable to Southern York County Digital Academy Elementary Students.

Please see the link for an electronic version of this handbook:

[SYCSD Elementary Handbook](#)

The Digital Academy Information book is created to help clarify policies and procedures that apply to the Digital Academy Program in addition to the SYCSD Elementary Student Handbook.

Digital Academy Overview

SYCSD Digital Academy is a sixth school that provides online instruction for our students who are looking for a different educational experience. Digital Academy has a comprehensive K-12 curriculum delivered in an online format. In addition to providing individualized scheduling and pacing for students, the SYCSD Digital Academy is able to offer unique opportunities that are unavailable from other cyber charter schools.

The Digital Academy is staffed with highly qualified SYCSD teachers to provide instruction that meets the needs of each student. The Digital Academy has adopted the use of online curriculum to deliver instruction in a fully blended approach to learning.

Our teachers have worked to align the online curriculum with our own rigorous in-school curriculum. Teachers adapt, modify, and supplement the curriculum to provide differentiated and customized instruction for each Digital Academy student.

We are dedicated to maintaining all students as part of our community. Students who graduate from SYCSD Digital Academy are given an SYCSD diploma. All students also have the opportunity to participate in any District-run program such as art and design, technical education, music, athletics, etc. Students are a part of the Southern community and have access to the opportunities afforded to students who attend our elementary, middle, and high schools.

Students who graduate from the Southern York Digital Academy will receive a Susquehannock High School diploma and will be able to participate at commencement ceremonies with other members of the graduating class.

A unique aspect of the Digital Academy is our commitment to work in a collaborative partnership that allows prospective students and families to access the District's resources and services in a way that suits their individual needs.

The funding for Digital Academy is from the same sources as the funding for the brick-and-mortar schools in the district. The Digital Academy is a public school and is free to the residents of SYCSD. All materials necessary for the school will be provided by the district to the families.

Mission Statement

SYCSD Digital Academy, through a cooperative effort with the students and families, will provide a quality online learning environment that challenges students to achieve their potential.

Vision

To provide an alternative learning opportunity which strives to develop productive, contributing, responsible citizens capable of meeting the global challenges of the future.

Philosophy

The philosophy of education at SYCSD Digital Academy is to foster intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth in all students according to their potential. The needs of the individual students are met through a variety of educational experiences, in an online learning environment with emphasis on the students as active learners. As a result of these learning experiences, the students will make vital contributions to the community in which they live. Furthermore, this program provides the students with additional flexibility in their schedules.

Digital Academy Contact Information

SYCSD Switchboard: 717.235.4811

Each person's extension is included in parentheses.

Digital Academy Coordinators and Staff

Dr. Kimberly Hughes, Director of Curriculum & Instruction
and Digital Academy Principal (x7226)

Ms. Stephanie Reese, Administrative Assistant (x7339)

Principals/Assistant Principals

Mr. James Hollinger, Southern Principal (x2500)

Mrs. Deborah Stone, Friendship Assistant Principal (x1501)

Mr. Robert Van Vorst, Shrewsbury Assistant Principal (x5501)

Special Education

Mr. Brendan Rogers, Director of Special Education (x7229)

Mrs. Jen Mendenhall, Instructional Advisor (x7311)

Teachers

Mrs. Christine Lucabaugh: Grades K, 1, 2, 3 Teacher

Mr. Mark Finn: Grades 4, 5, 6 Teacher

Curriculum

Lincoln Learning

Digital Academy students from K-6 will utilize Lincoln Empowered Learning as their online curriculum. This curriculum includes both online, hands-on, and live instructional opportunities for students. Students will have opportunities for synchronous and asynchronous learning throughout their school day.

Click the following links to explore Lincoln Learning:

[Lincoln Learning Elementary Demonstration](#)

[Lincoln Learning Student Tutorials](#)

iReady

i-Ready is an online program for reading and mathematics that will help your child's teacher personalize their learning and monitor progress throughout the school year. It allows the teacher to meet your child exactly where they are and provides data to increase your child's learning gains.

i-Ready consists of two parts: Diagnostic and Personalized Instruction. The i-Ready Diagnostic is an adaptive assessment that adjusts its questions to suit your child's needs. Each item a student sees is individualized based on their answer to the previous question. For example, a series of correct answers will result in slightly harder questions, while a series of incorrect answers will yield slightly easier questions. i-Ready Personalized Instruction provides students with lessons based on their individual skill level and needs, so your student can learn at a pace that is just right for them. These lessons are fun and interactive to keep your student engaged as they learn.

Equipment and Materials

Equipment, Internet Access, and Tech Support

Each student is provided with a SYCSD issued student Chromebook. The District's Acceptable Use Policy governs the use of this computer. CIPA compliant Internet filtering is applied for student use of all District-owned laptops and chromebooks. Helpdesk Support Technology Support Personnel will provide initial setup and provide any follow-up assistance with the use of District owned equipment.

If at any time, there is a concern about your child's Chromebook, Help Desk services are available Monday through Friday between 7:00AM and 4:00 PM (on school days). You can contact the Help Desk by calling 717.235.4811 x7262 or emailing helpdesk@sycsd.org.

Other Curricular Materials

At various times throughout the school year, it may be necessary to pick up supplementary curricular resources to support your child's education. These materials will be available at your child's home school between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. In addition, students can request to borrow materials, such as library books, from their home school.

Admission and Withdrawal

Admission Policy

The Southern York Digital Academy is accepting enrollments for any student who resides in our district. It has a flexible admissions policy. Students may enroll throughout the school year, upon a school-based team meeting. If you are interested in enrolling, please contact your child's home school.

Enrollment Procedures

After being admitted into the Digital Academy, the Digital Academy office will coordinate with the family and the appropriate school counselor to review the enrollment procedures.

Withdrawal Procedures

Should the need for withdrawal arise, the parent/guardian should contact their child's home school office. The secretaries there can assist you with the withdrawal process.

Attendance Policy

Digital Academy maintains attendance records for all students. Attendance is measured by the state law that requires all PA Schools to be open 180 days per year and in operation for 990 hours. In compliance with this law, Digital Academy will follow the SYCSD academic calendar. Attendance will be taken weekly. A week runs from Monday at 12:01 AM through Sunday at 11:59 PM.

Attendance Expectations

Digital Academy will calculate weekly attendance using the following items:

- Students will be required to remain “on pace” to complete their courses per semester. “On pace” refers to the weekly coursework indicated by the teacher.
- Students are expected to attend live lessons and small group instruction meetings set up by the teacher.
- On average a typical cyber school student will spend 20 to 30 hours completing their coursework and attending live meetings each week to remain on pace.

Attendance Communication

There are several ways that attendance is communicated to parents and students.

- Teachers will send an email weekly to students and parents who have not met the requirements for attendance or pacing. This email includes course, grade, and assignments behind. An absent note is requested with this email. Absent notes can be submitted through our automated absent note system, by emailing or by faxing medical notes to the student’s home school office.
- Once a student accumulates 3 excused absences or 1 unexcused absence, their school counselor/Administrator will communicate to the parent to set up a meeting / phone conference to discuss attendance.

- After 5 excused or 3 unexcused absences, a meeting is scheduled with the student's vice principal to discuss doctor's notes and address goals to improve attendance, which will be reviewed monthly until attendance improves. In addition, at 8 excused or 4 unexcused absences a formalized student attendance improvement plan will be implemented.
- After 10 excused or unexcused absences students will be required to have a doctor's note for all future absences. Please note the student attendance improvement plan may stipulate that students may be required to return to in person instruction after 10 days of absence.

When considering attendance in our currently implemented hybrid programs, Digital Academy and/or online coursework, student attendance is based on completion of assigned work as communicated at the commencement of each program. Consideration for a student's disability and/or medical condition along with current accommodations in individualized education plans or service agreement plans will be considered when determining attendance based on work completion.

Excused Absences

Parents are responsible for providing SYDA with an excuse form to verify the reason for the absence. The student's home school must receive this form within 3 days of the absence period.

The following reasons may be considered as a valid excuse for a student absence assuming the parent provides satisfactory evidence:

- Death in the Immediate Family
- Medical or Dental Appointments
- Illness or Injury
- Court or Administrative Proceedings
- Quarantine
- Observance of a Religious Holiday
- Educational Opportunities/Family Educational Trips

At times, students may need to be absent due to abnormal or unusual circumstances. When this happens, please contact the classroom teacher immediately.

Important Information from the Student Handbook on attendance:

Communication Policy

Communication between the student, teacher, parent/guardian, school counselor, and administration is extremely important. Communication can take place via a number of approved systems: email, telephone, course message system, and by video-conference.

Parents/students will be required to read and respond to all relevant communication on a regular basis. Parents will be contacted by the teacher and/or the assistant principal as needed.

Health Policy

All students must comply with the requirements of the State Immunization Code (28 PA Code Ch. 23). The only exemptions for immunizations are for religious beliefs or medical reasons.

Health Screenings

In compliance with School Code, all students are required to follow the health and dental exam policies.

Other Health Requirements:

- All students must have yearly height/weight and far and near point vision screenings.
- All students in grades K, 1, 2, 3, 7 and 11 must have documented hearing screening results on file with the school nurse.
- All students in grades 6 and 7 must have a scoliosis screening with the results submitted in writing to the school nurse.

Grades

Lincoln Learning

Parents and students in grades K-6 have access to a Lincoln Learning gradebook that will show student progress through the courses. The gradebook will indicate any missing assignments as well as assignments that have been sent back to retry. This gradebook should be checked on a regular basis to ensure your student is completing all required tasks for attendance purposes.

Sapphire

Students in grades 7-12 and their parents/guardians can access attendance records, classroom assignments, and grades through Sapphire. Regular checking of Sapphire makes it easier than ever to gain a real-time snapshot of your child's academic performance.

The link is located in the Parent/Guardian Portal at the District's website, www.sycsd.org, under "Parent/Guardian Portal."

At the beginning of the school year, passwords are reset and letters are mailed to parents/guardians with this information before the start of the school year. Parents/guardians may request assistance by contacting the help desk at 717-235-4811 extension 7262 or helpdesk@sycsd.org.

General Information

Academic Calendar

The Digital Academy will follow the Southern York County School District's published academic calendar. When the District is closed, students and staff are not required to work. Courses will be modified and adapted so that students will be able to finish the required elements each marking period.

Students of the Digital Academy are also required to participate in certain state tests. The testing dates can be found on the academic calendar.

Inclement Weather

School delays based on weather do not affect the schedule for Digital Academy. All scheduled classes and meetings will remain in session at the same scheduled times.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to:

- Participate in all required orientation training sessions.
- Complete all their class work independently, honestly and as accurately as possible.
- Contact their instructors when experiencing difficulties understanding assignments and content materials.
- Notify the Helpdesk when they are experiencing technological difficulties, which prohibit the student from completing assignments for any extended time period or when any content materials are not available.
- Participate in synchronous video lessons and/or meetings.
- Maintain progress in their courses. If progress is not being met, the district may remove the student from their online courses and enroll them in regular courses for the remainder of the year.
- Return materials to SYCSD immediately upon completion or withdrawal from the program.
- Practice good digital citizenship.
- Understand that failure to complete enrolled courses may result in truancy charges and student/guardian(s) may be responsible for paying for the costs of cyber services in full.
- Review, sign, and adhere to the Southern York County Student Behavioral Handbook.

Synchronous Meeting Student Expectations:

- Attend all meetings on time, with required materials ready.
- Test out technology ahead of time and ask for assistance if needed.
- Turn on camera as requested by the teacher, and unmute when called on to participate.
- Be in a quiet, distraction-free space, sitting up attentively.
- Refrain from eating or drinking during live lessons if possible.

Keys to Success

Students who are able to demonstrate the following may be more successful in their experience in the Digital Academy:

- Plan a daily schedule ahead of time.
- Schedule specific times each day to work on assignments.
- Read all information, view all resources, and be responsible for making sure they understand the information being transmitted.
- Communicate regularly with their teachers.
- Attend all live lessons, small group meetings, and other synchronous activities.
- Take personal responsibility for their learning and contact your teacher when issues arise.

Honor System

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to be honest in their work, including no cheating and no plagiarizing. Students caught cheating or plagiarizing may receive a failing grade for the particular assignments. It is up to the teacher, school administration and Digital Academy Coordinator to decide if the assignment may be redone or not.

For more information on this topic please refer to the Southern York County School District Student Behavioral Handbook.

Plagiarizing

Taking someone else's words or ideas and submitting them as your own is plagiarizing. Things such as copying a friend's answers and copying and pasting from a website are prohibited. Students are encouraged to discuss assignments, and to work collaboratively, but all work submitted should be the students own work or be properly cited.

Cheating

Gaining an unfair advantage by getting help from another source or looking at information that should be off-limits. Procedures for taking tests should be strictly followed. If no notes are allowed to take the test, then no notes or other documents should be open during the test. If a calculator is prohibited for an assessment, then a calculator should not be used.

Rules of Conduct

Southern York Digital Academy students should show respect to one another and to those employed to help them. SYCSD will not tolerate harassment of its students or employees by other students, employees, or associates.

Harassment is defined as threats or actual violence, hostility, intimidation, and/or hateful and insulting language.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances and other inappropriate conduct of sexual nature.

If a student feels they are being harassed by anyone associated with the Southern York Digital Academy, please contact the Digital Academy office immediately. Please refer to Board Policy No. 248.

Student Behavior Handbook

All Digital Academy students and parents/guardians are required to review and sign and adhere to the respective school's behavioral handbook. Students in the Digital Academy are subject to all the provisions that regular education students adhere to.

Student Behavior policies can be found in the Southern York County Elementary Handbook.

Parent Expectations

Parents/Guardians are expected to:

- Participate in all required orientation training sessions
- Attend parent/student/teacher meetings as necessary
- Respond to emails from the teacher as needed
- Monitor the student's time spent online and their academic progress by checking the child's gradebook for each course
- Understand that failure to complete the enrolled courses may result in truancy charges and student/guardian(s) may be responsible for paying for the costs of cyber services in full
- Assist younger students with getting logged in for live meetings
- Provide a quiet, distraction-free space for student
- Help student plan his/her daily schedule of assignments and meetings
- Refrain from prompting student during live meetings with teacher. Giving the child space to make mistakes helps the teacher collect valuable data about the student

Teacher Expectations

Teachers are expected to:

- Maintain, monitor and adjust Digital Academy courses throughout the school year.
- Prepare a weekly schedule of synchronous learning opportunities, assignments, and other learning activities.
- Provide virtual office hours or one-on-one meetings to answer questions and/or provide further feedback.
- Provide synchronous learning opportunities for students.
- Differentiate instruction based on student needs.
- Coordinate student services (extracurricular, special education, etc.)
- Incorporate support resources to help students further their understanding or to assist with students having difficulty.
- Update grades and feedback in the Student Information System.
- Communicate regularly with SYDA students and parents/guardians.
- Conduct student/instructor/parent meetings as necessary.
- Report student attendance weekly.

Special Education

Our digital academy staff and our supporting special education teachers and service providers are well prepared to work with students who require special education services. Given that our Digital Academy provides a unique and flexible educational environment, a student's individualized Education Program (IEP) may require some revisions and/or changes. As a result, we highly recommend an IEP meeting to discuss how your child can best be supported in the Digital Academy program

Special Education Notice:

It is the responsibility of the Pennsylvania Department of Education to ensure that all children with disabilities residing in the Commonwealth, regardless of the severity of their disability, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located and evaluated. This responsibility is required by federal law called the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and Pennsylvania Chapter 14 Special Education Regulations.

A full range of special education services are provided by the Southern York County School District. Programs provided directly by the district include those for students who have a specific learning disability, emotional disturbance, intellectual disability, speech or language impairment, a hearing impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury or other health impairment. Services are provided for students who are mentally gifted. Additional services are provided to Southern students through contract with the Lincoln Intermediate Unit #12. These services address the needs of early childhood, visually impaired, and severely impaired or multi-handicapped students. Occupational and physical therapy services are also provided to students who qualify.

Child Find efforts to identify special needs students in Southern schools are varied. Preschool students between age 3 and 5 are identified through services provided by the district through the Lincoln Intermediate Unit #12. Kindergarten students are screened for hearing and vision at the time of registration at Southern York School District. Registration is scheduled by

appointment and the dates are listed in the district calendar. Kindergarten registration is held during April. Screening is also conducted for all kindergarten students in early September each year to identify students who are possibly at risk in a variety of areas including speech and language. New resident students are also screened for special needs at the building level through a review of school records and parent/guardian/student interviews at the time of enrollment.

If teachers or staff suspect that a student might be in need of instructional interventions, a school team reviews records, diagnostic data, and current levels of academic and functional performance. Conclusions drawn by the school team as to determine what if any instructional interventions within our multi-tiered systems of support are necessary to support the student, a referral for a multidisciplinary evaluation and further assessment may also be recommended.

If a parent/guardian wishes to request a multidisciplinary evaluation, the school district asks the parent/guardian to provide the child's building principal written permission for the evaluation to begin. Any parent/guardian who requests a multidisciplinary evaluation of a resident child not attending Southern schools should send the written request to the Director of Special Education. A multidisciplinary evaluation must be conducted in accordance with specific timelines and follow protection-in-evaluation procedures. The evaluation is conducted by a multidisciplinary evaluation team, which includes, at least, the parents/guardians, a certified school psychologist, teachers, and others who have worked with the child and can contribute relevant information. The evaluation results are summarized in a report of findings, with conclusions and recommendations called an Evaluation Report.

Parents/guardians also have the right to obtain an independent educational evaluation. Southern will provide, upon request, information about where an independent evaluation may be obtained. Under certain circumstances, such an evaluation may be obtained at public expense. If a parent/guardian wishes to request a multidisciplinary evaluation, the school district asks the parent/guardian to provide the child's building principal written permission for the evaluation to begin. Any parent/guardian who requests a

multidisciplinary evaluation of a resident child not attending Southern schools should send the written request to the Director of Special Education.

A multidisciplinary evaluation must be conducted in accordance with specific timelines and follow protection-in-evaluation procedures. The evaluation is conducted by a multidisciplinary evaluation team, which includes, at least, the parents/guardians, a certified school psychologist, teachers, and others who have worked with the child and can contribute relevant information. The evaluation results are summarized in a report of findings, with conclusions and recommendations called an Evaluation Report. Parents/guardians also have the right to obtain an independent educational evaluation. Southern will provide, upon request, information about where an independent evaluation may be obtained. Under certain circumstances, such an evaluation may be obtained at public expense.

The determination of whether or not a student has a disability and may be in need of special education services is made by the Evaluation Team. A single test or procedure cannot be the sole factor in determining that the student has a disability. The IEP Team must consist of at least a district representative, the student's teacher, and the parents/guardians. The IEP Team develops a written Individual Education Plan based on the results of the evaluation. Placement must be made in the least restrictive environment in which the student's needs can be met with special education and related services. All students with disabilities must be educated to the maximum extent appropriate with children who are not disabled.

Southern York County School District protects the confidentiality of personally identifiable information regarding screening, referral, evaluation, storage, disclosure, and destruction of information for all students screened for or enrolled as an exceptional student in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and other applicable federal and state laws. Southern York Board of Education Policies #216 and 216.1 provide further information regarding confidentiality of student records.

The rights of parents/guardians are protected by procedural safeguards. These safeguards include parent/guardian consent for evaluations, re-evaluation, release of information, and placement of the student with a disability in a special education placement. Safeguards also include notification to parents/guardians, and the right to pre conference meetings, mediation, or impartial due process hearings. A full explanation of procedural safeguards is contained in the "Procedural Safeguards Notice" which is available upon request by calling the Special Education Office at 717-235-4811.

All communications regarding special education services are provided in English or, if necessary, in other languages solely used by parents/guardians. If a person does not understand any written information, further explanation may be requested by contacting the school district. When necessary, the district will also arrange for an interpreter for parents/guardians with limited English proficiency, or if a parent/guardian is deaf or blind or has no written language, the school district will arrange for communication in the mode normally used by the parent/guardian (e.g. sign language, Braille, or oral communication).

For more information, contact the Director of Special Education, Southern York County School District, 717-235-4811, extension 7229.