

**Student / Parent Handbook**

**2015-16**





Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians,

 Welcome to Open Campus PA! We are pleased to be able to offer a quality, supportive, and individualized online education program to our students through our Open Campus PA program. This program is a collaborative effort between the Hempfield, Manheim Township, and Penn Manor school districts to provide additional learning options for students. The web-based courses that comprise this program have been meticulously reviewed for quality of content, ease of navigation, and adherence to Pennsylvania Core standards. Course instructors are trained in online course facilitation and are committed to providing personal and timely support for all students.

 What sets our program apart from commercially provided alternatives is the fact that students remain in their local school districts. Their course instructors, their guidance counselors, and our schools’ administrative teams continuously monitor their work. Full-time online students may continue to be involved in extracurricular activities, class trips, school social events, and they have use of school facilities including the school library. Seniors graduate with their classmates and they receive diplomas from their respective school districts. We feel that community connection is invaluable and we are proud to be able to maintain that through our virtual schools program.

 This handbook has been developed to provide you with an overview of our virtual schools program, support system, and important policies and procedures. It includes clear guidelines on the responsibilities of the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), and the school districts. It is important for you to remember that you have selected a program that is part of the public school system and therefore must comply with various state and federal regulations.

 We look forward to working with you. Our commitment is to provide our students with the best support we can to ensure they are successful, and we have a collaborative team in place that is dedicated to achieving that goal. Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information.



Debbie Lugar

Director

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**PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

***Mission of Open Campus PA***

To transcend the boundaries of time and space, providing students with innovative options to learn, grow, and achieve.

***Open Campus PA Strategic Plan***

1. To identify, coordinate the development of, and provide quality online courses that meet the needs of full and part-time online learners.
2. To support and encourage the continued expansion of the online learning program to broaden the variety of courses offered to students in all partner school districts.
3. To effectively deliver online instruction through rich, rigorous course content that is aligned to Pennsylvania Core Standards and that encourages the development of critical and higher-level thinking skills.
4. To effectively facilitate online instruction through continuous communication, personal connection, collaboration, and timely feedback.
5. To develop, modify, and continuously evaluate every facet of the online learning program and accompanying policies and procedures, to ensure a quality experience for students, parents/guardians, and instructional staff.

**SUPPORT SERVICES**

***Open Campus PA Administration***

The Open Campus PA director ensures the effective administration and operation of the program. This includes overseeing the design and facilitation of courses, establishing communication between all stakeholders, student enrollment, grade reporting, and other facets of Open Campus PA. The director informs the Open Campus PA Steering Committee of the status of associated activities and makes recommendations.

The Open Campus PA Steering Committee consists of superintendents, directors, and administrators from each of the three partner school districts as well as a member of the local business community and representatives from the Pennsylvania State Education Association. The Steering Committee governs the Open Camps PA program, reviewing recommendations regarding all aspects of the program and collaborating on decisions.

***Course Instructors***

Open Campus PA course instructors serve as the primary providers of the academic and social growth of our online students. They include their contact information and office hours within the syllabus attached to the course and that information is routinely repeated within other areas of the online course. Instructor responsibilities include:

* arranging an introductory meeting with students (at each partner district) prior to, or in unison with, the start date of the online course.
* working with district technology staff and Open Campus PA director to ensure that all students are able to successfully access online courses along with any materials, media, activities, etc. contained within the online course.
* maintaining regular contact with all students (from each partner district).
* monitoring student progress and needs through their daily interaction within the course, completion of required work, and personal electronic communication.
* continuously monitoring activity, collaboration, and communications between students, within the online course.
* regularly reporting student progress to appropriate guidance counselors and school administrators.
* contacting parents/guardians of students whose attendance and/or academic progress is problematic.
* retrieving and providing each school with student grades on locally designated dates and by request.
* notifying associated school district guidance counselor of any student’s desire to withdraw from an online course. Enrollments must occur within 10 school days of the start of the course,
* withdrawing students must continue to submit work until the withdrawal is processed. This is addressed and completed on a case-by-case basis.

***Guidance Counselors***

Local school district guidance counselors provide students with information regarding online opportunities and they initiate the process of enrolling students in online courses. Counselors may suggest online versions of courses depending upon the student’s academic history and the requirements of the course. Guidance counselor responsibilities include:

* guiding prospective students in the completion of the Open Campus PA enrollment form.
* submitting all completed enrollment forms to Open Campus PA by specified date.
* following up with online students regarding attendance or academic issues.
* entering course final grades into the local student information system (Sapphire) for students whose instructor is from a partner school district.
* notifying course instructor of any student’s desire to withdraw from an online course. Withdrawals must occur within 10 school days of the start of the course, and students must continue to submit work until the withdrawal is processed.
* providing Open Campus PA with any student accessibility requirements and Individualized Education Plans.
* inviting online course instructors to take part in IEP meetings (either in person or remotely).

***Technical Help***

Open Campus PA provides free technical support for online students and course instructors to use for assistance with any technical issues related to Open Campus PA courses. Every partner school district provides assistance to its resident students and instructors, which considers the equipment, network, and other components unique to each district. Access technical assistance by going to the Open Campus PA website ([www.opencampuspa.net](http://www.opencampuspa.net)) and clicking on the **Support** tab. There you will find each district’s Help Desk link.

**ENROLLMENT**

Students in grades 9-12, who are currently enrolled in any of the three partner school districts, are eligible to take one or more online courses through Open Campus PA, with approval from their home school district guidance counselor. Acceptance is based upon completion of the required enrollment form and successful completion of the prerequisite online course tutorial, *Essentials of Online Learning* (first time Open Campus students only). Courses are open for enrollment as long as space is available. A course may not run if enrollment is below the minimum required number of students. Counselors may have the option of placing students on a waiting list for a course that has reached enrollment capacity. If space becomes available, the student will be notified.

A student may withdraw from a course up to two weeks after the start date. To withdraw from a course, the student must provide notice to both the course instructor and to his/her guidance counselor. Students who simply stop participating in a course without submitting a formal request to withdraw will continue to receive zeros for all non-submitted work through the end of the course, which will be reflected in a final grade.

**TEXTBOOKS, EQUIPMENT, AND SUPPLIES**

Each Open Campus PA course syllabus lists materials required for the course. Most course materials are provided electronically; however, any additional textbooks or other books will be provided by the school district(s). Some ancillary materials may be the responsibility of the student. Any additional required materials will be listed on the course syllabus as well as with the course description on the Open Campus PA website.

**OPEN CAMPUS PA CALENDAR**

Open Campus PA operates on a calendar that is very close to, but independent of, its three partner school districts. Courses are provided using the block scheduling system (unless otherwise noted). Full and half-credit courses must be completed during an 18-week semester. A general calendar indicating marking period start and end dates can be found at [www.opencampuspa.net](http://www.opencampuspa.net).

Instructors will provide calendars and pacing guides within the syllabus for each course. Students must submit assignments by deadlines listed on the course calendar. Coursework not received by the due date will automatically be recorded as a zero. In *some instances*, students *may* be permitted to turn in late work, with a grade penalty, if arrangements are made with the course instructor.

Holidays and school breaks may not always align with those provided by the student’s home school district. All Open Campus PA students are required to abide by the Open Campus PA school calendar. Any conflicts should be addressed to the course instructor well in advance; they will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Students should strive to complete and submit required assignments ahead of any requested absences.

**GRADES**

Open Campus PA spans three different school districts with three different student information systems. Therefore, Moodle will be the primary site where students (and parents) can access current running grades for their online course(s).

Final/marking period grades will be entered, by the instructor, into his/her resident school district Sapphire student information system, but only for his/her resident school district students. Marking period and final grades for non-resident school district students will be submitted by the course instructor to the student’s resident school district guidance counselor, who will then enter them into that district’s Sapphire student information system.

Open Campus PA does not follow a specific grading scale. Numeric grades will be converted to letter grades based on the resident school district’s grading scale. The resident school district counselors will address weighting of grades and other special considerations.

**LATE WORK POLICY**

Timely completion of required work and submission of assignments is critical to the success of the online student. Due dates for all coursework are published in the course syllabus and/or in a separate calendar or document on the course home page. Course instructors also provide regular reminders of upcoming deadlines.

If a student does not complete an assignment by the specified due date, a grade of **zero** will be recorded in the online grade book. Requests for make-up work will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If you know you may be turning an assignment in late because of an illness or for any other legitimate reason, you must notify your course instructor **in advance** to make arrangements. This policy is intended to help students recover if they fall behind in a course; it is not intended to allow repeated tardiness in work submission.

**ADVANCE WARNING SYSTEM**

If a student’s cumulative grade in an online course is below 70% midway through the course, the course instructor will alert the student, parent/guardian, and resident school district guidance counselor via email, telephone, or both. This will provide the opportunity for students to receive support in addition to instructor-provided academic support.

**FINAL EXAMS / AP EXAMS**

Students enrolled in an Open Campus PA courses may be required to take a final exam, depending upon the course. Final exams for core subject-area courses may be required to be taken on-site. Additional information will be provided by course instructors.

Students enrolled in an Advanced Placement course will complete the AP exam at their resident school district. Procedures for this will accompany the AP course.

**NCAA APPROVAL**

Courses offered through Open Campus PA are approved for NCAA (National Collegiate Academic Association) credit, unless otherwise noted.

**TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

Open Campus PA works diligently with its partner school districts to ensure students and staff are able to easily access courses housed within the Open Campus PA learning management system (Moodle). Students will receive login credentials upon enrollment in a course. Parents have the option to receive credentials that will allow Moodle grade book access.

Students taking an Open Campus PA course are required to have a working computer, updated software (details provided on the Open Campus PA website and/or within your course) and Internet access. In some cases, students will be scheduled to complete online course work during the school day, but may need to continue working off-campus. Other students may be completing online course work entirely off-campus. Dependable Internet access is necessary in either case, either from home or from a public facility that offers Wi-Fi.

**PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Parents/Guardians of virtual schools students have unique **opportunities** and **responsibilities** when participating in the education of their children.

Parents/Guardians are expected to:

* Directly supervise your child’s education at home.
* Provide a physical environment conducive to the child’s educational needs.
* Talk with your child about the responsibilities involved with taking courses online.
* Accompany your child to advisor/counselor/administrative meetings pertaining to his/her education.
* Obtain and keep a record of the information needed to log in to the online courseware, to monitor your child’s progress.
* Log in regularly to monitor your child’s progress.
* Comply with the school district’s attendance policy, as it relates to Open Campus PA students.
* Direct your child to contact the course instructor immediately, should an issue arise that may be preventing him/her from completing required work on time and/or satisfactorily.
* Assist student in complying with all Open Campus PA rules, policies, and procedures.
* Assure that all work submitted by the student was completed solely by the student.
* Notify your student’s course instructor if any change occurs with your or your child’s contact information or academic status.
* Provide student with transportation as needed, to participate in standardized testing or other required on-site school activities.

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Students also have unique **opportunities** and **responsibilities** when pursuing their education through our Open Campus PA program.

Students are expected to:

* Follow the Open Campus PA and course calendars, and complete all work by designated dates.
* Agree to follow all policies outlined in this handbook.
* Contact your course instructor **immediately** with any questions or problems that may arise with course content or site navigation, or if you are currently experiencing a major technical issue.
* Contact your course instructor **immediately** to discuss any issues that may impact your ability to complete work on schedule or satisfactorily.
* Notify your course instructor of any planned excused absences. \*Your school district attendance office must approve all absences.
* Communicate appropriately online when sending email, when communicating with classmates and instructors, and when speaking on the telephone or leaving voicemail.
* Use your own login credentials to access courses, and complete **your own** coursework, only!
* Be respectful of **all** individuals involved with providing you the privilege of being enrolled in the Open Campus PA program.

**OPEN CAMPUS PA RESPONSIBILITIES**

Open Campus PA and partner school districts will:

* Provide high quality courses that align with state and Common Core standards for each subject area.
* Ensure all courses are facilitated by certified instructors deemed highly-qualified in their subject areas.
* Enroll students in courses that align with school district grade level and graduation requirements.
* Enroll students in the required number of credits, to align with grade level and graduation requirements.
* Ascertain that all Open Campus PA courses in which students are enrolled, are in compliance state and federal standards and the curriculum of the school districts.
* Submit course grades to the district’s student information systems in accordance with marking period, semester, and end-of-year reporting.
* Communicate special education and I.E.P. requirements to course instructors.
* Resolve any communication issues with course instructors.
* Regularly communicate with *full-time* online students and parents to update them on:
	+ applicable school activities
	+ health screening requirements
	+ standardized testing requirements/dates
	+ marking period deadlines
	+ grade-level news & events
	+ graduation project requirements
	+ any other information normally provided to on-site students and applicable to online students
* Continuously review online course content and course facilitation.
* Continuously evaluate the need for additional online courses .

**ATTENDANCE**

Attendance in Open Campus PA courses is determined by students’ active involvement in discussions and activities. These are required to be consistently accessed and completed throughout the week. Details are provided in the syllabus for each course. Issues with non-attendance will be addressed by appropriate administrators at the student’s resident school district.

**INFRACTIONS**

Acceptable use, plagiarism, student behavior, and other policies signed and in effect at the student’s resident school district remain in effect for Open Campus PA. Course instructors will provide guidelines and consequences for policy infractions. Administrators from the student’s resident school district will provide follow-up and any disciplinary action.