

Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery BOCES Distance Learning Project

Student Handbook 2017-2018 School Year

Revised 8/8/17



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I. OVERVIEW OF DISTANCE LEARNING PROJECT

Introduction

The HFM BOCES Distance Learning Project is a collaborative effort among schools in the region. The distance learning network is a two-way, fully interactive, full-motion video and audio system connecting specially designed classrooms in participating school districts. The network uses fiber-optic cable and telecommunications technology to enable a teacher and students in a distance learning classroom in one school to see, hear, and talk to students in comparably equipped classrooms in other schools on the network. The simultaneously interactive environment means that the teacher and all students remain in visual and verbal communication at all times during a class.

Purpose

The principal goal of the Distance Learning Project is to expand educational and career training opportunities in Hamilton, Fulton, and Montgomery Counties.

Philosophy

The HFM BOCES Distance Learning Network is designed to supplement existing curriculum and instructional staff. Project participants are committed to providing students, staff, and community members with a maximum number of quality educational opportunities within the local district.

Project Participants

Nine (9) sites are connected to the project. They are:

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Amsterdam | HFM BOCES Career & Technical Center |
| Broadalbin-Perth | Mayfield |
| Fonda-Fultonville | Oppenheim-Ephratah-St. Johnsville |
| Fort Plain | Wells |
| Gloversville | |

Other districts in the region may also join the network in later years. The project participants are also connected to 51 other sites in the Capital Region, Franklin-Essex-Hamilton, Questar III, and Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES regions. Connections to distance learning projects in other regions have been implemented as well.

The Distance Learning Classroom

The classroom in which the teacher is located is the host site. The classrooms to which a host site transmits are called the remote or receive sites.

The standard distance learning classroom is equipped with two-way, fully interactive audio/video equipment. Most distance learning classrooms utilize the following equipment:

- a. An overhead-mounted document camera to display visual material and serve as an "electronic chalkboard."
- b. A camera focused on the teacher. In most rooms, this camera is in the front of the room.
- c. A camera in the front of the room focused on the students.
- d. One (1) or two (2) ceiling microphones, a surface-mounted microphone at the teacher station, and a lavalier wireless microphone for the teacher. In a handful of rooms, surface-mounted microphones at each student table are utilized instead of ceiling microphones.
- e. Two displays (most often one projection system and one LCD flat panel display) in the front of the room for student and teacher viewing of each remote site and any material displayed by means of the document camera, computer, and interactive whiteboard panel.
- f. A Blu-ray player for local presentation use.
- g. Teacher station touch screen controls to select the camera to be active and to adjust the cameras (pan, tilt, zoom).
- h. A phone/fax/copy machine to transmit hardcopy between sites (quizzes, homework, instructions, etc.) and to contact students individually through a phone call.
- i. Computers at the student desks (in some classrooms).

Photos of typical distance learning classrooms, showing equipment and layout, can be found on the regional Distance Learning web site at <http://dl.neric.org/>.

Schedule of Classes

A copy of the overall distance learning schedule can be found on the regional Distance Learning web site at <http://dl.neric.org/>.

II. STUDENT GUIDELINES

A. Course Registration

1. Guidance counselors in the respective school districts schedule students for courses on the distance learning network.
2. Guidance counselors generate a list of student enrollment and submit the list to the host school's guidance counselors.

B. Student Orientation

All students scheduled for distance learning courses:

1. Are provided with an opportunity to visit the distance learning classroom before the course begins.
2. Receive a copy of the distance learning student reference manual.
3. Must sign, along with their parents, a student agreement form before starting a distance learning class.

C. Student Evaluation

1. Distance learning students are evaluated in accordance with the approved course description. The host-site teacher will inform students of the evaluation methods and processes at the beginning of each course.
2. The final examination schedule is coordinated through and disseminated by the building principals.

D. Student Grading

1. All grades are the responsibility of the host-site teacher. The teacher ensures that grade reports are transmitted to the remote-site schools by courier or by fax on the dates stated in the host school's calendar.
2. Host site teachers submit interim (5-week) reports to the remote sites on their dates stated in the host school's calendar, using the official form of the sending school.

E. Student Record Keeping

1. Student records for distance learning courses are kept by the host site teachers. This includes grades, attendance, and any other information deemed necessary.
2. Supervising staff members at the remote sites take daily attendance in their individual distance learning classrooms and report all absences to the appropriate authority, in accordance with school attendance procedures.
3. The host site teacher sends all cumulative records to each distance learning student's respective school at the conclusion of the course.

F. Student Attendance

1. The host-site district attendance policy will be followed in any distance learning course.
2. For courses offered directly by a college for college credit, that college's attendance policy will be followed.

G. Student Add / Drop of Course

1. It is understood that the adding of a course will be governed by the student's home district policies and procedures. The host site teacher will be consulted prior to any change. In the event of a dispute, however, the host site will ultimately determine whether the student may enter the class.
2. The dropping of a course will be governed by the student's home district policies and procedures. The host site teacher will be consulted prior to any change.
3. For courses offered directly by a college for college credit, the add/drop policies of the college will be used.

H. Student Conduct

The success of the distance learning program requires the cooperation and support of students. The expectations outlined in the student agreement form must be understood and agreed to by students and parents alike.

In particular, students are expected to follow all school rules, including those specifically developed for the distance learning program. In cases where rules are not followed, students are subject to local procedures administered by the teachers, site administrator(s), and/or others as designated.

I. Student Discipline

1. The teacher conducting a distance learning class is expected to maintain an appropriate learning environment.
2. The receiving district shall assume full responsibility and liability for the supervision and maintenance of discipline of students in the receiving school.

J. Class Cancellations and Interruptions

1. Classes will only be canceled for factors at the host sites, such as equipment failure or snow days.
2. Cancellations at remote sites are treated as days missed and the students are responsible for making up the work.
3. Scheduled interruptions, such as fire drills or field trips, that take students out of distance learning classes should be held to a minimum. Whenever possible, remote sites should be notified in advance of such events.

DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM STUDENT AGREEMENT FORM

The Distance Learning Program represents an opportunity for students to take advantage of the latest technology and instructional techniques and to receive courses that might not normally be offered in this school. The program can only function with the cooperation of the students. Students enrolled in distance learning courses and their parents will enter into an agreement whereby the students will conduct themselves in such a manner as to ensure the optimum utilization of the program.

Please carefully read the information below and sign in the space provided to indicate your understanding of the rules and your agreement to abide by them.

As a student taking a course on the Distance Learning Network, I understand that:

- A. Appropriate behavior is expected at all times. Insubordination (defined as anything that interferes with teaching or learning in the classroom) of any kind will not be tolerated.
- B. I will follow all school rules as outlined by my school's code of conduct, and those established by the host-site teachers, including those rules specifically developed for the Distance Learning Network. In particular:
 - Inappropriate language or gestures will not be tolerated.
 - I will treat school property with respect and I will be held responsible for intentional damage or destruction that I do to any property in the distance learning classroom.
- C. I will handle distance learning classroom equipment only if authorized to do so.
- D. I will sit within camera view at all times unless instructed by the teacher to do otherwise.
- E. I understand that, at times, classroom activities will be video recorded.
- F. Any electronic devices (including cell phones) must be turned off to avoid interference with the classroom audio system, unless otherwise authorized by my host-site teacher or local school district policies.
- G. I will only attend conflicting local school assemblies when I am directly involved in presenting the assembly program. In addition, my distance learning class takes precedent over conflicting extracurricular / co-curricular activities. I further understand that, if I must miss a class, advance notice to my teacher is my responsibility.

In cases where rules are not followed, students will be subject to a range of penalties from verbal warning to exclusion from the course.

I, _____, understand the significance of the Distance Learning Program environment.
Student's Name

I further understand the rules listed above and agree to adhere to them. I am making a commitment to complete the course for which I have registered.

Course Name(s) School year

Signature of Student Date

Signature of Parent(s) Date