Montgomery Public Schools
ACCESS/Virtual Program
Student/Parent
Handbook

632 South Union Street · Montgomery, AL 36104
Phone: 334-269-3830

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Purpose

The purpose of the Montgomery Public Schools Virtual Program is to provide motivated, independent learners with engaging, student-centered courses to meet the students' educational needs in an online environment that will allow flexible, individualized learning.

What is the MPS Virtual Program?

MPS Virtual Program is a state-wide initiative to provide students with an alternative to the classroom. ***Classes are conducted entirely online in conjunction with the state's ACCESS program which already provides the system's students' with Distance Learning classes.*** We will provide the chromebooks that the students will use for classes and ALL students' will need is an internet connection in their home.

Initial Student Eligibility:

- ☐ Reside in Montgomery County, enrolled in a MPS traditional high school
- ☐ A rising 9th-12th grader
- ☐ On track to graduate with cohort (with minimum required carnegie units for grade level)
- ☐ Passed ALL classes during previous academic year
- ☐ Have consistent, daily access to the internet in the home
- ☐ Have personal transportation to the virtual site (transportation is NOT provided)
- ☐ Meet all other requirements for enrollment in Montgomery Public Schools

Eligibility for Continued Participation:
- ☐ Reside in Montgomery County
- ☐ Maintain minimum passing grades in **ALL** courses taken during the current academic year
- ☐ Remain on track for graduation (evaluated immediately following current academic year

☐ Maintain consistent transportation to the virtual site

☐ Maintain appropriate course progression as measured by the completion of weekly assignments, quizzes, and tests

☐ Adhere to the academic integrity contract

☐ Remain in good standings a student of the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program by adhering to all expectations, procedures, and policies of the MPS Board of Education, MPS ACCESS/Virtual Program, the Alabama State Department of Education, and ACCESS

☐ Students with discipline infractions resulting in suspension or expulsion will be immediately removed from the program

☐ Students who fail more than one class for the academic year will be removed from the program

Characteristics of a GREAT ACCESS Student:

☐ In general, more successful web-based learners are those who are motivated, independent learners, who are computer literate and effective communicators

☐ Students should also be interested in the concept of online learning and be willing to ask for help and share virtual learning problems/concerns with others

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General Information

Location:
The Montgomery Public Schools Virtual Program is located at:

Booker T. Washington Complex
632 South Union Street
Montgomery, AL 36104

Hours of Operation:
The hours of operation will be:

Monday thru Friday - 9:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Testing Schedule:
All unit tests, quizzes, and term examinations must be taken in the physical presence of a MPS ACCESS/Virtual School Program staff member. **Currently, ALL tests will be taken at home timed specifically for each subject (see Timed Tests Handout).** Students must report to the MPS Virtual School Program site, to take these tests, quizzes, and exams. **Transportation is not provided; therefore, students and/or parents must arrange for reliable and safe transportation according to the terms of the signed Transportation Agreement.**
The MPS ACCESS/Virtual School Program students will take all state-mandated assessments at their zone schools. Below is the tentative testing schedule for the 2021-2022 school-year, specific dates will be available at a later date.

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State-Mandated Assessment Testing Window

Date	Grade	Test
August 2020	12th	Civics Test
August - September 2020	9th & 10th	
September 2020	12th	Civics Test
October 2020	12th	Civics Test
October 2020	11th	
November 2020	12th	Civics Test
December 2020	12th	Civics Test
February 2021	12th	Civics Test
February 2021	12th	ACT WorkKeys
April 2021	12th	Civics Test
April 2021	10th	
April 2021	11th Grade	ACT Plus Writing
May 2021	12th	Civics Test
May 2021	9th & 10th	

Parking

Only licensed students may drive themselves to the MPS ACCESS/Virtual School Program site, located at 632 South Union Street. All other students must be driven by a parent or guardian.

Grading Scale

The Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program will utilize the following grading scale:

<u>**GRADING SCALE**</u>
A = 90 - 100
B = 80 - 89
C = 70 - 79
D = 60 - 69
F = 0 - 59

Student Benefits, Expectations, and Requirements

Virtual schooling offers students numerous benefits in terms of time flexibility and program customization. Along with these advantages, students also assume increased responsibility in time management, organization, self-direction, and self-regulation.

Benefits

- ❏ Instruction from Alabama-certified teachers
- ❏ No tuition, no minimal fees
- ❏ Accredited diploma upon satisfying all requirements for graduation
- ❏ Flexibility and personalized learning experiences
- ❏ Individualized academic plan
- ❏ Self-pacing and opportunity for accelerated advancement
- ❏ Flexibility to pursue personal interests intensively

Expectations

- ❏ Technology
  - ❏ Acquire and maintain consistent Internet access

- ❏ Attendance
  - ❏ Adhere to Montgomery Public Schools Board of Education's attendance policy
  - ❏ Attend class daily in accordance with the Montgomery Public Schools calendar
  - ❏ Attendance requirement is satisfied by logging into ACCESS courses daily
  - ❏ Students are required to physically be present at the Montgomery Public Schools Virtual Program site, **at least one day per week**
  - ❏ Students are required to participate in the 4-5 day orientation/training at the beginning of the school year

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❏ Course Progression

  ❏ <mark>Students must maintain appropriate course progression as measured by the completion of weekly assignments, quizzes, and tests.</mark>

  ❏ Students are permitted to work ahead of the standard course progression and finish courses early

❏ Proctored Examinations

  ❏ All tests, exams, and Alabama state-mandated tests must be taken in the presence of a proctor at the MPS ACCESS/Virtual Program site or zoned school (state-mandated tests ONLY). Students are responsible for scheduling testing appointments with the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program staff.

❏ Scores earned on exams that are not taken at an approved testing site with a proctor are subject to invalidation and review by the Montgomery Public Schools Virtual Program staff.

❏ <mark>Students must provide their own transportation to the testing site</mark>.

Minimum Requirements to Remain Enrolled

❏ Reside in Montgomery County, Alabama
❏ Maintain consistent, daily access to the Internet (minimum 1.5 Mbs)
❏ Minimum passing average in **ALL** courses taken during the current academic year
❏ Accumulate no more than 5 unexcused, full-day absences during the current academic year
❏ Maintain appropriate course progression as measured by the completion of weekly assignments, quizzes, and tests
❏ Remain in good standing as a student of the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program
❏ Students with discipline infractions resulting in suspension or expulsion will immediately be removed from the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program

Academic Integrity Contract

The Academic Integrity Contract of the Montgomery Public Schools

ACCESS/Virtual Program combines the existing Academic Integrity Policy of ACCESS

Distance Learning and additional requirements posed by Montgomery Public

Schools.

ACCESS Distance Learning

ACCESS Distance Learning students must sign a commitment form attesting to

academic integrity regarding each of the following topics. If a student fails to abide

by these policies, the student will be removed from the course with a failing grade

and will be subject to other consequences as determined by ACCESS and local school

system administrators.

- ❏ All work must be completed by the student alone
- ❏ Any collaboration among students must be pre-approved by the teacher
- ❏ **Plagiarism will not be allowed in any form. This will include copying or using the ideas or words of others and presenting them as one's own.**
- ❏ Students will not allow others to copy their work
- ❏ Content from the Internet will not be misused or misrepresented

All ACCESS Distance Learning teachers utilize a variety of technologies to check

student work for authenticity. If an instructor confirms that a student has

plagiarized work in any manner, the student will be subject to consequences

determined by ACCESS Distance Learning administrative staff, the distance learning

teacher, and the local school system, and will be subject to removal from the course.

<u>Montgomery Public Schools - ACCESS/Virtual Program</u>

Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program students must take all unit tests, course examinations, and Alabama mandated assessments in an environment proctored by Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/VirtualProgram staff <mark>(Timed-At-Home tests are now being administered).</mark> Students are responsible for the following:

- Completing unit tests and course examinations in the proctored environment without the use of study aids or computer help unless allowed by the online teacher.
- Provide reliable transportation to and from the testing site(s) (designated by the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program staff)

Scores earned on tests or exams not taken at an approved testing site with a proctor are subject to invalidation and review by the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual School Program Academic Integrity Committee. Additionally, in accordance with ACCESS Distance Learning policy, the student may be removed from the course with a failing grade and may be subject to dismissal from the MPS ACCESS/Virtual Program.

Virtual Program Procedures

ATTENDANCE/TRUANCY

Students are required to adhere to the attendance policy as stated in the Montgomery Public Schools Attendance Policy. ACCESS/Virtual School Program students' attendance requirement is satisfied by logging in daily. Students are required to physically report to the Virtual Program site at least one day per week. If a student fails to physically report to the Virtual Program site for two (2) consecutive weeks, disciplinary action will be taken.

In the event of an absence, students are to provide a written excuse note of absences to the Virtual Program staff within three (3) days of a recorded absence, in accordance with the Montgomery Public Schools Attendance Policy. In cases of chronic absence or truancy (5 total days of unexcused absences), and after consultation with the appropriate staff, in accordance with policy and procedures, the Virtual Program staff will take action including but not limited to removal from the Virtual School Program, referral to the truancy office, issuance of legal notices, and juvenile court intervention. These actions will take place in an effort to remedy any social, emotional, or family support issues that may contribute to a student's excessive absences.

DRESS CODE

Montgomery Public Schools has a uniform policy, to ensure proper wear of the uniforms, see descriptions below. ACCESS/Virtual Program students will wear shirts that are the color of their zoned school.

Shirts

• Collared Polo •Long/Short Sleeved •No Symbols •Must be tucked •Must fit properly •Only white t-shirts worn underneath

Slacks

•Khaki colored slacks (no jean material) •Shorts/Skirts/Skorts must be no higher than the bottom of the knee •Belt must be worn •Belt colors (black, brown, tan, or white) •Slacks/Shorts must fit properly •No Sagging Will Be Tolerated

Shoes

•Must Cover Feet •No Bedroom Slippers •No Flip Flops •No Stilettos or Slides

Jackets

•Zippered or Button Down Only •No Pullovers •Uniform Shirt Must Be Visible •No cropped jackets or vests

Jewelry

•Earrings worn by females ONLY •No nose jewelry •No excessive jewelry • Loop earrings must be no larger than a quarter •No heavy chains with large medallions •No dental grills •No large finger rings

DISCIPLINARY DUE PROCESS

For any disciplinary violations made by ACCESS/Virtual Program students, a referral will be written by the Virtual Program teacher, who will contact the parent concerning the offense. The referral will be submitted to the Virtual Program administrator/designee. The administrator/designee will investigate a student's alleged misconduct and determine whether disciplinary action is necessary. The administrator/designee will provide due process by explaining the program's view of the offense, the information gathered during the investigation, and the consequences or other behavioral intervention as determined by the administrator. The administrator/designee will allow the student to explain his/her side or view of the offense. If the administrator/designee has knowledge of any serious student misconduct, the administrator/designee may immediately remove the student from the ACCESS/Virtual Program. If it is determined that disciplinary action is not warranted, the incident will be deleted and any suspension days will be changed to excused absences. Parents will be provided written notice of suspensions and/or removal from the ACCESS/Virtual Program.

GRADING/RETENTION IN ACCESS/VIRTUAL PROGRAM PROCEDURES

In order to remain enrolled in the ACCESS/Virtual Program, students must maintain passing grades in all courses. Grades will be reviewed bi-weekly by the Virtual Program staff. Failure to maintain passing grades in any course will result in the following:

- 1st week - Conference with parent and student

- 2nd week – If any grade is below a 60 average, for a second consecutive week, the student will be required to report to the Virtual Program site for a minimum of one (1) week, for monitoring (conference with parent and student).

- 3rd week – If any grade is below a 60 average, the student will continue to report to the Virtual Program site for mandatory monitoring (conference with parent and student).

- 4th week – If any grade is below a 60 average, the student will be withdrawn from the Virtual Program and enrollment in zoned school will resume (conference with parent and student).

*Note: Enrollments and withdrawals after the 1st-nine weeks WILL NOT be allowed!

FIELD TRIPS

The Montgomery County Board of Education, recognizing that educational field trips to various locations for instructional purposes help provide desirable learning experiences, shall delegate to the superintendent the responsibility for development of administrative criteria governing field trips. Only those field trips that grow out of the instructional program or are otherwise related to the instructional program are to be permitted on school time. Parents are to submit to the ACCESS/ Virtual Program, the purpose for the field trip for their child, at least 10 days in advance for approval. The cost for the field trip will be the responsibility of the parent.

OFF-CAMPUS BEHAVIOR

Students may be subject to disciplinary action that may include suspension/removal from the Virtual Program for off-campus criminal behavior that results in the student being legally charged with a felony and the student's continued presence in school poses a danger to persons or property or disrupts the educational process.

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LOST/STOLEN EQUIPMENT

The equipment is provided for use only while a part of the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual School Program. In the event that the student leaves the Virtual School Program or moves out of Montgomery County, the equipment must be returned to the Virtual Program. Failure to return the computer with assigned accessories will result in the equipment being considered stolen and a police report will be filed. ***If equipment is lost/stolen during the course of the school year, a replacement will only be considered after a copy of the police report has been received by the Virtual Program (depending on the circumstances, a replacement may NOT be available)!***

Magnet School Interest

During your enrollment in the ACCESS/Virtual Program, it is imperative that you inform the facilitator of your interest in applying for magnet school when the application process begins. This will expedite the process on behalf of the Virtual Program in preparing documentation needed for the completion of the application.

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Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Where is Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program located?

A. The Montgomery Public Schools Virtual Program is currently located at 632 South Union Street. The Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program is open on Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. for monitoring, guidance counseling, and proctored testing.

Q. What are the enrollment criteria for the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program?

A. The requirements for student enrollment are that the student:

- Reside in Montgomery County, enrolled in a MPS traditional high school
- A rising 9th-12th grader
- On track to graduate with cohort (with minimum required carnegie units for grade level)
- Passed ALL classes during previous academic year
- Have consistent, daily access to the internet in the home
- Have personal transportation to the virtual site (transportation is NOT provided)
- Meet all other requirements for enrollment in Montgomery Public Schools

Q. What does On Track for Graduation mean?

A. A student who is on track for graduation has earned the appropriate amount of Carnegie units necessary for grade placement above 9 as indicated below:
10th - 6 credits
11th - 11 credits
12th - 18 credits (and must be able to complete ALL graduation requirements within the year

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Q. What curriculum does the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program use?

A. The Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual School Program uses the curriculum of ACCESS Distance Learning, a program administered by the Alabama State Department of Education. All course curricula are aligned to Alabama Courses of Study.

Q. Who are the teachers for the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program?

A. The Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program utilizes Montgomery Public Schools and ACCESS Distance Learning teachers. All teachers are Highly Qualified and certified in their content areas in accordance with the Alabama State Department of Education policy.

Q. What type of diploma does the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program offer?

A. Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program offers the Alabama high school diploma. We offer Advanced Placement courses, which meet the standards of the College Board's Advanced Placement (AP) curriculum.

Q. Do Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program students have face-to-face requirements?

A. Yes, Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program students have face-to-face obligations for orientation and state-mandated assessments. All course tests must be taken on campus and will be proctored by Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual School Program school staff (**ALL ACCESS tests are currently being administered as at-home timed tests**).

Q. Is transportation provided for students to report to the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program?

A. No. Upon submitting a signed Transportation Agreement, licensed students may drive themselves to the Montgomery Public Schools Virtual Program, located at 632 South Union Street. 9==ALL ACCESS tests are currently being administered as at-home timed tests).== All other students must be driven by a parent or guardian.

Q. What is involved with proctored examinations?

A. All unit tests and term examinations must be taken in the physical presence of a Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program staff member. Students must report to the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program site, to take these tests and exams. Transportation is not provided; therefore, students and/or parents must arrange for reliable and safe transportation according to the terms of the signed Transportation Agreement.

Q. How is attendance recorded for Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program students?

A. Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program students must "attend" class daily in accordance with the Montgomery Public Schools' calendar. Students fulfill attendance requirements when they log into their courses daily. Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program students are required to abide by the Montgomery Public Schools attendance policies and procedures.

Q. How are grades recorded on the transcript for Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program?

A. When students complete their distance learning courses, documentation regarding the students' final grades are downloaded from PowerSchool and synced with Schoology. The registrar posts the final grades to the students' transcripts and places the documentation from students' cumulative folders.

Q. Are Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program students required to take state assessments such as the Pre-ACT, ACT Plus Writing or ACT WorkKeys?

A. Yes, ALL Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program students are required to take all state-mandated assessments. All 11th grade students will take the ACT Plus Writing in the Spring term, and all 12th grade students will take the ACT WorkKeys in the Fall and with re-takes offered in the Spring terms (state-mandated tests will be administered at the students' zone schools).

Q. Does the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program follow the Montgomery Public School's academic calendar?

A. The Montgomery Public Schools Virtual School Program operates on a standard semester system in accordance with the Montgomery Public Schools' academic calendar. The starting and ending date of ACCESS classes (regardless of the format) is determined by the Alabama State Department of Education and is closely aligned with the Montgomery Public Schools' academic calendar.

Q. Are Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program students permitted to graduate early?

A. No, students are permitted to accelerate their high school course progression but not graduate early. The Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual School Program operates as a 12-month school/program (fall, spring, and summer terms). Students are allowed to take additional courses during the regular school year and summer months under the condition that they maintain the minimum pace across all currently enrolled courses.

Q. Does the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program have any extracurricular or sports programs?

A. Yes, school sponsored extracurricular activities, including athletics, are available at the virtual student's zoned school.

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Q. Does the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program offer a summer program?

A. The Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual School Program operates a summer program for students who wish to earn additional credits toward early graduation.

Q. What types of student support services are offered?

• Orientation – Four/Five (4-5) days of face-to face activities for online learning preparation to include 2 face-to-face meetings and 3 days of online experiences (depending upon the beginning of school calendar).
• Monitoring - Tracking of student attendance, course progression, grades, and exam proctoring.
• Assessment - All state-mandated tests may be administered by the zoned school; ALL other assessments (subject area) will be proctored at the Virtual lab

Q. What are the minimum requirements to remain enrolled in the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program?

A. •Reside in Montgomery County, Alabama

•Maintain consistent, daily access to the Internet (minimum 1.5 Mbs)

•Maintain minimum passing grade in **ALL** courses taken during the current academic year.

•Remain on track for graduation (evaluated at the end of the summer semester immediately following the current academic year)

•Maintain consistent transportation to the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program for testing and other services.

•Accumulate no more than 5 unexcused, full-day absences during the current academic year.

•Maintain appropriate course progression as measured by the completion of weekly assignments, quizzes, and tests.

•Adhere to the Academic Integrity Contract.

• Remain in good standing as a student of the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual School Program by adhering to all expectations, procedures, and policies of the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program, Montgomery Public School Board of Education, the Alabama State Department of Education, and ACCESS.

• Students with discipline infractions resulting in suspension or expulsion will immediately be removed from the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual School Program.

•Students who fail more than one class per academic year will be removed from the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual School Program.

Q. I have more questions; how should I contact the Montgomery Public Schools ACCESS/Virtual Program?

A. If you have additional questions, please contact: J. Kelley Ross (j.kelley.ross@mps.k12.al.us) at the listed email address or call 334-269-3830; 334-312-8962.