

## Overview of the SSISD Virtual Academy

Students participating in the Virtual Academy will engage in learning as outlined in the SSISD Curriculum for all courses. This is very different from the Distance Learning Program offered in the spring of 2020. The Distance Learning Program was specifically created to provide opportunities for continued academic engagement in a temporary, emergency crisis situation, while the Virtual Academy is designed to be a long term educational option that will successfully guide students through a rigorous and comprehensive curriculum for the entire school year.

Parents should carefully consider whether the Virtual Academy is an appropriate option for their children for the 2020-2021 school year. All instruction will be provided through the Academy, but students will need strong at home support in order to create a learning environment that is conducive to a successful education. We are working to finalize a comprehensive guidance document for families who wish to enroll their children in the Virtual Academy. Below is an overview of Virtual Academy guidelines for families to consider:

- Attendance is required daily, Monday through Friday. In order to be counted present each day, students must engage in specified instructional activities that show adequate educational progress for that day.
- Instruction will be provided in an online format. Pre-K through 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will access their courses through Seesaw and 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade students will access their courses through Microsoft Teams. Access to internet service is required for the Virtual Academy.
- Instruction through the Virtual Academy is designed for mastery of the Texas Essential Knowledge and skills for each content area and will follow the sequence and pacing of the SSISD Curriculum.
- Daily instruction will not mirror the traditional on campus instruction. Instruction through the Virtual Academy will be designed to meet the unique needs of students who have a more independent responsibility for their own learning.
- Instruction will primarily consist of recorded video instruction and independent learning activities. This self-guided instruction will be supplemented through live video conferences with teachers in whole group, individual, and small group settings as needed. These live instructional opportunities will be scheduled at regular, consistent times throughout the week.
- It is essential that students develop a daily schedule, in a designated workspace, that allows them to engage in the Virtual Academy on a consistent basis. Resources and support will be offered to families for implementation of the Virtual Academy at home.
- Grading for all Virtual Academy courses will follow the same grading policy as the on-campus model. Virtual Academy courses that earn high school credit will count in the GPA calculation and class rank as outlined in the SSISD grading policy.
- It may not be possible to offer some high school courses in a virtual manner due to the hands-on nature of the course work. Students will be provided a list of courses available through the Virtual Academy. It is possible for students to attend the Virtual Academy and come to campus for specific course work that cannot be completed at home. Transportation will not be provided for these special cases.
- Students who choose the Virtual Academy will be eligible to participate in athletics and other UIL activities as offered.
- Accommodations and support services will be provided virtually where possible. Some specialized services may be provided on campus.