



Handbook 2020-21

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Black Hills Online Learning Community (BHOLC) is a public school partner held to all rules and governance as public schools within the state of South Dakota. We are an online education service using online instruction to provide customized learning opportunities. Our program is administered by Technology and Innovations in Education (TIE), which is a subsidiary of Black Hills Special Services Cooperative, in cooperation with participating South Dakota public schools. We are an approved provider through the South Dakota Virtual School system.

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Mission

Black Hills Online Learning Community collaborates with South Dakota school districts to provide online learning opportunities for their students.

Vision

Each learner deserves a positive and personalized experience.

Beliefs

- Learning should be personalized.
- Concept mastery is the goal for learners.
- Building positive relationships is critical to learner success.

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Signature of Receipt and Agreement

For full time students, an agreement must be signed by a parent/guardian and an official school contact. **By signing this agreement, the parent/guardian indicates receipt of the Black Hills Online Learning Community Handbook and agrees to abide by the policies and expectations of Black Hills Online Learning Community.**

Any reference to “local” school in this document means the school through which a learner is enrolled. Usually this is the student’s resident school district; however, sometimes this is the school to which the student is open enrolled.

Calendar

For 2020-21, the BHOLC school year will run from September 1, 2020 through May 21, 2020 for students in grades K-8. High school students will follow their district’s calendar as much as possible.

Designated Holidays (Learning Facilitators not available, Learners are able to access courses)

- Labor Day (September 7)
- Native American Day (October 12)
- Veteran’s Day (November 11)
- Thanksgiving (November 26-27)
- Christmas/NewYear/Winter Break (December 23 - January 1)
- Martin Luther King Day (January 18)
- President’s Day (February 15)
- Spring Break (April 2-5)

Standard Progress Checkpoints (Grades K-8):

- Last Day to Register: August 21
- First Day of School: September 1
- End of First Quarter: October 30-- Goal of 25% completion in all courses
- End of Second Quarter/First Semester: January 15-- Goal of 50% completion in all courses
- End of Third Quarter: March 19—Goal of 75% completion in all courses
- Last Day of School /End of Second Semester: May 21—All courses should be complete

Families may opt to follow their local district calendar, or they can customize a school schedule with the help of their online learning facilitator(s) to fit their individual needs. Our program strives to allow families flexibility in meeting academic and family needs. However, families should plan to work at a pace that allows for completion of all grade level work within the designated school calendar.

Curriculum

The K12 and Edmentum curriculum is designed to meet the South Dakota Content Standards. These are the same standards used by all public schools in South Dakota. These providers were selected for their expertise and experience in virtual school programs for more than a decade in states across the country. More information can be found at <http://k12.com> and <https://www.edmentum.com/>.

K12 for Grades K-8

Learners in the K12 program for grades K-8 will be enrolled in literature, language arts, mathematics, science, and history. A full list of available courses can be found at <http://www.k12.com/courses/k-8-courses.html>. Offline materials such as textbooks, workbooks, science kits, and math manipulatives are included in this program.

Edmentum for Grades 9-12

Full time learners in grades 9-12 can take 5-7 credits. Course selection should place a primary emphasis on meeting local graduation requirements. Learners are encouraged to establish a plan with their school counselor, outlining their course needs and individual goals. All school districts in South Dakota have the option to enroll students in individual courses via the [South Dakota Virtual School](#). More information about Edmentum and a list of available courses can be found at <https://www.bholc.org/20-21-course-list/>.

Fees

Black Hills Online Learning Community is tuition free to families for regular full-time enrollment (FTE) thanks to our partnerships with local school districts. Students must be enrolled in a participating school district and obtain approval for enrollment in BHOLC before the enrollment deadline ([participating districts](#)).

Materials

All BHOLC learners will need adequate technology to participate in BHOLC. Families should plan for each learner to have access to an individual computer with Internet service for up to six hours a day. Families with multiple online students should plan accordingly. At this time tablet devices are not compatible with course software. Learners will need a laptop or desktop computer ([see detailed specifications](#)).

Learners in grades K-8 in the K12 program will receive offline course materials at no cost. These materials include such resources as textbooks, workbooks, manipulatives, science kits, maps, and/or globes. Reusable materials are expected to be returned upon completion of a course; expendable materials such as workbooks are for the learner to keep.

Offline materials are not included in the Edmentum program for grades 9-12. Most resources will be embedded in the courses, but students may need to provide their own novels for English courses and common household materials may be needed for science labs.

Other expenses that fall within the responsibility of enrolled families include the following: general school supplies, ink for printers, any transportation costs, Internet access, and computer hardware. BHOLC does not provide technology for accessing the program.

Enrollment Requirements

Any learner eligible to be enrolled in a South Dakota public school is eligible to participate in the Black Hills Online Learning Community. BHOLC is a full-time, general education, independent study program. Participation in our program must be approved by a partner school district.

- Enrollment opens April 1 and closes August 21, 2020.
- All required documentation for enrollment must be received at the time of enrollment in the local school. Failure to submit the appropriate documentation may result in non-enrollment in Black Hills Online Learning Community.
- Learners who have received services under the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) must provide this information at time of enrollment. Black Hills Online Learning Community will work with families and school districts on an individual basis to determine whether accommodations can be met through the online learning environment.
- All information on the application must be true and correct. If misrepresentations are made or incorrect information is provided, the application will be deemed as not meeting the requirements of the school and may result in the revocation or halting of enrollment.

Questions regarding enrollment status should be directed to the enrollment coordinator.

There is no discrimination in the admission of learners to this program on the basis of race, creed, color, disability, or gender. Black Hills Online Learning Community provides a free, appropriate public education to all of its learners.

Attendance and Progress

For K-8 students, Learners and Learning Coaches (parent/guardian) should plan to login each school day in order to adequately progress through the content and learning activities. While BHOLC allows for flexibility in pace and schedule, learning coaches must assist Learners to manage their time in a way that allows for completion of all grade level content within the school calendar.

For 9-12 students, daily progress on coursework is highly recommended. Learners should pace themselves to finish a semester course in 84 days or less. Learners who are not making adequate progress may be subject to removal from the BHOLC program. This program is not a perfect fit for all learners; some learners may need the support of a traditional face-to-face learning experience to best meet their academic needs.

Daily attendance: five days per week is suggested.

- A typical school day ranges from 3 to 6 hours, depending on grade level. Learners should plan to “attend” school every day.
- Learning Coaches are responsible for marking attendance in the K12 Online School (OLS).
- Learning Coaches should check in with their learning facilitator about extended absence for family or medical reasons.
- Learning Coaches should be logging in daily and checking email frequently.

The BHOLC school year is divided into four quarters and two semesters. On average, learners in grades K-8 should complete approximately 25% of their courses (literature, language arts, mathematics, science, and history) in each quarter for the following benchmarks:

- First Quarter – October 30 - 25% complete
- Second Quarter - (First Semester) -January 15 - 50% complete
- Third Quarter - March 19 - 75% complete
- Fourth Quarter - (Second Semester) - May 21 - 100% complete

It is in the best interest of all learners to make adequate academic progress. Learners should be engaged daily and completing assignments consistently. If the BHOLC Coordinator and the school of enrollment determine the learner is not making acceptable progress, these entities will work with the learner and learning coach to determine the next steps to best meet student learning needs. In some cases this may mean removal from the BHOLC program.

Courses for students in the Edmentum program for grades 9-12 (like Algebra or Biology) are broken into two semester-based sections. To keep consistent with the school of enrollment, it is suggested that the first section be completed by the end of the first semester, the second section by the end of the second semester. All semester classes should be completed in 84 days or less. A sample schedule based on standard start and end calendar dates for the year is shown in the table below:

Sample Edmentum Schedule for Grades 9-12

	1 st quarter November 1 (50% done with this section)	2 nd quarter January 16 (100% done with this section)	3 rd quarter March 19 (50% done with this section)	4 th quarter May 21 (100% done with this section)
Course 1	Algebra I - 1 st Semester		Algebra I - 2 nd Semester	
Course 2	English I - 1 st Semester		English 1 - 2 nd Semester	
Course 3	Physical Science – 1 st Semester		Physical Science – 2 nd Semester	
Course 4	Geography - 1 st Semester		Geography - 2 nd Semester	
Course 5	World History – 1 st Semester		World History – 2 nd Semester	
Course 6	Spanish I - 1 st Semester		Spanish I - 2 nd Semester	

Many variations to this schedule will exist due to the individualized nature of the program. We encourage Learners to work at a pace that best meets their needs and that allows them to complete the course in a timely manner. If Learners are engaging with the content 4-6 hours per day as recommended, they will likely stay on pace. However, if students are not engaging with the content regularly, they may be withdrawn from the program for lack of participation.

Online Learning Roles & Responsibilities

To help maintain the highest academic expectations, Black Hills Online Learning Community employs local South Dakota highly qualified teachers to oversee all programs and connect with participating families on a regularly scheduled basis. The following descriptions of various roles in our learning community are intended to help create a shared understanding of expectations.

- **Learner**

Learners in the program are traditionally known as students. They participate in online courses and are required to have daily supervision at all grade levels.

Learners:

- Log in to the online school regularly, see attendance section for recommendations.
- Complete assignments, activities, and assessments as directed by the learning coach

and/or Learning Facilitator.

- Engage in appropriate technology use.
- Communicate with Learning Facilitator(s) via phone and/or email.

- **Learning Facilitator**

The learning facilitator is a certified teacher that guides Learners and Learning Coaches. K-8 learners have a grade-level based learning facilitator who oversees progress and connects with families. The learning facilitator is available to answer questions and provide additional support and resources as needed. Learners in grades 9-12 have content-based learning facilitators who support learning, grade coursework, provide feedback on assignments, and are available to answer questions.

K-8 Learning Facilitators:

- Help learners and learning coaches use the Online School (OLS).
- Help learning coaches provide instruction using the k12® curriculum.
- Maintain correspondence that may be in the form of conference calls, email, and/or virtual meeting tools with learners and learning coaches.
- Respond within two school days to all email, and phone calls.
- Inform learning coaches of school updates/information from k12®.
- Provide encouragement and support.
- Model specific practices to support instruction.
- Provide interventions, recommendations, and individualized support for learners who may be struggling.

9-12 Learning Facilitators:

- Provide feedback and grade student work.
- Respond to emails within two school days.
- Maintain correspondence with learners about their achievement and progress.
- Provide encouragement and support.

- **Learning Coach**

The learning coach is a parent or guardian who provides daily supervision and support for the learner. **This is a full-time commitment.** Every learner must have a learning coach; however, there may be more than one learning coach for each learner. The learning coach is an important member of the learning team.

Learning Coaches (Grades K-12):

- Continuously monitor learner progress and ensure work is being completed daily.
- Must have a working phone number, email account, and Internet access. He/she should check email and/or phone messages daily and must maintain these accounts throughout enrollment.
- Respond to contact from the learning facilitator, mentor, or enrollment coordinator within two school days.
- Inform the enrollment coordinator of any changes to contact information (i.e. address, phone number, email address) within two school days.
- Notify the teacher of any extended absences during the regular school calendar.
- Support participation in state-mandated testing. This is an on-site requirement.

The following guidelines are specific to K-8 Learning Coaches:

- Continuously supervise learner during regular school hours.
- Log into Learning Coach account daily.
- Mark lessons complete only if completed by learner.
- Provide assessment passwords.
- Ensure learner participates in interventions deemed necessary by the teacher.
- Must be able to read and understand the curriculum and instructional materials provided.
- Work in partnership with the learning facilitator to support learner when academic issues arise.
- Support participation in state-mandated testing. This is an on-site requirement.

- **Mentor** (9-12 Edmentum program only)

The mentor is a direct contact for students in the Edmentum program. This person serves as a liaison between the enrollment coordinator, the school contact, and the Edmentum learners/families to ensure timely course completion and strong student engagement.

The mentor:

- Provides passwords to learning coaches/learners for exams.
- Can request to have assessments reset (for example, if a quiz locks up before being submitted, or if an assessment is submitted mistakenly).
- Monitors learner participation and achievement.
- Communicates regularly with learners.
- Assists in communications with course instructors.
- Provides encouragement and support.
- Responds within 2 school days to all email and telephone calls.

- **School Contact**

The contact person for each school district will assist families in the enrollment process by registering them via SDVS and providing course selection advice based on local graduation requirements (for students in grades 9-12). School contacts have direct access to student progress in the Edmentum program. They may connect with students and families to ensure successful student engagement and progress, much like the BHOLC mentor does. BHOLC staff will communicate directly with the school contact.

- **Enrollment Coordinator**

Students and families are assisted by the enrollment coordinator throughout the registration process and school year. The enrollment coordinator works directly with families and school contacts to oversee enrollment and provide program updates.

The Enrollment Coordinator:

- Helps families to navigate the enrollment process.
- Communicates with schools and South Dakota Virtual School.
- Responds to inquiries within 72 hours.
- Provides monthly K12 progress reports to school contacts.
- Processes withdrawals should families or schools choose to discontinue a learner's enrollment.

Withdrawal Process

It is the goal of Black Hills Online Learning Community to provide a positive experience for all learners and families. The online learning environment requires a high level of self-direction and motivation for learners to be successful. As such, this may not be the most appropriate learning environment for some learners.

Families and school personnel can withdraw learners from the program at any time by contacting the enrollment coordinator. Once notification of withdrawal has been received, access to the k12®/Edmentum program will be terminated. The learning coach will receive an email with instructions for returning the offline course materials as well as a mailing label so that materials can be shipped at no cost. Upon withdrawal, learners must immediately return to the traditional classroom or check with school personnel for additional options. Failure to do so may prompt truancy penalties. Withdrawn learners are still subject to the attendance guidelines as designed by their school of enrollment.

Assessments

Learners in Black Hills Online Learning Community are required to complete the following assessments. Grade level is determined by classification in Infinite Campus according to the local school.

- The Smarter Balanced state assessment for math and ELA (grade level 3-8 and 11) annually
- Dakota STEP state assessment for science (grade level 5, 8, and 11) annually

Grading

Black Hills Online Learning Community does not provide letter grades. Rather, progress is measured based on mastery of concepts through assessments. Learning coaches in the k12® program have constant access to their learner's completion percentage, including a projected end date to indicate when the learner can anticipate completing a class at his or her current rate of progress. Learning coaches in the Edmentum program receive guardian accounts where they can log on and find level of engagement, progress, and achievement for each actively enrolled course.

Grades K-8	Grades 9-12
100-90% progress = M = Mastery 89-80% progress = C = Completion 79- 0% progress = I = Incomplete Students with incomplete levels of progress will remain in the course until 79% completion has been reached.	Percentage earned according to course assessments. Final percentages are reported to learner's school district. School districts convert to a letter grade based on their individual grading scale.

Because learners are enrolled full time through their local public school, letter grades, grade point averages (GPA), transcripts, and awarding of diplomas will all be determined by the local school district according to their policies.

Frequently Asked Questions about Black Hills Online

How does Black Hills Online Learning Community work?

The K12 curriculum (grades K-8) is a combination of both offline and online components. Supervision is done on site by the learning coach (parent/guardian) and off site by our Black Hills Online learning facilitator.

Learning coaches for the K12 program have a login that provides an overview of the daily plan for each learner while the learners have their own logins for completing their daily plans. Learning coaches are provided with guidance for assisting the learner through the online program. Learning coaches can also request additional assistance from the learning facilitator at any time, as the learning facilitator will work with learning coaches to demonstrate best practices and strategies for learner success. Help is also available via the k12® website at <http://help.k12.com>.

Learners in grade levels K-2 do about 80% of their work offline, while grades 3-5 do about 60% offline. Grades 6-8 spend most of their time online. Offline components consist of textbooks, workbooks, and activities such as projects and experiments.

K-8 materials for offline expectations are provided at no additional cost and are shipped to each family directly from k12.com®. Additional basic supplies are minimal and are posted in the learner plan/ learning coach information well in advance of the lesson(s) for which they are needed so families can plan ahead.

Information about learner progress, involvement, and achievement is shared with the enrolled school district contact for state reporting purposes and to maintain awareness of student well-being in the online learning environment.

Computers and Technology

Families are responsible for providing their own computers and Internet connections to access the Black Hills Online Learning Community k12® and Edmentum programs. We recommend that each student have his or her own computer. At this time tablet devices, like iPads, are not compatible with the program platforms.