



**Poplar School District
Cyber School
Handbook
2026-2027**

“WHATEVER IT TAKES WE CAN, WE WILL”

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Welcome Students and Parents!

Dear Students and Families,

Welcome to the Poplar School District Cyber School! I am excited that you have chosen to be part of our learning community. My name is Frank Gourneau III, and I serve as the High School Principal and the overall administrator for our K–12 Cyber School program. I want you to know that you are an important part of the Poplar School District family. Our goal is to provide every student with a high-quality education while offering the flexibility and support needed to help them succeed.

At Poplar Cyber School, we understand that every student's journey is different. Some students thrive in a traditional classroom, while others excel in an online setting that allows them to learn at their own pace. Whatever brought you here, our commitment is to meet you where you are, encourage your growth, and help you reach your academic and personal goals.

Although our classrooms may be virtual, you never learn alone. Our teachers, support staff, and administration provide guidance, encouragement, and timely communication throughout your educational journey. We encourage students and families to stay connected, ask questions, and reach out whenever assistance is needed. Building strong relationships is just as important in an online school as it is in a traditional classroom.

Success in an online learning environment comes through communication, responsibility, and commitment. We ask students to stay engaged with their coursework, communicate regularly with their teachers, and take ownership of their learning. In return, we promise to provide the support, resources, and encouragement needed to help every student be successful.

Thank you for placing your trust in Poplar School District Cyber School. We are honored to be part of your educational journey and look forward to celebrating your achievements along the way. Together, we can create an educational experience that is flexible, meaningful, and focused on your future.

Welcome to the Poplar School District Cyber School family. We're glad you're here!

Sincerely,

Frank Gourneau
High School Principal
Administrator, Appétu Téča Academy
Administrator, K-12 Cyber School
Poplar School District



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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Welcome to the Poplar School District Cyber School, where we are committed to providing students with a flexible, high-quality educational experience. Our Cyber School is designed to meet the needs of students who wish to pursue their education in a non-traditional learning environment while maintaining the academic standards and opportunities offered by Poplar School District.

Through the Acellus learning platform, students receive a comprehensive distance learning education that allows them to progress toward their educational goals while benefiting from the support of our dedicated staff.

High school students who successfully complete all graduation requirements outlined in the Poplar School District Student Handbook will earn a Poplar High School diploma and participate in commencement exercises alongside their graduating class.

As a Poplar Cyber School student, you remain an important part of our school community. Students have access to many of the same opportunities and support services available to their peers on campus, including participation in extracurricular activities such as athletics and band, guidance and counseling services, student assistance programs, and after-school academic support.

We are excited to partner with you on your educational journey and look forward to helping you achieve your academic goals. Welcome to the Poplar School District Cyber School family!

ACELLUS PROGRAM

Acellus is an online learning platform known for its flagship, accredited institution, offering a flexible, self-paced education with video lessons and personalized instruction via "Vectored Instruction" to adapt to student needs, catering to general education, special needs, and career/tech education. Students learn through engaging video lessons and interactive coursework, which prepares them for college or careers.

How Acellus Works

- Learning Platform: Students use the Acellus Gold platform for subjects like Math, Science, Language Arts, and Social Studies as well as various other classes to cover elective courses.
- Personalized Learning: "Vectored Instruction" identifies learning gaps and adjusts content difficulty, making it effective for struggling students or those with special needs. This proprietary technology identifies specific gaps in a student's understanding and provides targeted video lessons to fill those gaps before allowing them to move forward.

- Self-Paced: Students can learn at their own pace with on-demand, high-definition video lessons. It is highly important that students complete their daily and weekly goals to keep pace with graduating. Courses are available 24/7, allowing students to set their own schedules and progress through material as quickly or slowly as needed outside of the classroom setting.

Key Programs & Features

- Parent Access: Parents can monitor student progress on their own profile. Parents are also able to select courses for their children. Please make sure to confirm courses with administration for high school to keep on track to graduate.
- Special Education: Courses are designed to be achievable for students with special needs, integrated with IEPs.
- Career & Tech Ed (CTE): Offers specialized training in fields like STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) for high-tech careers.
- Curriculum: Offers over 400 courses, including core subjects (Math, Science, Language Arts, Social Studies), electives, Advanced Placement (AP), and Career & Technical Education (CTE).

CYBER SCHOOL GOALS

- The Poplar School District Cyber School is committed to providing a high-quality, student-centered educational experience. Our goals are to:
- Provide a non-traditional learning environment for students within Poplar School District and throughout the State of Montana that aligns with the mission and values of Poplar School District.
- Offer students seeking an alternative educational setting the opportunity to earn a Poplar High School diploma by successfully completing all district graduation requirements.
- Foster a well-rounded educational experience by combining high-quality online instruction with meaningful interactions with educators, academic support, and counseling services.
- Develop individualized learning plans that support each student's academic needs while ensuring alignment with Poplar High School graduation requirements.
- Encourage students to take ownership of their education by promoting personal responsibility, accountability, self-motivation, and lifelong learning.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION AND EXPECTATIONS

Enrollment in the Poplar School District Cyber School is based on each student's individual educational needs and the coursework required to meet graduation requirements. Students who may benefit from the Cyber School include those who are unable to attend school due to medical or health-related circumstances, students requiring an alternative educational setting, students currently enrolled in an approved online learning program, or students whose unique circumstances warrant consideration in consultation with the parent/guardian and school administration.

To begin the enrollment process, a parent or guardian must initiate registration through Acellus. After completing registration with Acellus you must also complete all required enrollment documentation for Poplar School District.

Success in Cyber School requires students to be self-motivated, organized, and committed to taking responsibility for their education. Students are expected to actively participate in their coursework and adhere to all program requirements. Failure to meet these expectations may result in probationary status or removal from the Cyber School program.

Students enrolled in the Poplar School District Cyber School are expected to:

- Maintain satisfactory attendance in accordance with district policy.
- Complete assigned online coursework each school day.
- Dedicate sufficient time to their studies. As a general guideline, students should expect to spend approximately one hour per course each day, with a total instructional commitment comparable to a traditional school day (approximately 5.5 hours daily).
- Log in regularly and meet all assigned daily and weekly academic goals. Failure to meet weekly goals will delay a student's projected course completion timeline and may affect academic standing within the program.
- Participate in all state-mandated assessments (if opting in) and successfully complete all Poplar High School graduation requirements to earn a diploma.
- Comply with all district policies, including those outlined in the Student Handbook and any Cyber School-specific requirements.

Participation in district-sponsored extracurricular activities, including athletics, is subject to Montana High School Association (MHSA) eligibility requirements, district policies, and any additional team or activity rules.

High school students who remain in good academic standing and meet attendance and program participation expectations may be eligible to attend school-sponsored events, including prom, in accordance with district guidelines.

GRADING POLICY

Parents and guardians of students enrolled in the Poplar School District Cyber School can monitor their students' academic progress, grades, attendance, and course completion through the Acellus learning platform.

Upon completion of coursework, grades are recorded on the student's Acellus transcript as well as an official Poplar School District transcript. Transcripts/grades may be accessed through Acellus, Infinite Campus, or requested by contacting the school office.

GRADE COMMUNICATIONS

The Poplar School District is committed to keeping students and families informed of academic progress. As a courtesy, the district may send emails, make phone calls, or mail notices regarding student grades, attendance, or academic performance.

These communications are provided as a convenience and are not guaranteed or required. Students and parents/guardians are responsible for regularly monitoring academic progress through the Acellus learning platform and the Infinite Campus Parent/Student Portal. These systems serve as the official sources for student grades, progress, and academic records.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY/PLAGIARISM

Academic honesty is an essential expectation of all students enrolled in the Poplar School District Cyber School. Students are expected to complete and submit their own original work. Participation in a cyber learning environment requires integrity, honesty, and personal responsibility.

Plagiarism is the act of using another person's words, ideas, or work and presenting them as one's own without proper acknowledgment. This includes copying from another student, books, websites, artificial intelligence (AI) tools, or any other source without appropriate citation or permission.

Any assignment determined to contain plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty may receive a grade of zero or no credit. Repeated violations may result in additional disciplinary action, including probationary status or dismissal from the Poplar School District Cyber School.

Students who use information from another source are responsible for properly citing that source in accordance with teacher's expectations.

GUIDANCE SERVICES

Students enrolled in the Poplar School District Cyber School have access to school counseling services throughout the school year, including academic, personal, college, and career planning.

Available services include:

- Academic advising and graduation planning
- College and career readiness counseling
- Scholarship and financial aid information
- Course planning and scheduling
- Social-emotional support and referrals

Students and parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the school counselor whenever assistance is needed. Information regarding assessments, college applications, scholarships, and career opportunities is available through the counseling office.

PARENT/GUARDIAN ROLE

The Poplar School District values the partnership between families and the Cyber School. While the district provides curriculum, instruction, and educational support, parents and guardians play an essential role in helping students remain successful.

Parents/guardians are expected to:

- Provide a structured learning environment at home.
- Supervise and encourage daily academic progress.
- Maintain regular communication with school staff.
- Monitor student progress through the Acellus learning platform and Infinite Campus.
- Hold students accountable for completing assignments and meeting deadlines.
- Ensure that students meet daily and weekly academic expectations.

- Promptly communicate concerns or questions to the Cyber School Administrator.
- Monitor course completion and ensure new courses are added when appropriate. Families with questions regarding graduation progress should contact the district for assistance.

ACADEMIC STANDING

Student progress is monitored throughout the school year to ensure continued success in the Cyber School program. Academic performance may be reviewed at the end of each grading period and, when appropriate, monthly.

Students who fail to meet attendance, academic, or participation expectations may be required to participate in an intervention meeting involving the student, parent/guardian, counselor, and Cyber School Administrator. During this meeting, student progress, program expectations, and available support will be reviewed.

Students who consistently fail to meet the expectations outlined in this handbook may be placed on academic probation or removed from the Poplar School District Cyber School at the discretion of district administration.

TECHNOLOGY/MATERIALS

Students and parents/guardians are required to sign the district's Acceptable Use Agreement while participating in the Poplar School District Cyber School. Unless otherwise specified by the district, families are responsible for providing:

- A reliable computer or compatible electronic device
- Internet access capable of supporting online instruction
- Any necessary consumable school supplies (paper, pencils, notebooks, printer ink, etc.)

Students are expected to use all technology responsibly and in accordance with district policies.

HEALTH RECORDS/SCREENINGS

Students enrolled in the Poplar School District Cyber School must meet all health and immunization requirements established by the Poplar School District, the State of Montana, and the Poplar School Board.

Required annual health screenings include:

- Height
- Weight
- Body Mass Index (BMI)
- Vision screening

Additional screenings or examinations may be required based on the student's grade level. Families may choose to have required screenings completed by school health personnel during scheduled district screening days at no cost or by their private healthcare provider at their own expense. Documentation of privately completed screenings must be submitted to the school.

Students must also maintain current immunization records as required by Montana law. Questions regarding immunizations or health requirements should be directed to the school nurse or your healthcare provider.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Poplar School District provides special education services in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Montana law, and all applicable federal and state regulations.

Eligible students receive services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP) developed by the student's educational team. Services are designed to provide a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) based on each student's individual needs.

Students enrolled in the Poplar School District Cyber School who qualify for special education services will use the Acellus platform (leveling and courses) to accommodate services according to their IEP. Parents may need to sign a document (IEP Plan) which outlines these services.

Parents with questions regarding special education services are encouraged to contact the Poplar School District Special Education Department.

ATHLETICS/EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students enrolled in the Poplar School District Cyber School may be eligible to participate in district-sponsored athletics, clubs, organizations, and extracurricular activities, provided they remain in good academic and behavioral standing.

Participation is subject to:

- Poplar School District policies and procedures
- Montana High School Association (MHSA) eligibility requirements
- Individual team, club, or activity expectations
- Students and parents/guardians are responsible for contacting the building principal, activities director, or athletic director regarding participation requirements.
- Transportation to and from practices, meetings, rehearsals, and other extracurricular activities are the responsibility of the parent or guardian unless otherwise provided by the district.

STATE ASSESSMENTS

Students enrolled in the Poplar School District Cyber School may participate in all required local, state, and federal assessments unless exempted by law or district policy. Testing is administered at designated Poplar School District buildings according to the student's grade level and the state testing schedule. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that students report to the assigned testing location on scheduled testing dates. Questions regarding testing schedules should be directed to the building administrator. Families who wish to decline participation in an assessment, when permitted by law or policy, must complete any required opt-out documentation in accordance with district procedures.

ENROLLMENT NOTICE – POPLAR SCHOOL CYBER SCHOOL

Enrollment in the Poplar School District Cyber School does not constitute enrollment for on-campus instruction. Students enrolled in the Cyber School are enrolled only in the district's online educational program.

Students who wish to attend classes on campus must complete a separate enrollment process and submit all required documentation for on-campus attendance. Enrollment in the Cyber School does not automatically qualify a student for admission to on-campus instruction.

For students residing outside of the Poplar School District, approval for on-campus attendance is subject to district enrollment policies, administrative review, and available capacity. All out-of-district students must complete the required application process and receive approval from district administration before attending classes on campus.

Questions regarding on-campus enrollment should be directed to the school administration before making plans to attend in-person classes.

POPLAR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

A student must complete the following 22 units.

4 units of English Language Arts

3 units of Mathematics

3 units of Social Studies (including a ½ unit of Civics or Government)

2 units of Science

2 units of Health Enhancement with ½ unit each year for two years

1 unit of Arts

1 Unit of Career and Technical Education

6 units of Electives

(½ unit of economics or financial literacy with the 2 units of social studies, the 2 units of mathematics, or the 1 unit of career and technical education. *Effective for 2026 Graduates and beyond)

Graduating with Honors: One honor cord for 3.0-3.49 and two honor cords for 3.5-4.0

SB 18 Bill:

For students (with an educational disruption at any point in their high school career) who meet the state minimum high school credit requirement for graduation, as set forth in Chapter 55 by the Montana Board of Public Education but will not meet the local requirement, the district must award the student a diploma.

STATE OF MONTANA GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

20 Credits

The following 13 units shall be a part of the 20 units required for all students to graduate:

4 units of English Language Arts

2 units of Mathematics

2 units of Social Studies (including a ½ unit of Civics or Government)

2 units of Science

1 unit of Health Enhancement with $\frac{1}{2}$ unit each year for two years

1 unit of Arts

1 Unit of Career and Technical Education

($\frac{1}{2}$ unit of economics or financial literacy with the 2 units of social studies, the 2 units of mathematics, or the 1 unit of career and technical education. * Effective for 2026 Graduates and beyond)