



BEST FOR ALL

We will set all students on a path to success.

Virtual Education Guidance

October 28, 2021

Matt Bowser, Director of Virtual Schools

Division of Choice, Tennessee Department of Education



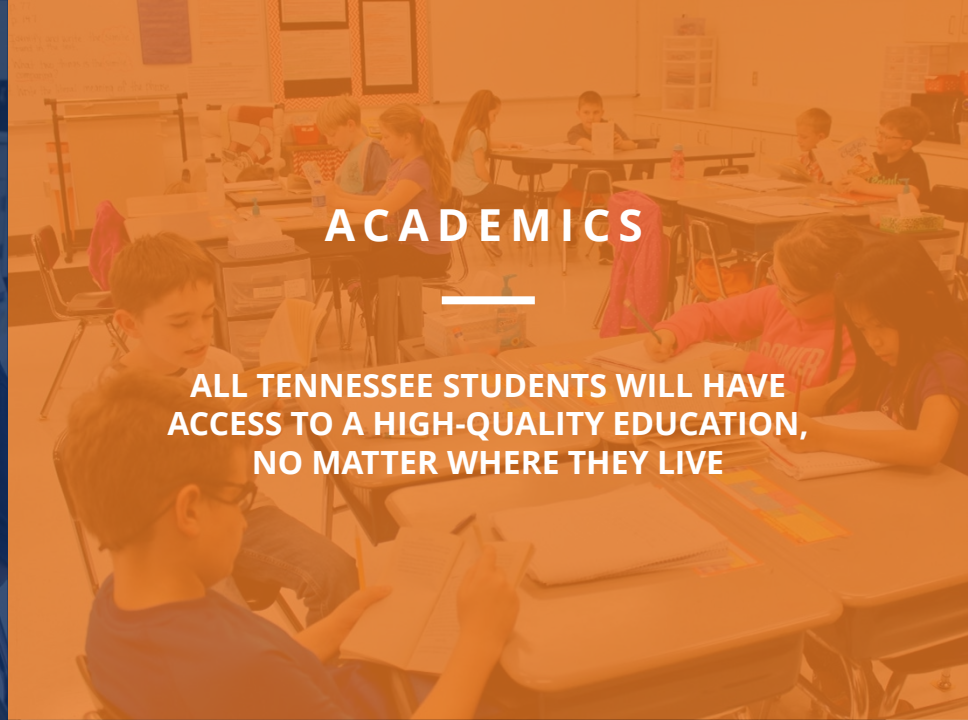
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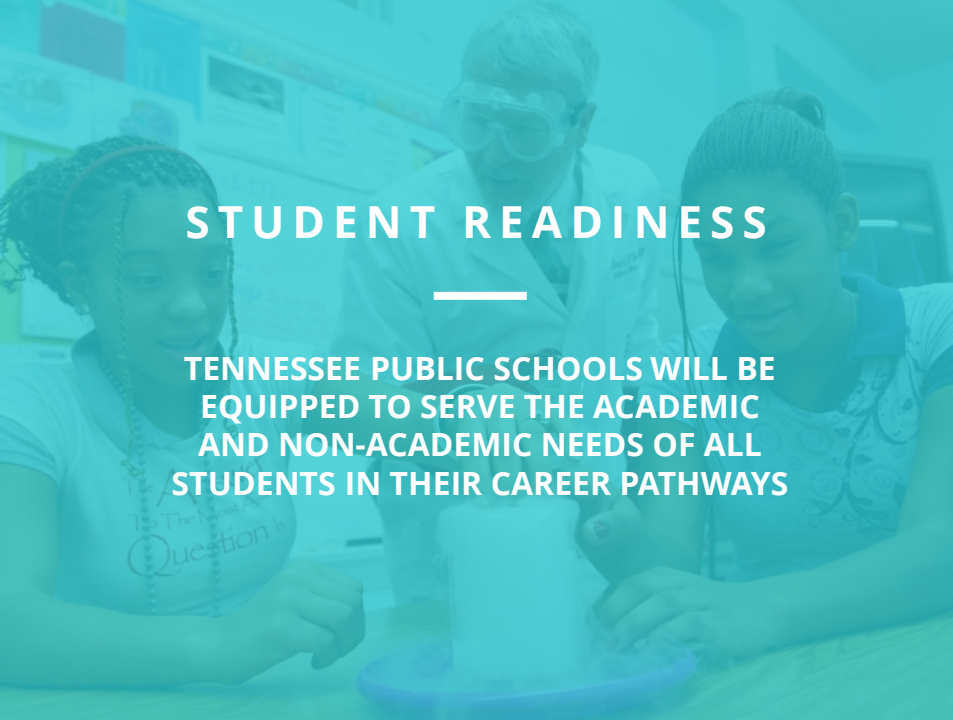
ACADEMICS

ALL TENNESSEE STUDENTS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO A HIGH-QUALITY EDUCATION, NO MATTER WHERE THEY LIVE



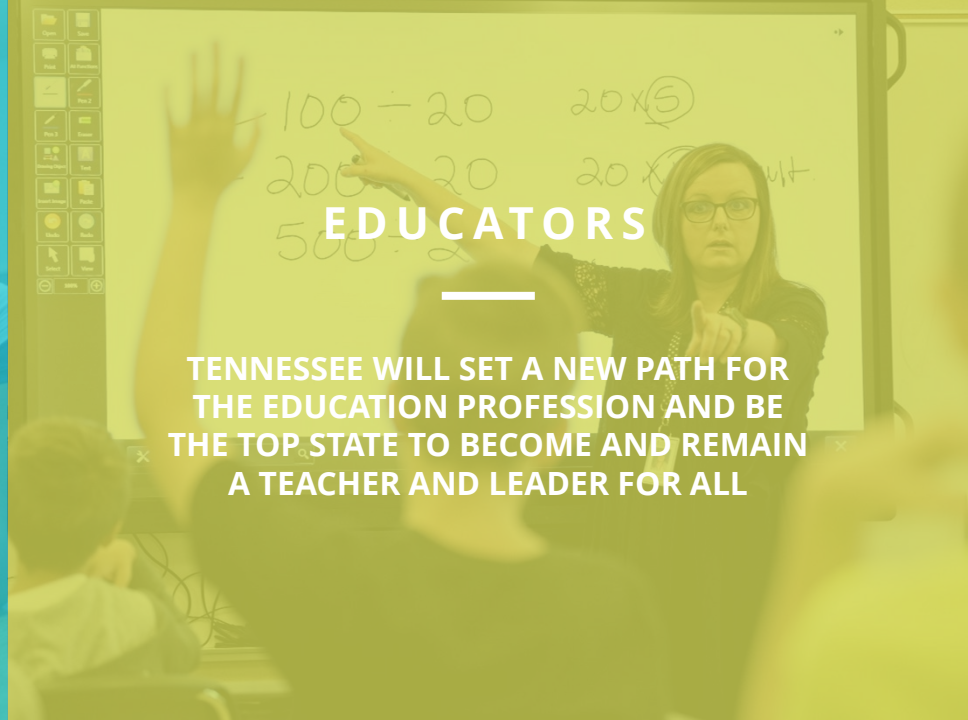
STUDENT READINESS

TENNESSEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS WILL BE EQUIPPED TO SERVE THE ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS IN THEIR CAREER PATHWAYS



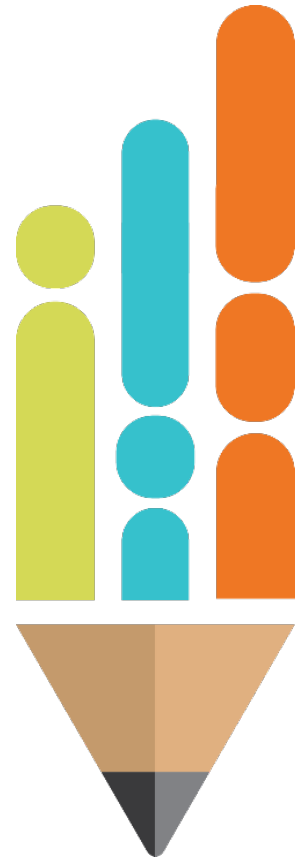
EDUCATORS

TENNESSEE WILL SET A NEW PATH FOR THE EDUCATION PROFESSION AND BE THE TOP STATE TO BECOME AND REMAIN A TEACHER AND LEADER FOR ALL



Norms

- Please mute microphones.
- Send any questions via chat or Q&A section of WebEx.
- Stay engaged and contribute your expertise and knowledge.
- Respond to interactive exercises.





Purpose of this training...

- Introduce Virtual Education.
- Explain the differences between a virtual school and a virtual education program.
- Review the laws and rules framing virtual education in Tennessee.
- Discuss virtual education operation and logistics.
- Explore the process of starting or changing a virtual school.
- Address how to launch a virtual education program.
- Identify resources to aid in the journey of virtual education.

About Me



- Proud to serve Tennessee Districts as Director of Virtual Schools.
- Served as a public school teacher and instructional coach for 7 years.
- Served as building and district level administrator for 7 years.
- I live in West TN not far from the Mississippi River.

Agenda

- What is Virtual Education? – (10 minutes)
- How is Virtual Education Defined in Tennessee? – (5 minutes)
- Virtual Education Laws and Rules – (5 minutes)
- Virtual Education Overview in Tennessee – (2 minutes)
- Opening or Changing a Virtual School – (5 minutes)
- Virtual School Operational Guidance – (10 minutes)
- Beginning a Virtual Program – (5 minutes)
- Virtual Education Program Guidance – (10 minutes)
- Resources and Best Practices – (5 minutes)
- Q & A



What is Virtual Education?

Virtual Education should...

take about 2 minutes and type in the chat

- Virtual Education should
 - Offer a high-quality alternative to learning in a brick-and-mortar setting.
 - Engage a student's experiences, curiosity, and inquiry.
 - Provide a logical path of learning for a student to follow at their own pace.
 - Align to Tennessee State Standards.

Virtual Education should not...

take about 2 minutes and type in the chat



How is Virtual Education Defined?

- **Virtual School:** A public school in which the school uses technology in order to deliver a significant portion of instruction to its students via the internet in a virtual or remote setting.
- **Virtual Education Program:** A course or series of courses offered through the use of technology by an LEA or public charter school to provide students a broader range of educational opportunities, including any of the following:
 1. Academic remediation or enrichment, or providing students access to a wider range of courses.
 2. Continuity of educational service for students who are homebound pursuant to 0520-01-02-.10 or 0520-01-09-.07.
 3. Continuity of educational service for students who are quarantined pursuant to 0520-01-13-.01.
 4. Continuity of educational service for students enrolled in an alternative school pursuant to 0520-01-02-.09.



What Laws and Rules Govern Virtual Education in Tennessee?



Virtual Schools

- ***Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-16-201 – 49-16-216***
 - Tennessee General Assembly passed Public Chapter 492 the “Virtual Public Schools Act” in 2011.
- ***SBE Rule 0520-01-03-.05(1)***

Virtual Education Programs

- ***Tenn. Code Ann. § 49-16-101 – 49-16-105***
 - Tennessee General Assembly passed Public Chapter 1096 in 2008.
- ***SBE Rule 0520-01-03-.05(2)***

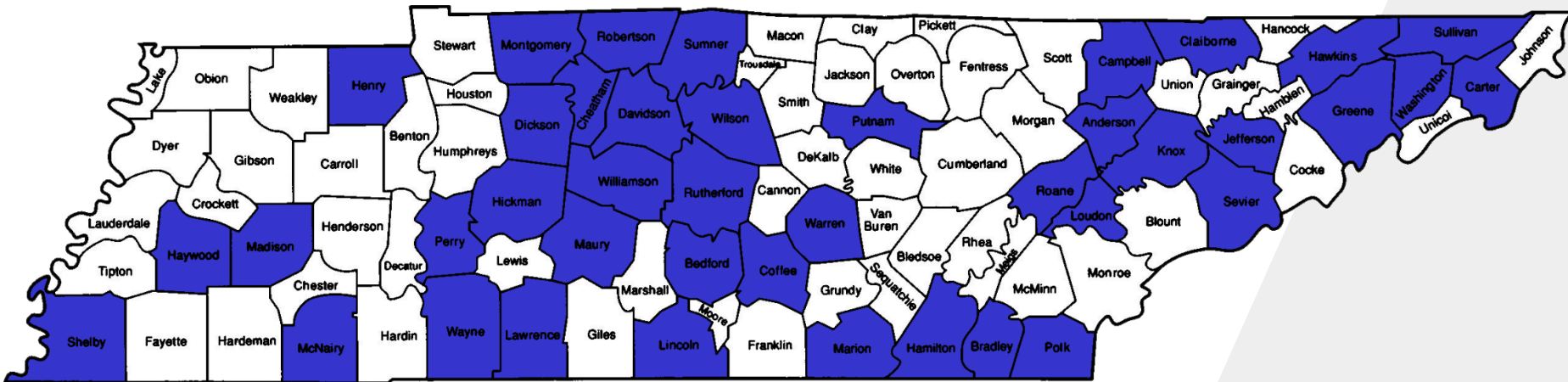


Virtual Education Quick Facts

- Tennessee has 57 virtual schools spanning 41 counties.
- Enrollment is currently 17,264 as compared to 4,037 in 2019-2020.
- Enrollment increased over 400% from 2019-2020 to 2021-2022.
- Number of schools increased from 17 to 57 between 2019 and 2021.
- Most Tennessee LEAs have implemented a virtual education program.

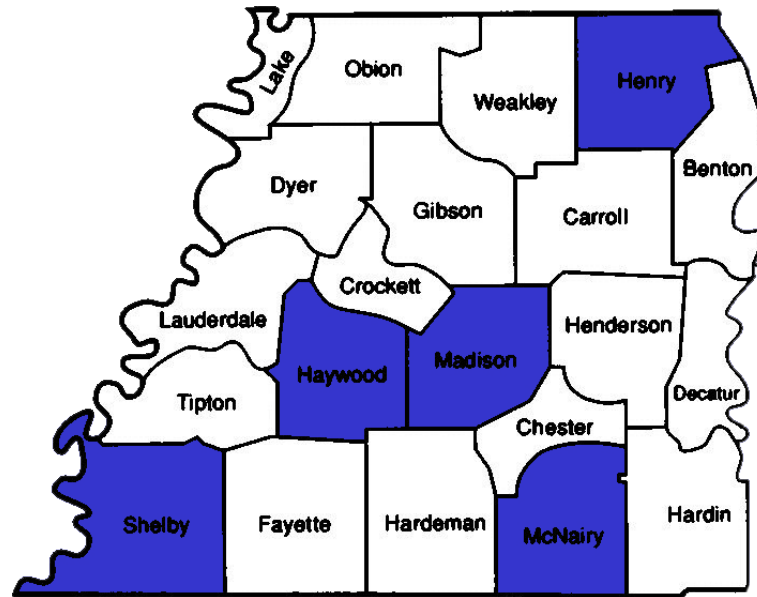
TN LEAs Operating Virtual Schools 2021-2022

Tennessee has 57 virtual schools spanning 41 counties.



Note: Counties in blue contain one or more public virtual schools.

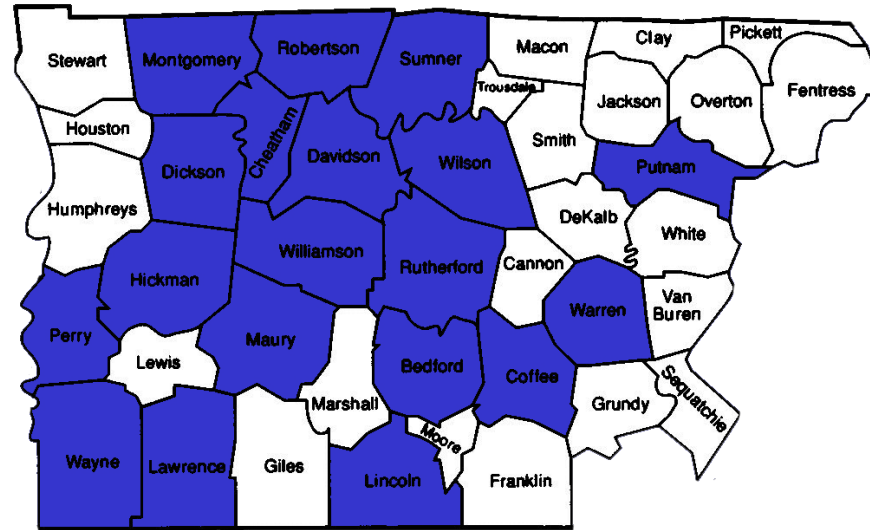
West TN LEAs Operating Virtual Schools 2021-2022



Note: Counties in blue contain one or more public virtual schools.

- Collierville Municipal Schools | Collierville Virtual Academy
- Germantown Municipal School | Germantown Online Academy of Learning
- Haywood County | Haywood County Virtual Academy
- Henry County | Henry County Virtual Academy
- Jackson-Madison County Schools | Jackson Academic STEAM Academy
- McNairy County | McNairy County Virtual School K-12
- Shelby County | Memphis Virtual School

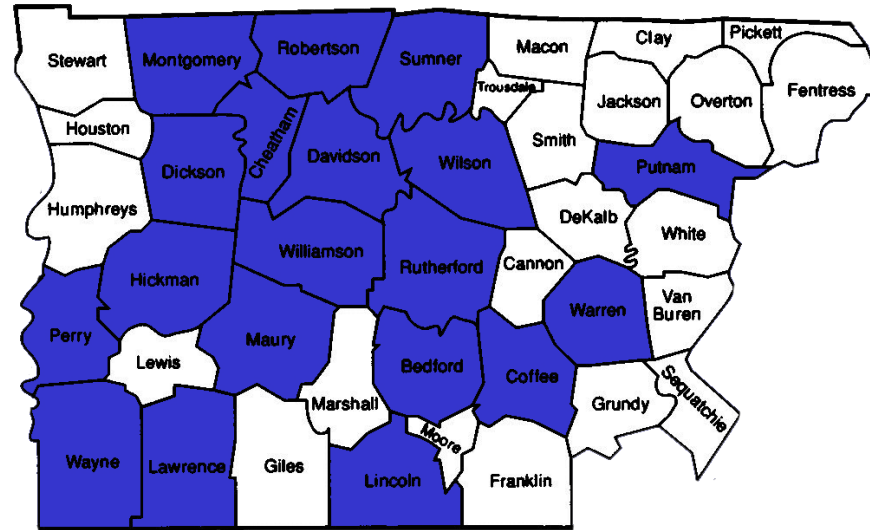
Middle TN LEAs Operating Virtual Schools 2021-2022



Note: Counties in blue contain one or more public virtual schools.

- Bedford County | Bedford County Virtual School
- Cheatham County | Cheatham County Virtual School
- Clarksville Montgomery County Schools | CMCSS K-12 Virtual School
- Coffee County | Coffee County Virtual Academy
- Davidson County | MNPS Virtual School
- Dickson County | Dickson County Distance Learning Academy
- Hickman County | Hickman County Learning Academy
- Lawrence County | Pioneer Virtual Academy
- Lincoln County | Lincoln Central Virtual Academy
- Maury County | Virtual Academy of Maury County

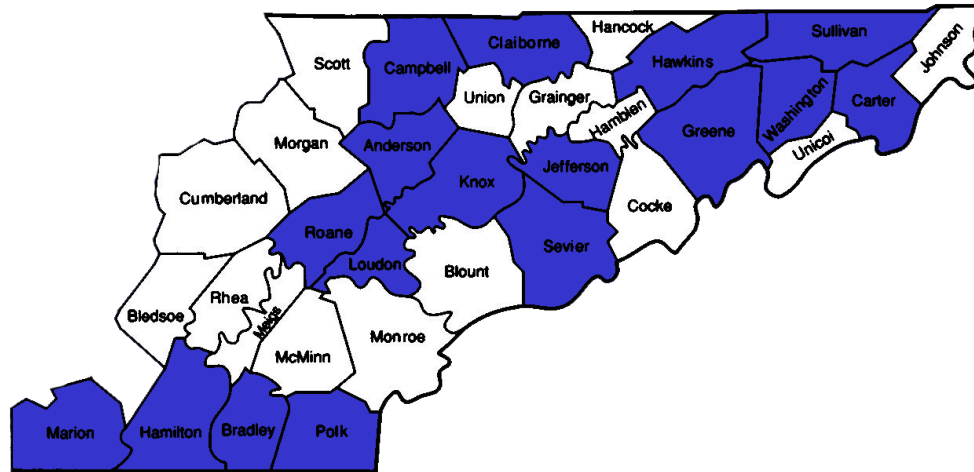
Middle TN LEAs Operating Virtual Schools 2021-2022



Note: Counties in blue contain one or more public virtual schools.

- Perry County | Perry County Virtual School
- Polk County | Polk Innovative Learning Academy
- Putnam County | Putnam County VITAL
- Robertson County | Robertson Co. Virtual School
- Robertson County | Tennessee Connections Academy 9-12
- Robertson County | Tennessee Connections Academy K-8
- Rutherford County | Rutherford County Virtual School
- Sumner County | E B Wilson
- Tullahoma City Schools | Tullahoma Virtual Academy
- Warren County | Warren Connect
- Wayne County | Wayne County Virtual School
- Williamson County | WCS Online 9-12
- Williamson County | WCS Online K-8
- Wilson County | Barry Tatum Virtual Learning Academy

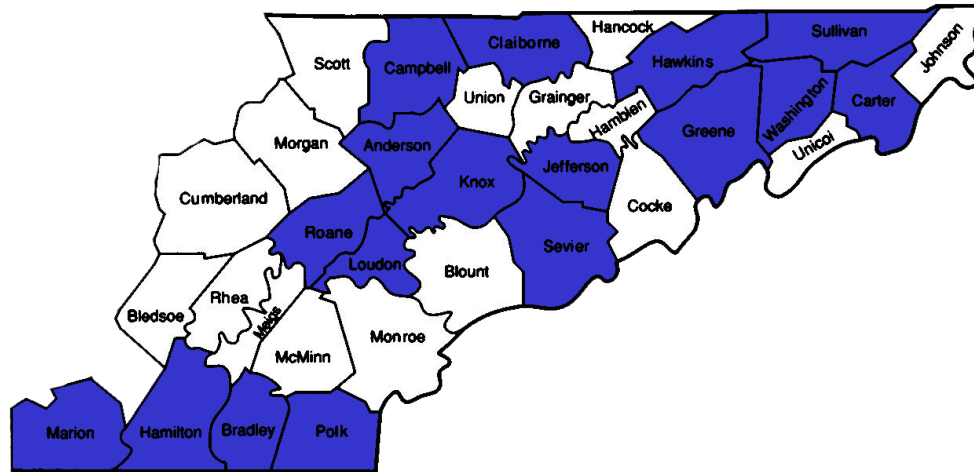
East TN LEAs Operating Virtual Schools 2021-2022



Note: Counties in blue contain one or more public virtual schools.

- Anderson County | Anderson County Innovation Academy
- Bradley County | Bradley County Virtual School
- Bristol City | Tennessee Online Public School
- Bristol City | Tennessee Online Public School at Bristol
- Campbell County | North Cumberland Online School
- Carter County | Carter County Online Academy
- Claiborne County | Claiborne Virtual Learning Academy
- Greene County Schools | Greene Online Academy of Learning
- Greeneville City | Tennessee Online Public School at Greeneville
- Hamilton County | Hamilton County Virtual School
- Hawkins County | Hawkins County Virtual Academy
- Jefferson County | Jefferson Virtual Academy

East TN LEAs Operating Virtual Schools 2021-2022



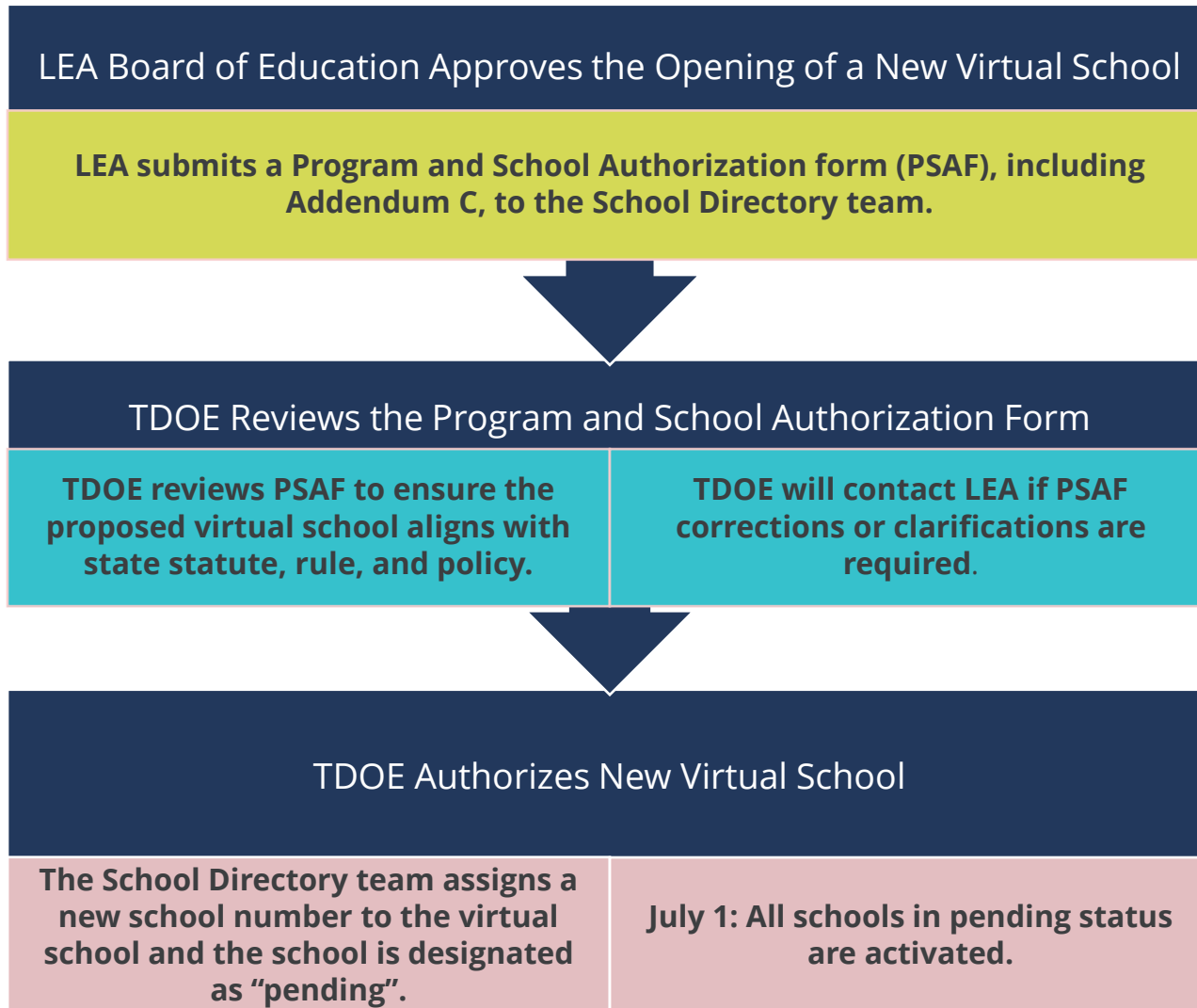
Note: Counties in blue contain one or more public virtual schools.

- Johnson City Schools | Johnson City Virtual Academy
- Johnson County | Tennessee Connections Academy Johnson County 9-12
- Johnson County | Tennessee Connections Academy Johnson County K-8
- Knox County | KCS Virtual Elementary School
- Knox County | KCS Virtual High School
- Knox County | KCS Virtual Middle School
- Lenoir City | The iLearn Institute at Lenoir City Schools
- Marion County | Marion Virtual Elementary School
- Marion County | Marion Virtual High School
- Polk County | Polk Innovative Learning Academy
- Roane County | Roane County Virtual Academy
- Sevier County | Sevier County Virtual Academy
- Sullivan County | Sullivan County Virtual Learning Academy
- Union County | Tennessee Virtual Academy
- Washington County | Tennessee Virtual Learning Academy

Virtual Schools



Opening a New Virtual School



Making Changes to a Virtual School



LEA emails PSAF identifying changes to both school.directory@tn.gov & virtual.schools@tn.gov

LEA completes the online [School Directory Change Request Form](#)

TDOE reviews submission and requests any clarifications or additional information, if needed.

The LEA's School Directory Contact will be notified that the change(s) have been authorized.



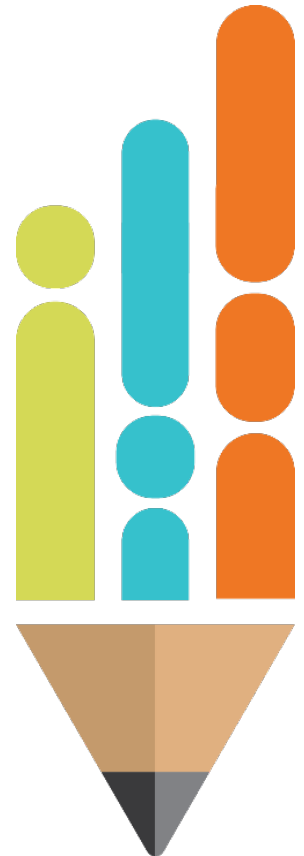
- Selective enrollment criteria is not allowed for students who reside within the LEA's zone of residency.
- LEAs may allow students to enroll from outside the LEA's zone of residency.
 - The LEA's out-of-district enrollment policy would apply (which may include tuition).
 - Any criteria must be neutral and non-discriminatory for all student populations.
- LEA policies may establish criteria for continued enrollment in a virtual school, as long as the policy is non-discriminatory and is uniformly applied.



Enrollment Types



- Full-time virtual student is a student who takes the majority of their classes through the use of technology while enrolled in the virtual school.
- Part-time virtual student is a student who takes less than a majority of their classes through the use of technology within a virtual school while enrolled in another school.



Attendance Coding



- Virtual schools must monitor and report the daily attendance of their students. This must include seeking and receiving daily visual, verbal, and/or written confirmation of student participation in six and one-half (6½) hours of instructional time per day, using multiple methods of confirming student attendance.
- Virtual schools use the same attendance and enrollment coding as brick-and-mortar schools.
- Virtual schools should ensure that classes offered in a virtual school are marked as “O” for an online course within the EIS Record ID 030 – Field: Teaching Method.
- If a class/section is a mixture of in-person learning within a brick-and-mortar building and online/virtual learning, do not mark the course as an “O” online course.



Extracurriculars & Sports



Participation in extracurricular activities (band, choir, etc.), sports, CTE, proms:

- LEAs *may* allow students enrolled in a virtual school to participate in such activities at another school within the LEA *if* expressly stated in an LEA policy.
- Participation in sports must also comply with TSSAA rules.
- Whatever policy the LEA adopts should be applied consistently to all students.



Academics



- Virtual school students must meet the same academic requirements for promotion or retention as students in a brick-and-mortar school.
- Virtual Schools must provide the equivalent of the one hundred and eighty (180) days of instruction per academic year and six and one-half (6½) hours of instructional time per day pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-6-3004, provided, however, that a student at the student's own pace may demonstrate mastery or completion of a course or subject area and be given credit for the course or subject area.
- To graduate, virtual school students must meet the same graduation requirements as students who attend a brick-and-mortar school.
- Virtual schools are required to provide access to PE, Visual Art, and Music offerings equivalent to those offered in a brick-and-mortar school.



Curriculum & Materials



- Virtual schools must offer courses that align with TN state academic standards.
- Virtual schools must use textbooks and instructional materials that are on the approved SBE textbook and instructional materials list or they can seek a waiver to use textbooks and materials that are not on the list.
- Virtual schools must provide enrolled students with materials and access to necessary technology.
 - Necessary technology would include a computer, a printer and an internet connection used for school work.
 - As an alternative, the virtual school may provide access through a physical computer lab that is available to the student through regularly scheduled times.



Faculty and Staff



- LEAs may use teachers that are teaching in a brick-and-mortar school as virtual teachers within the virtual school; however, instruction must be provided in a way that virtual students have the same opportunity to meaningfully interact with the teacher as students attending class in-person.
- LEAs may contract for services with nonprofit and for-profit entities in the operation and management of the virtual school.



Licensure



- Licensure and endorsement requirements are the same for both virtual and brick-and-mortar educators.
- The LEA must ensure that each teacher employed at a virtual school is qualified to teach in this state under existing law.
- LEAs must ensure that each virtual school course has an assigned teacher of record who is properly endorsed and licensed to teach in Tennessee.
- LEAs must ensure that all teachers employed by the LEA serving as teacher of record within the virtual school are evaluated annually.



Class Size



- Virtual schools must adhere to the same class size standards as brick-and-mortar schools.
- Virtual schools may increase the enrollment in virtual classes by up to twenty-five percent (25%) over the class size maximum established by T.C.A. § 49-1-104 if the school demonstrates student achievement growth at a level of “at expectations” or greater, as represented by the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) in the prior year where TVAAS data is available.



Accountability



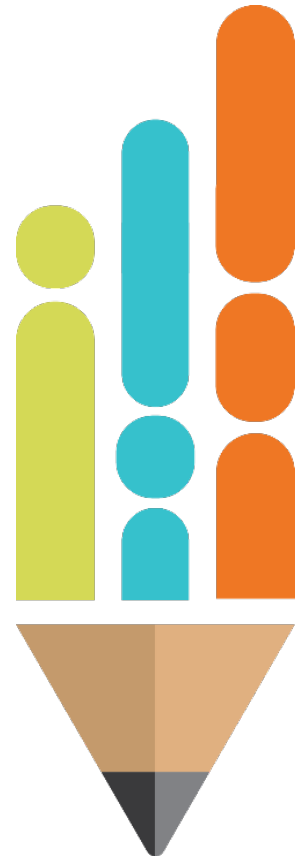
- Virtual schools are held to the same accountability standards as brick-and-mortar schools.
- Virtual schools must administer all state mandated assessments applicable to enrolled virtual school students in a proctored environment consistent with state test administration guidelines.
- The LEA establishing the virtual school is responsible for its performance and compliance with laws and regulation, regardless of whether the LEA directly operates the school or contracts with an entity for the management or operation of the school.
- LEAs must evaluate their virtual schools each year:
 - Based on a framework and template provided by TDOE.
 - Must publicly report the evaluations on the LEA's website, the virtual school's website, and directly to families.



Transportation



- LEAs are not required to provide transportation to and from a physical location for general education students when the LEA/virtual school requires in-person meetings.
- LEAs *are* required to provide student transportation to and from a physical location if a student's IEP signifies that transportation is required/needed.



Virtual Education Programs





Beginning a Virtual Education Program

Instructional Need

LEA or school identifies need for a virtual education program, such as offering a fully online course within a brick-and-mortar school.

Local Board Policy

LEA should develop local board policy aligning to requirements in Tennessee State Board Rule.

Courses and Curriculum

LEAs must ensure that the primary curriculum and instructional material used is on the SBE list of approved textbooks and materials.

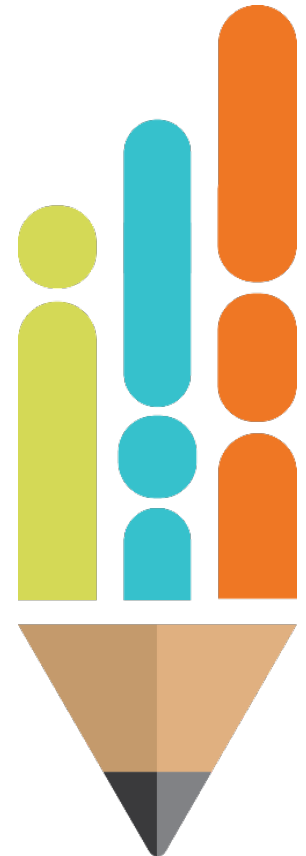
Coding of Courses in EIS

LEA should ensure that classes offered in a virtual Education Program are marked as "O" for an online course within the EIS Record ID 030 – *Field: Teaching Method*.

Enrollment & Enrollment Criteria



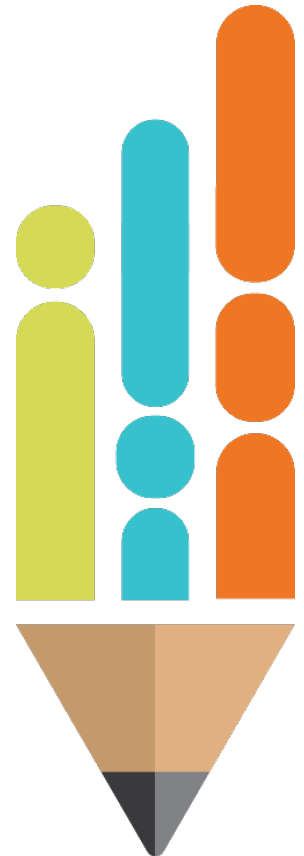
- A student must be enrolled at the school where the student receives the majority of their instruction each school year.
 - A student whose virtual education programs constitute less than a majority of their instruction should be enrolled at the brick-and-mortar school.
 - A student whose virtual education programs constitute a majority of their instruction should be enrolled at the virtual school.
- Student participation in a virtual education program shall be at the discretion of the LEA or public charter school where the student is enrolled.
- Selective enrollment criteria is allowable for virtual education programs.
 - LEAs must create a policy establishing the criteria.
 - Must be neutral and non-discriminatory for all student populations.



Special Populations



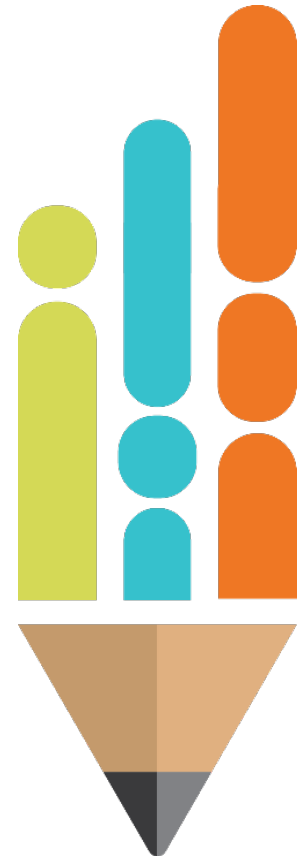
- LEAs must ensure that students with special needs, including students with disabilities and limited English proficiency, are not excluded from enrolling and participating in virtual education programs and receive all services required by the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or Individual Learning Plan (ILP).
- LEAs may develop a policy establishing criteria to remove a student from participation in a virtual education program. The criteria must be non-discriminatory for all student populations and account for FAPE with students with disabilities.



Attendance Coding



- Virtual education programs use the same attendance coding as a brick-and-mortar school.
- Schools should ensure that classes offered in a virtual education program are marked as “O” for an online course within the EIS Record ID 030 – Field: Teaching Method.
- If a class/section is a mixture of in-person learning within a brick-and-mortar building and online/virtual learning, do not mark the course as an “O” online course.

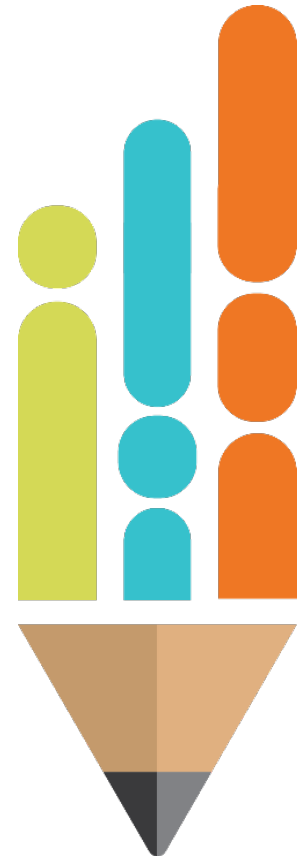


Attendance



Each LEA and public charter school offering a virtual education program must maintain attendance policies and procedures for determining when a student is present. There must be a plan for seeking and receiving daily periodic visual, verbal, and/or written confirmation of student participation using 2 or more of the following methods:

1. Students participating in a phone call with a teacher, with parent or legal guardian support as appropriate for the age of the student;
2. Students participating in synchronous virtual instruction;
3. Students completing work in a learning management system;
4. Students submitting work via hard-copy or virtual formats; or
5. Other method the LEA or public charter school identifies as appropriate.

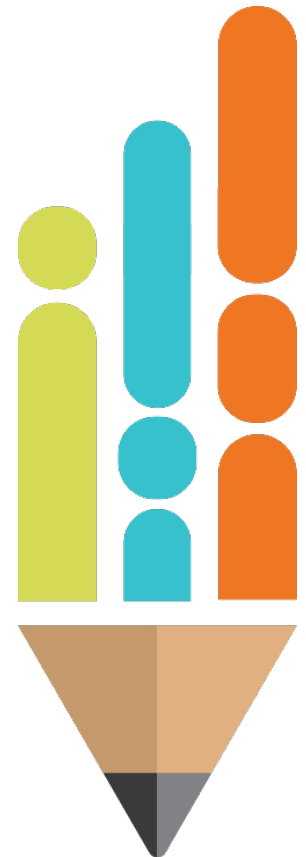


Local Policy



LEAs providing access to a virtual education program must establish a virtual education program policy that:

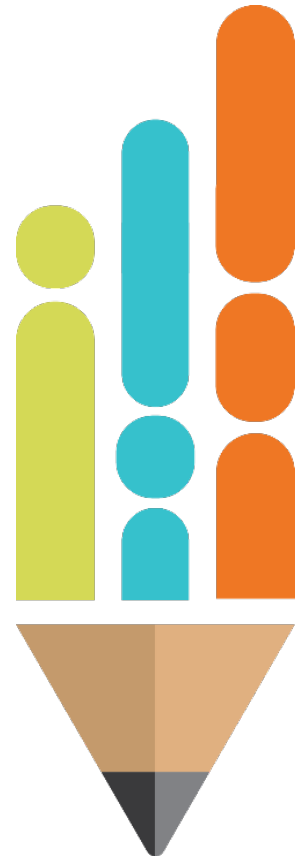
- defines student eligibility and participation requirements, including:
 - interventions for students struggling to maintain eligibility requirements, and
 - a process for removing students from virtual education program courses who fail to maintain eligibility requirements and placing them into a comparable in-person course; and
- includes an articulated enrollment agreement for students from another LEA or public charter school to access virtual education program courses, if the LEA or public charter school chooses to allow such arrangements.



Curriculum & Materials



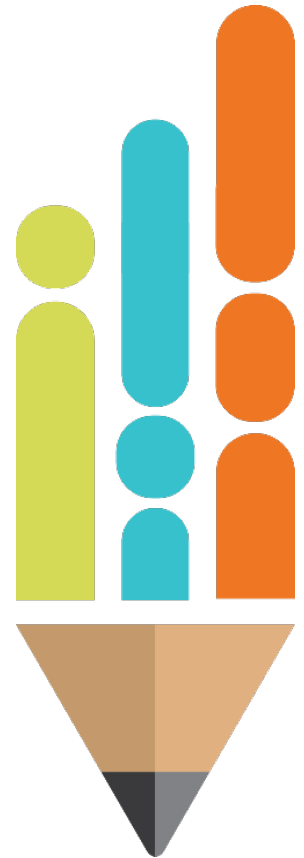
- Virtual education programs must offer courses that align with TN state academic standards.
- Virtual education programs must use textbooks and instructional materials that are on the approved SBE textbook and instructional materials list.
- The school offering the virtual education program must provide participating students with materials and access to necessary technology.
 - Necessary technology would include a computer, a printer and an internet connection used for school work.
 - As an alternative, the school may provide access through a physical computer lab that is available to the student through regularly scheduled times.



Faculty & Staff



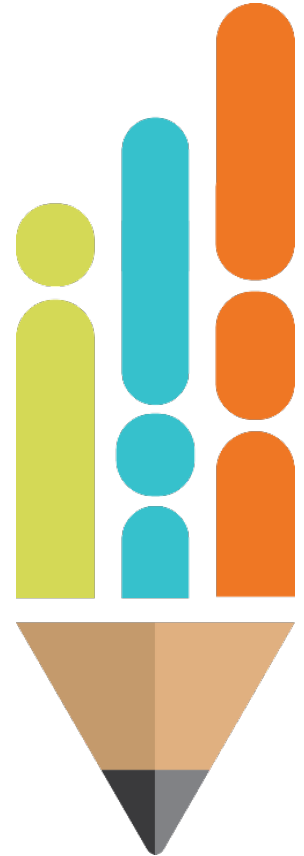
- LEAs may use teachers that are teaching in a brick-and-mortar school as virtual teachers within the virtual education program; however, instruction must be provided in a way that ensures virtual students have the same opportunity to meaningfully interact with the teacher as students attending class in-person.



Licensure



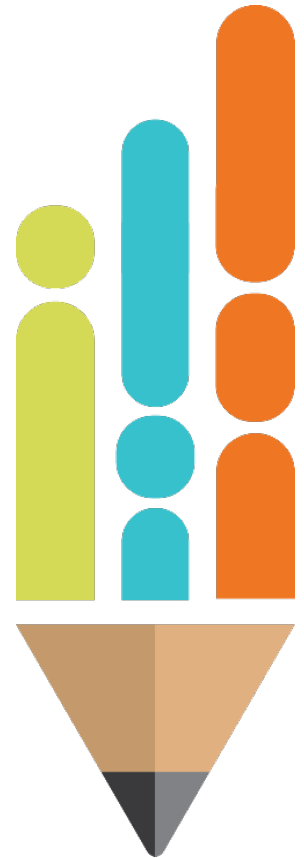
- Licensure and endorsement requirements are the same for both virtual and brick-and-mortar educators.
- The LEA must ensure each teacher within a virtual education program is qualified to teach in this state under existing law.
- LEAs must ensure that each virtual program course has an assigned teacher of record who is properly endorsed and licensed to teach in Tennessee.
- LEAs must ensure that all teachers employed by the LEA serving as teacher of record within a virtual education course are evaluated annually



Class Size



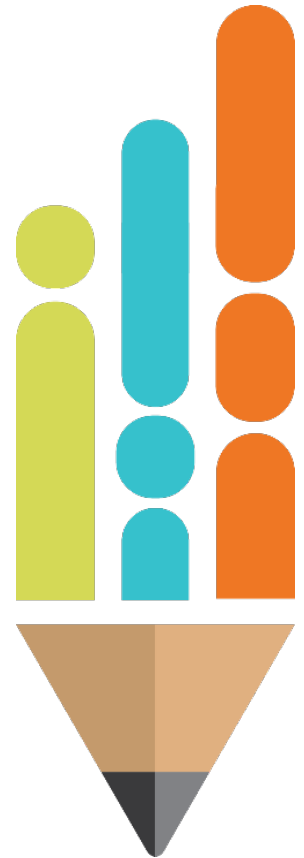
- Classes offered within a virtual education program must adhere to the same class size standards as brick-and-mortar schools.



Accountability



- The results of student assessments for courses taken as part of a virtual education program and other accountability measures will be attributed to the school where the student is enrolled.
- Promotion, certificates, and diplomas for a student taking courses as part of a virtual education program shall be determined and issued by the school where the student is enrolled.



Resources



Statute and Regulation Resources

- **Tennessee Code – Lexis Law Link:** <https://www.tncourts.gov/Tennessee%20Code>
- **Tennessee State Board of Education Rules, Policies, and Guidance:** <https://www.tn.gov/sbe/rules--policies-and-guidance.html>
- **Code of Federal Regulations:** <https://www.ecfr.gov/>

TDOE & SBE Websites

- **TDOE Virtual School Website:** <https://www.tn.gov/education/school-options/virtual-schools.html>
- **TDOE District Technology Website:** <https://www.tn.gov/education/district-technology/tn-tmobile-project.html>
- **TDOE Textbooks and Instructional Materials List:** <https://www.tn.gov/education/textbook-services/textbook-reviews.html>
- **SBE Guidance:** <https://www.tn.gov/sbe/rules--policies-and-guidance/guidance.html>

Questions?

Contact: Matt Bowser | matt.bowser@tn.gov



How was the training?

Please take a moment and complete the [Virtual Education Guidance Feedback](https://bit.ly/TNVirtualSurvey).



<https://bit.ly/TNVirtualSurvey>

