

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

about West Virginia's Virtual Re-entry Options

Updated July 17, 2020



Q. Is each county required to make virtual school available to their students?

Yes. WVBE Policy 2510 requires counties to provide a virtual school option for students in grades 6-12. Counties have local discretion when deciding whether to offer a virtual school option for elementary school students.

Q: Are students participating in virtual school considered public school students?

Yes. Virtual school students are public school students, are included in the district's net enrollment totals, and districts receiving state aid funding for these students. Virtual school students enjoy the same rights and opportunities as students attending a brick and mortar facility, including but not limited to participating in graduation events, prom, and honor activities. Virtual school students should not be penalized because they are receiving instruction away from the school building.

Q. What are the virtual school options? Is each county restricted to only one option?

There are essentially four options for providing virtual instruction to students:

- » #1: West Virginia Virtual School (WVVS) Contracted Teacher, Platform and WVVS Curriculum*
- » #2: County Employed Teacher and WVVS Curriculum*/Contracted Curriculum
- » #3: County Employed Teacher and County Curriculum
- » #4: Contracted Provider (supplying both instructor and curriculum)

Counties and schools may offer as few or as many of these options to best meet student needs.

Q. Is there a class size limit for virtual school classes?

When county employed teachers provide virtual instruction this school year, statutory class size limits apply.

Q. Can virtual school students participate in co-curricular and extracurricular activities?

Yes. Virtual school students are treated the same as brick and mortar students with respect to eligibility and participation in co-curricular and extracurricular activities.

Q. Can counties charge students seeking to enroll as virtual school students?

No. Virtual school students are included in net enrollment totals and districts will receive state aid funding for virtual school students. Districts can charge the same reasonable fees imposed on traditional brick and mortar students.

Q. For schools that use the county employed teacher model, what process is used to determine which teacher(s) will provide virtual instruction?

When considering staffing and scheduling for the upcoming school year, asking a teacher to do a blend of in-person and virtual instruction throughout the day (e.g.: 4 periods of in-person and 2 virtual periods) or even provide full virtual instruction is not considered a transfer. So long as teachers are still teaching at the same school they were assigned, no transfers are necessary. However, if county boards need to physically transfer employees to another school location, county boards should review W. Va. Code §18A-2-7(e), which allows the transfer of both professional through the end of the second school month due to unforeseen circumstances.

Q. What is the start date for virtual school?

Statewide, Virtual school instruction may begin September 8, 2020. If an individual county's start date is delayed past September 8, 2020, that county's virtual school program may still begin September 8, 2020.

Q. Do virtual school teachers provide instruction from their home?

Although virtual school students may receive instruction outside the school building, a county may reasonably expect its teachers providing virtual instruction to be physically present in the school building to ensure teachers have appropriate technology and broadband access and support. Notwithstanding, districts must take employee health needs into considerations when making these decisions.

Q. Will professional learning centered around virtual instruction be available for teachers?

The WVDE is assembling virtual instruction centered professional learning options that will be available in early August.

Q. Can a virtual teacher in one building provide instruction to a student in another building, with the student remaining enrolled in the student's home building?

Yes. No statute or policy precludes this instructional arrangement.

Q. Can students with IEPs or 504 plans enroll in virtual school?

A student's IEP or 504 plan must be reviewed to determine whether the necessary accommodations can be provided virtually.

Q. Can a county impose transfer restrictions on virtual school after the school year commences?

Yes. Counties can place reasonable transfer restrictions on transferring between virtual school and traditional brick and mortar school both for staffing and scheduling purposes. We encourage counties to be as flexible as possible with families whose situations prompt requests to transfer into virtual school options.

Q. Will virtual school students be required to participate in the general summative assessment?

Yes. Virtual school students will be held to the same testing requirements as brick and mortar students.

Q. Is additional funding available for virtual school students or to support a district/school's virtual school offerings?

Virtual school students are included in net enrollment totals and counties will receive state aid funding for such students. Additionally, counties may use CARES funds to support virtual school offerings if necessary.

Q. What are the appropriate WVEIS codes for virtual students?

The WVDE Office of Technology is working to simplify the WVEIS codes for virtual school students and will be providing that information as soon as it is available. Notwithstanding, counties are encouraged to continue developing local virtual school plans.

Q. Are districts responsible for making information or training available to parents so they may assist their virtual students?

As part of their virtual school plan, districts must include a component to that makes information and assistance available to parents so they are better equipped to help their virtual school students.

Q. What impact will this have on the two free courses per student typically offered through West Virginia Virtual School (WVVS)?

Local virtual school options do not impact the two free courses typically offered through WVVS. These courses remain available to traditionally enrolled students for the upcoming school year.

Q. When can I begin enrollment/registration for virtual school?

Districts are encouraged to open enrollment/registration as soon as local virtual school plans are determined. Districts will be better prepared to make necessary staffing and school operations decisions for the upcoming year once physically present student enrollment is known.

Q. Do county virtual school plans have to be approved by the WVDE?

No. Districts must confirm their virtual school plan is in place as part of the submitted individual re-entry plan, but virtual school plans do not require WVDE approval. Notwithstanding, as it is able, the WVDE support districts as they develop virtual options.

Q. Are virtual school teachers certified teachers?

Yes. As required by law, all virtual school teachers must hold an appropriate West Virginia teaching certificate.

Q. If school districts are required to close mid-year, how will this affect the county's virtual school?

At this point the WVDE does not anticipate that a school closure will impact a county's virtual school. Virtual school options will continue to operate notwithstanding a closure.

