



# Virtual Education Report

School Year 2020-2021



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## Introduction

Each year, the Tennessee Department of Education releases an annual report on virtual education programs and virtual public schools operating in Tennessee. In compliance with state statute<sup>1</sup>, the report provides information on student enrollment, academic performance, as well as funding for virtual education. Additional information regarding virtual education is available on the department's [virtual school webpage](#).

State statutes<sup>2</sup> frame virtual schooling and virtual education in the state of Tennessee. These statutes authorize the Tennessee State Board of Education (SBE) to promulgate rules, policies, and guidance regarding authorization and operation of virtual schools and virtual education programs in Tennessee. The SBE has promulgated rules<sup>3</sup> that outline the statutory requirements for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) operating virtual schools, and brick-and-mortar schools that operate a virtual education program.

## Divisions of Virtual Education

In accordance with state law, the Tennessee State Board of Education has divided virtual education into two different categories: virtual schools and virtual education programs. This differentiation allows both LEAs and brick-and-mortar schools a high level of flexibility in offering virtual education.

A virtual school is a public school that uses technology to deliver a significant portion of instruction to its students via the internet in a virtual or remote setting. Virtual schools are assigned their own state and federal school number. Therefore, virtual schools are held to the same standards as other public brick-and-mortar schools within the LEA. Students enrolled in a virtual school must take a significant portion of their classes virtually to remain enrolled in the school but may attend some classes in-person within a brick-and-mortar location if needed.

Students may choose to remain enrolled in a public brick-and-mortar school and still participate in virtual education through a virtual education program. A virtual education program is a course or series of courses offered through the use of technology by an LEA or public charter school. Virtual education programs provide students a broader range of educational opportunities and the flexibility to progress at their own pace through virtual courses. Unlike virtual schools, virtual education programs are not separate schools and must operate through a brick-and-mortar school.

## Establishment and Funding of Virtual Education

Virtual schools are provided funding resources like any other public school in the state. LEAs may utilize BEP funds to implement and operate both virtual schools and virtual education programs. Many LEAs across Tennessee offer access to virtual courses through a virtual education program as a choice for their students and families.

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<sup>1</sup> T.C.A. § 49-16-104

<sup>2</sup> T.C.A. § 49-16-101 - 216

<sup>3</sup> SBE rule 0520-01-03-.05

## Operation of Virtual Schools

LEAs may establish and directly operate virtual public schools or may contract for management services with non-profit and/or for-profit entities. All virtual schools must comply with the same laws, rules, and regulations as public brick-and-mortar schools. Even when an LEA contracts with another entity to manage the day-to-day operations of a public virtual school, the LEA is still responsible for ensuring the virtual school is in compliance with all applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

Both virtual and brick-and-mortar schools offer virtual education services to reach a variety of students who seek personalized pathways to learning opportunities. Throughout Tennessee, virtual instruction takes many forms including:

- **Synchronous Virtual Courses:** *a fully online/virtual course in which a student can progress independently through the coursework and requires students to attend regularly scheduled (daily/every other day) virtual classes with a teacher.*
- **Asynchronous Virtual Courses:** *a fully online/virtual course in which a student can progress independently through the coursework and does not require students to attend regularly scheduled (daily/every other day) virtual classes with a teacher.*
- **Bisynchronous Virtual Courses:** *a fully online/virtual course utilizing a mixture of asynchronous and synchronous instruction.*
- **Hybrid Virtual Courses (allowable in public virtual schools only):** *a course that offers primarily virtual instruction (asynchronous, synchronous, or bisynchronous) and requires students to periodically*

*attend class in-person within a brick-and-mortar location.*

Virtual education promotes flexibility in academic advancement by allowing students to learn at their own pace in a setting of their choice. Students are permitted to complete virtual coursework at their own pace in both virtual schools and virtual education programs.

Students with unique learning needs, including those with disabilities and limited English proficiency, may enroll and participate in a virtual school. Virtual schools are required to comply with federal laws addressing special populations, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and must provide all services required by a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

## Notable Happenings in Virtual Education

- The number of Tennessee public virtual schools increased by 55% from 18 schools in the 2019-20 school year to 28 schools in the 2020-21 school year.
- Enrollment in Tennessee virtual schools increased 198% from 3,553 enrolled students in the 2019-20 school year to 10,589 enrolled students in 2020-21.
- 86% of Tennessee public schools reported the use of virtual education during the 2020-21 school year in response to COVID-19.
- Tennessee Department of Education partnered with Trevecca Nazarene University to provide free training on digital learning and teaching to all Tennessee teachers.

## 2020-2021 Virtual School Information

The charts and tables included in this report provide details related to Tennessee public virtual schools operating during the 2020-21 school year. The information includes grade configurations, enrollment, demographics, attendance, promotion, mobility, attrition, academics, and funding. All data included is representative of the 2020-21 school year.

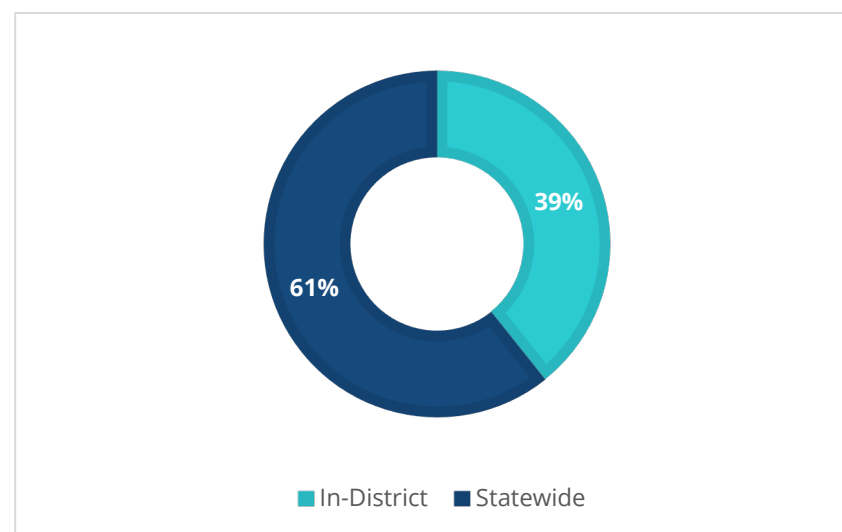
### *Virtual School Enrollment, Attendance, and Student Population*

Enrollment in Tennessee virtual schools increased 198% from 3,553 enrolled students in the 2019-20 school year to 10,589 enrolled students in the 2020-21 school year. Student participation in virtual education has seen a continuous upward trend across the last five years. The COVID-19 pandemic was a major contributing factor to the increase in virtual school enrollment and use of virtual education in the 2020-21 school year. Sixty-three percent (63%) of Tennessee public school educators that completed the Tennessee Educator Survey indicated that they have delivered instruction in a fully virtual setting during the 2020-21 school year.

In the 2020-21 school year, sixty-one percent (61%) of virtual schools offered a statewide enrollment option for any student residing in the

state that meets the school's enrollment criteria. LEAs that allow out-of-district or state-wide enrollment may charge tuition to families for the portion of funding that the LEA receives from local city or county taxes. LEAs operating a virtual school are not required to offer out-of-district or state-wide enrollment options; thirty-nine percent (39%) of the virtual schools operating in the 2020-21 did not offer this option.

*Chart 1: Percentage of virtual school enrollment types*



*Table 1: Operating Virtual Schools (School Year 2020-21)*

<b>School</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Date Opened</b>	<b>Grades Served</b>	<b>Enrollment Type</b>
<b>Barry Tatum Virtual Learning Academy</b>	Wilson County	January 1, 2012	3-12	In-District
<b>Bradley County Virtual School</b>	Bradley County	April 20, 2012	K-12	Statewide
<b>Carter County Online Academy</b>	Carter County	July 1, 2020	K-12	In-District
<b>Claiborne Virtual Learning Academy</b>	Claiborne County	July 1, 2020	K-12	In-District
<b>E B Wilson</b>	Sumner County	August 1, 2013	9-12	In-District
<b>Hamilton County Virtual School</b>	Hamilton County	January 31, 2012	K-12	In-District
<b>Henry County Virtual Academy</b>	Henry County	July 28, 2020	K-12	In-District
<b>Hickman County Learning Academy</b>	Hickman County	July 1, 2020	6-12	In-District
<b>Marion Virtual High School</b>	Marion County	August 1, 2017	9-12	Statewide
<b>McNairy County Virtual School K-12</b>	McNairy County	July 29, 2020	K-12	Statewide
<b>Memphis Virtual School</b>	Shelby County	July 1, 2013	9-12	Statewide
<b>MNPS Virtual School</b>	Davidson County	July 1, 2011	6-12	In-District
<b>Perry County Virtual School</b>	Perry County	July 2, 2019	5-12	Statewide
<b>Pioneer Virtual Academy</b>	Lawrence County	July 1, 2020	K-12	Statewide
<b>Polk Innovative Learning Academy</b>	Polk County	July 2, 2019	K-11	Statewide
<b>Roane County Virtual Academy</b>	Roane County	July 28, 2020	K-12	Statewide

School	District	Date Opened	Grades Served	Enrollment Type
<b>Robertson Co. Virtual School</b>	Robertson County	July 1, 2012	K-12	In-District
<b>Rutherford County Virtual School</b>	Rutherford County	July 1, 2020	3-12	Statewide
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Johnson County 9-12</b>	Johnson County	July 1, 2020	9-12	Statewide
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Johnson County K-8</b>	Johnson County	July 1, 2020	K-8	Statewide
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Robertson County 9-12</b>	Robertson County	July 1, 2019	9-12	Statewide
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Robertson County K-8</b>	Robertson County	July 1, 2019	K-8	Statewide
<b>Tennessee Online Public School</b>	Bristol City	November 21, 2011	9-12	Statewide
<b>Tennessee Virtual Academy</b>	Union County	July 1, 2011	K-8	Statewide
<b>Tennessee Virtual Learning Academy</b>	Washington County	July 1, 2014	9-12	Statewide
<b>Virtual Academy of Maury County</b>	Maury County	July 1, 2020	7-12	Statewide
<b>Putnam County VITAL</b>	Putnam County	July 1, 2011	K-12	In-District
<b>Wayne County Virtual School</b>	Wayne County	July 1, 2020	7-12	In-District

Chart 2: Statewide Student Enrollment in Virtual Schools Trend – Across Years

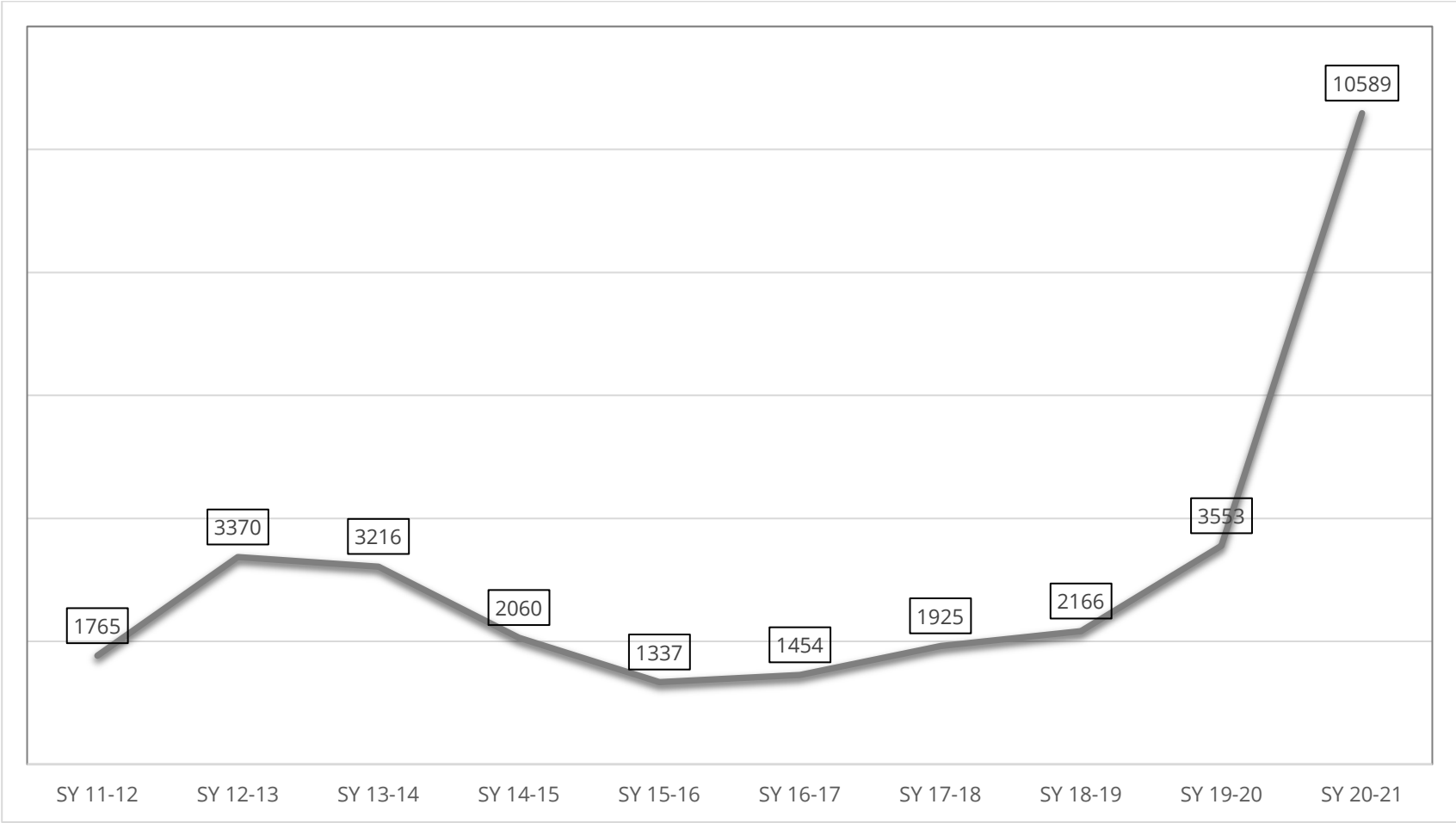




Table 2: October 1st Yearly Student Enrollment by School

School	Enrollment									
	SY 11-12	SY 12-13	SY 13-14	SY 14-15	SY 15-16	SY 16-17	SY 17-18	SY 18-19	SY 19-20	SY 20-21
Barry Tatum Virtual Learning Academy	*	18	29	31	35	39	55	75	114	2,664
Bradley County Virtual School	*	34	69	85	70	48	43	51	67	258
Carter County Online Academy	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	79
Claiborne Virtual Learning Academy	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	13
E.B. Wilson	*	9	20	53	81	72	96	58	102	91
Hamilton County Virtual School	*	22	26	19	30	27	28	31	35	709
Henry County Virtual Academy	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	157
Hickman County Learning Academy	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	27
Marion Virtual High School	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**	**
McNairy County Virtual School K-12	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	23
Memphis Virtual School	*	111	150	97	102	168	93	163	106	70
MNPS Virtual School	16	85	89	140	122	97	98	92	90	94
Perry County Virtual School	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	122
Pioneer Virtual Academy	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	14	11
Polk Innovative Learning Academy	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	73	138
Roane County Virtual Academy	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	85
Robertson County Virtual School	*	19	19	25	38	38	50	42	44	43

School	Enrollment									
	SY 11-12	SY 12-13	SY 13-14	SY 14-15	SY 15-16	SY 16-17	SY 17-18	SY 18-19	SY 19-20	SY 20-21
<b>Rutherford County Virtual School</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	102
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Johnson County 9-12</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	46
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Johnson County K-8</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	196
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Robertson County 9-12</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	532	1,453
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Robertson County K-8</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	701	1,442
<b>Tennessee Online Public School</b>	*	58	138	222	208	222	224	216	173	159
<b>Tennessee Virtual Academy</b>	1,749	3,014	2,676	1,379	634	733	1,217	1,348	1,343	2,259
<b>Tennessee Virtual Learning Academy</b>	*	*	*	*	10	**	16	37	29	32
<b>Virtual Academy of Maury County</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	88
<b>Putnam County VITAL</b>	*	*	*	**	**	**	**	53	127	220
<b>Wayne County Virtual School</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	**

\* Not operating within school year

\*\*Data not available or does not meet reporting count threshold

Table 3: October 1st School Demographics (School Year 2020-21)

School	% Economically Disadvantaged Students		% Students with Disabilities		% Limited English Proficient	
	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA
<b>Barry Tatum Virtual Learning Academy</b>	14.0%	13.3%	11.9%	12.0%	8.1%	5.7%
<b>Bradley County Virtual School</b>	34.1%	28.1%	8.5%	12.0%	<5%	<5%
<b>Carter County Online Academy</b>	49.4%	43.9%	10.1%	17.3%	*	<1%
<b>Claiborne Virtual Learning Academy</b>	69.2%	40.0%	23.1%	15.4%	*	<5%
<b>E B Wilson</b>	7.7%	20.8%	51.6%	14.0%	*	<5%
<b>Hamilton County Virtual School</b>	39.1%	35.5%	10.6%	12.8%	<5%	9.9%
<b>Henry County Virtual Academy</b>	47.8%	46.2%	15.9%	14.8%	<5%	<5%
<b>Hickman County Learning Academy</b>	14.8%	31.6%	<5%	19.1%	<5%	<5%
<b>Marion Virtual High School</b>	*	42.9%	*	12.6%	*	<5%
<b>McNairy County Virtual School K-12</b>	*	33.2%	*	13.2%	*	<5%
<b>Memphis Virtual School</b>	34.3%	61.3%	5.7%	11.1%	<5%	11.8%
<b>MNPS Virtual School</b>	14.9%	41.2%	<5%	12.4%	<5%	26.2%
<b>Perry County Virtual School</b>	41.0%	41.1%	26.2%	20.1%	*	<5%
<b>Pioneer Virtual Academy</b>	18.2%	35.1%	*	12.9%	*	<5%
<b>Polk Innovative Learning Academy</b>	35.5%	37.1%	15.9%	16.5%	*	<5%
<b>Putnam County VITAL</b>	22.3%	30.3%	<5%	15.0%	*	8.8%

School	% Economically Disadvantaged Students		% Students with Disabilities		% Limited English Proficient	
	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA
<b>Roane County Virtual Academy</b>	14.1%	32.3%	<5%	18.8%	*	<5%
<b>Robertson County Virtual School</b>	<5%	21.5%	9.3%	13.6%	<5%	9.0%
<b>Rutherford County Virtual School</b>	6.9%	19.8%	<5%	8.9%	<5%	12.7%
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Johnson County 9-12</b>	26.1%	41.6%	6.5%	19.0%	<5%	<5%
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Johnson County K-8</b>	29.6%	41.6%	5.1%	19.0%	<5%	<5%
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Robertson County 9-12</b>	6.0%	21.5%	8.8%	13.6%	<5%	9.0%
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Robertson County K-8</b>	5.5%	21.5%	8.0%	13.6%	<5%	9.0%
<b>Tennessee Online Public School</b>	<5%	27.0%	5.0%	14.3%	*	<5%
<b>Tennessee Virtual Academy</b>	38.2%	38.8%	12.5%	13.6%	<5%	<5%
<b>Tennessee Virtual Learning Academy</b>	37.5%	25.0%	*	15.0%	*	<5%
<b>Virtual Academy of Maury County</b>	31.8%	33.2%	5.7%	15.0%	<5%	5.7%
<b>Wayne County Virtual School</b>	*	26.0%	*	18.1%	*	<5%

\*Data not available

Table 4: Attendance and Graduation (School Year 2020-21)

School	K-8 Attendance Rate		K-8 Promotion Rate		High School Attendance Rate		High School Graduation Rate	
	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA
<b>Barry Tatum Virtual Learning Academy</b>	99%	96%	100%	99%	99%	96%	100%	96%
<b>Bradley County Virtual School</b>	100%	96%	100%	100%	100%	95%	100%	96%
<b>Carter County Online Academy</b>	*	97%	*	99%	99%	96%	78%	89%
<b>Claiborne Virtual Learning Academy</b>	96%	93%	100%	98%	*	91%	*	94%
<b>E B Wilson</b>	*	97%	*	100%	100%	97%	96%	95%
<b>Hamilton County Virtual School</b>	87%	94%	71%	98%	77%	91%	54%	86%
<b>Henry County Virtual Academy</b>	97%	96%	100%	99%	92%	94%	100%	99%
<b>Hickman County Learning Academy</b>	*	92%	*	98%	99%	89%	*	93%
<b>Marion Virtual High School</b>	**	95%	**	96%	*	93%	*	88%
<b>McNairy County Virtual School K-12</b>	100%	97%	**	97%	*	99%	*	96%
<b>Memphis Virtual School</b>	100%	94%	100%	76%	100%	95%	55%	78%
<b>MNPS Virtual School</b>	100%	92%	100%	100%	100%	87%	96%	82%
<b>Perry County Virtual School</b>	99%	95%	100%	100%	97%	95%	*	82%
<b>Pioneer Virtual Academy</b>	100%	97%	100%	97%	100%	97%	*	96%
<b>Polk Innovative Learning Academy</b>	98%	94%	95%	97%	96%	95%	*	89%
<b>Putnam County VITAL</b>	100%	96%	90%	99%	98%	99%	100%	92%
<b>Roane County Virtual Academy</b>	99%	96%	100%	98%	*	94%	*	90%

School	K-8 Attendance Rate		K-8 Promotion Rate		High School Attendance Rate		High School Graduation Rate	
	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA
<b>Robertson County Virtual School</b>	*	93%	*	99%	99%	91%	100%	87%
<b>Rutherford County Virtual School</b>	100%	98%	100%	100%	100%	99%	100%	95%
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Johnson County 9-12</b>	**	96%	**	100%	86%	95%	*	91%
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Johnson County K-8</b>	93%	96%	*	100%	**	95%	**	91%
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Robertson County 9-12</b>	**	93%	**	99%	87%	91%	68%	87%
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Robertson County K-8</b>	95%	93%	100%	99%	**	91%	**	87%
<b>Tennessee Online Public School</b>	**	95%	**	**	98%	94%	96%	91%
<b>Tennessee Virtual Academy</b>	96%	95%	100%	100%	**	92%	**	86%
<b>Tennessee Virtual Learning Academy</b>	*	96%	*	99%	100%	95%	100%	93%
<b>Virtual Academy of Maury County</b>	100%	95%	92%	98%	99%	94%	76%	87%
<b>Wayne County Virtual School</b>	**	97%	**	98%	*	96%	*	97%

\*Data not available/too few students to generate rate

\*\*School did not serve these grade levels

## Student Mobility & Attrition

Student mobility rate is the percentage of a student body entering, reentering, and/or withdrawing on or after October 1st of a school year. Student mobility rates were elevated in virtual schools during the 2020-21 school year in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The data in Table 5 presents the mobility rate of students in public virtual schools during the 2020-21 school year. Mobility rate is calculated by taking the sum of students entering (enrolling), reentering, and exiting (withdrawing) on or after October 1st, 2020, divided by the total yearly membership of the school<sup>4</sup>.

Virtual schools typically have a higher mobility rate than brick-and-mortar schools within the same LEA. Many students and families choose virtual schooling because of the flexibility that virtual education offers; data in table 5 suggests that most virtual students do not remain enrolled in the virtual school for the entirety of the school year. During the 2020-21 school year, many students enrolled in virtual schools only for a short time in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and then transferred back into a brick-and-mortar school. Virtual schools plan for this increased mobility and student transience by offering flexible scheduling and varied types of instruction to fit student and family needs.

Teachers and school leaders often find it challenging to effectively build school and classroom culture with a consistently changing student body. Furthermore, elevated mobility can have negative outcomes on both individual student achievement and school-wide student academic progress<sup>5</sup>.

Coupled with mobility, virtual schools also have a higher rate of attrition than other brick-and-mortar schools within the same LEA. Attrition rate is the percentage of the school's student membership that exits (withdraw) the school and is not replaced by entering (enrolling) students during the school year<sup>6</sup>. Attrition data is shown as "School Membership Change" and "District Membership Change" data in table 5. These data display the percentage increase (positive number) or decrease (negative number) of student membership during the school year. Student attrition is a concern for virtual schools; however, increased student attrition is expected with the marked increase in student enrollment across the last five years.

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4 Virtual school mobility rate: Percentage of the virtual school's yearly student membership that enters (enrolls) for more than one (1) day on or after 10/1 or exits (withdraws) from the virtual school on or after 10/2 and before the last month of the school's academic calendar.

5 Welsh, R. O. (2017). School Hopscotch: A Comprehensive Review of K-12 Student Mobility in the United States. *Review of Educational Research*, 87(3), 475-511. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654316672068>

6 Virtual school attrition rate: Percentage of the virtual school's yearly student membership, enrolled for more than one (1) day, that exits (withdraws) from the virtual school on or after 10/2 and before the last month of the school's academic calendar.

Table 5: Annual Mobility and Attrition Rate (School Year 2020-21)

School	School Mobility Rate	District Mobility Rate†	School Membership Change	District Membership Change†
<b>Barry Tatum Virtual Learning Academy</b>	39.15%	18.39%	-22.53%	1.17%
<b>Bradley County Virtual School</b>	44.10%	13.97%	8.72%	0.38%
<b>Carter County Online Academy</b>	37.50%	15.01%	10.94%	1.09%
<b>Claiborne Virtual Learning Academy</b>	23.53%	12.15%	11.76%	0.87%
<b>E B Wilson</b>	48.53%	13.76%	1.47%	-0.41%
<b>Hamilton County Virtual School</b>	28.66%	10.23%	-7.27%	-0.02%
<b>Henry County Virtual Academy</b>	30.93%	11.59%	-9.28%	-1.00%
<b>Hickman County Learning Academy</b>	0%	13.26%	0%	0.34%
<b>Marion Virtual High School</b>	*	*	*	*
<b>McNairy County Virtual School K-12</b>	0%	10.86%	0%	-0.40%
<b>Memphis Virtual School</b>	20.51%	17.03%	-12.82%	-0.88%
<b>MNPS Virtual School</b>	0%	17.82%	0%	0.34%
<b>Perry County Virtual School</b>	61.25%	23.33%	-27.50%	-1.87%
<b>Pioneer Virtual Academy</b>	79.41%	12.10%	55.88%	-0.17%
<b>Polk Innovative Learning Academy</b>	51.02%	17.32%	-6.12%	-1.00%
<b>Putnam County VITAL</b>	14.00%	12.73%	-0.40%	0.41%
<b>Roane County Virtual Academy</b>	29.36%	13.90%	12.84%	-0.38%



School	School Mobility Rate	District Mobility Rate†	School Membership Change	District Membership Change†
<b>Robertson County Virtual School</b>	53.06%	17.04%	-36.73%	-1.38%
<b>Rutherford County Virtual School</b>	61.61%	13.21%	39.81%	1.33%
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Johnson County 9-12</b>	84.11%	23.91%	29.91%	5.76%
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Johnson County K-8</b>	72.98%	23.91%	28.18%	5.76%
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Robertson County 9-12</b>	25.41%	17.04%	-1.60%	-1.38%
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Robertson County K-8</b>	30.79%	17.04%	-1.39%	-1.38%
<b>Tennessee Online Public School</b>	21.69%	11.48%	-12.17%	-0.74%
<b>Tennessee Virtual Academy</b>	35.99%	28.94%	10.84%	4.72%
<b>Tennessee Virtual Learning Academy</b>	44.12%	14.56%	-32.35%	-2.52%
<b>Virtual Academy of Maury County</b>	10.87%	16.58%	-6.52%	0.88%
<b>Wayne County Virtual School</b>	*	*	*	*

\*Fewer than ten (10) students enrolled and/or no mobility/attrition data generated

†District mobility rate and district membership change (attrition) rate is calculated using comparable methodology to virtual school mobility and attrition rate.

## Accountability

Virtual schools are public schools and therefore subject to the same accountability laws, rules, and regulations as any other public school in Tennessee. Like each public brick-and-mortar school, virtual school accountability data is published as part of the annual State Report Card and available for public review.

The Tennessee General Assembly placed additional accountability measures on virtual schools in 2013, focusing on student achievement growth, as represented by the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS). TVAAS composites are reported on a 1-5 scale and are one-year scores. If a virtual school demonstrates student achievement growth at a level 1 or “significantly below expectations” for any three consecutive years of the school’s operation, the commissioner of education has the authority to enforce an enrollment cap or direct the district to close the school.

In March 2020, the U.S. Department of Education waived federal assessment and accountability requirements as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and school closures. In January 2021, Governor Bill Lee and the Tennessee General Assembly passed [Chapter 2 of the Public Acts of 2021, 1<sup>st</sup> Extraordinary Session](#), (PC2) to remove negative consequences associated with accountability if the district met an 80% participation rate for statewide assessments. This new law helped ensure a strong statewide administration of Tennessee Comprehensive Achievement Program (TCAP) assessments in spring 2021 to both generate reliable data on how Tennessee students were performing and inform strategies to help support academic success during the pandemic.

All Tennessee school districts met the requirement in PC2 to achieve an 80% rate of student participation in TCAP administration of spring 2021; therefore, some assessment data is neither publicly available this year nor included in accountability calculations such as letter grades or other summative ratings. Other information about schools and districts is available within the [2020-2021 Tennessee State School and District Report Card](#) as well as the Tennessee Department of Education’s [data downloads webpage](#).

Historically, Tennessee virtual schools have performed below expectations on state assessments as represented by data in Chart 3. The department has identified areas of focus to drive gains in student achievement and has created a virtual school monitoring and oversight project to address the low performance of virtual schools.

**Chart 3: Average School-Wide Composite Achievement Score: All Virtual Schools - Across Years**

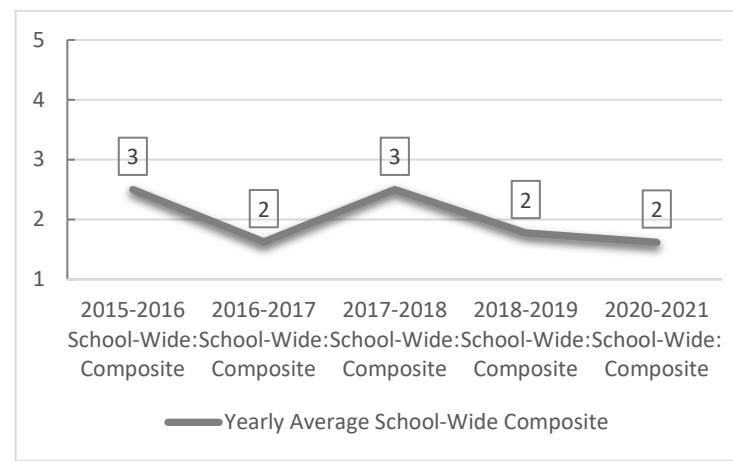


Table 6: Student Achievement Growth (School Year 2020-21)

School	Literacy		Numeracy		Literacy and Numeracy		Science		Social Studies		Overall Composite	
	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA
<b>Barry Tatum Virtual Learning Academy</b>	2	5	1	5	1	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	5
<b>Bradley County Virtual School</b>	1	5	1	5	1	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	5
<b>Carter County Online Academy</b>	3	1	0	1	3	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	1
<b>Claiborne Virtual Learning Academy</b>	3	5	1	5	2	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	5
<b>E B Wilson</b>	0	1	3	5	3	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	3
<b>Hamilton County Virtual School</b>	1	5	1	5	1	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	5
<b>Henry County Virtual Academy</b>	3	4	1	5	1	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	5
<b>Hickman County Learning Academy</b>	*	3	*	1	*	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	*	1
<b>Marion Virtual High School</b>	*	5	*	5	*	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	*	5
<b>McNairy County Virtual School K-12</b>	*	2	*	2	*	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	*	1
<b>Memphis Virtual School</b>	0	1	3	1	3	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	1
<b>MNPS Virtual School</b>	1	1	3	1	2	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	1
<b>Perry County Virtual School</b>	2	3	1	3	1	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	3
<b>Pioneer Virtual Academy</b>	*	1	*	5	*	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	*	3
<b>Polk Innovative Learning Academy</b>	3	5	1	5	1	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	5
<b>Putnam County VITAL</b>	1	5	1	5	1	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	5
<b>Roane County Virtual Academy</b>	3	5	1	5	1	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	5

School	Literacy		Numeracy		Literacy and Numeracy		Science		Social Studies		Overall Composite	
	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA
<b>Robertson County Virtual School</b>	*	5	*	5	*	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	*	5
<b>Rutherford County Virtual School</b>	4	5	1	5	1	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	5
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Johnson County 9-12</b>	3	3	1	1	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Johnson County K-8</b>	1	3	1	1	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Robertson County 9-12</b>	4	5	1	5	1	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	5
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Robertson County K-8</b>	1	5	1	5	1	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	5
<b>Tennessee Online Public School</b>	4	3	5	5	5	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5	5
<b>Tennessee Virtual Academy</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1
<b>Tennessee Virtual Learning Academy</b>	*	2	*	1	*	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	*	1
<b>Virtual Academy of Maury County</b>	2	3	2	5	2	5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	5
<b>Wayne County Virtual School</b>	*	1	*	1	*	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	*	1

\*Indicates school had insufficient data to generate TVAAS scores in this subject

N/A = Science and Social Studies not assessed during this academic year

## Funding

Virtual schools are funded in the same manner as public brick-and-mortar schools are funded. Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-16-204, a virtual school shall be provided resources as any other public school in the state. State funding allocations for the basic education program (BEP) are district-based and not based on individual schools. School districts can use BEP funds from both state and local sources to implement and operate their virtual schools and virtual education programs. Beginning

in the 2023-24 school year, the Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement (TISA) will replace the BEP as the funding formula for K-12 public schools. Under TISA, school districts will continue to be able to use state and local funds to operate virtual schools and virtual education programs. The table below provides the BEP funding for each virtual school operating in the 2020-21 school year, including the state share and required local match, on both an aggregate and per pupil basis<sup>7</sup>.

*Table 7: State Funds Generated for Virtual Schools (School Year 2020-21)*

School	State Funds Generated – Total	State Funds Generated – Per Pupil
<b>Barry Tatum Virtual Learning Academy</b>	\$817,344.66	\$7,169.69
<b>Bradley County Virtual School</b>	\$1,928,980.86	\$7,476.67
<b>Carter County Online Academy</b>	\$602,567.76	\$7,627.44
<b>Claiborne Virtual Learning Academy</b>	\$100,198.41	\$7,707.57
<b>E B Wilson</b>	\$695,223.30	\$7,318.14
<b>Hamilton County Virtual School</b>	\$5,308,325.54	\$7,487.06
<b>Henry County Virtual Academy</b>	\$1,211,779.38	\$7,718.34
<b>Hickman County Learning Academy</b>	\$216,014.85	\$8,000.55
<b>Marion Virtual High School</b>	\$22,643.94	\$7,547.98

<sup>7</sup> Data provided by Tennessee Department of Education Finance Department

School	State Funds Generated – Total	State Funds Generated – Per Pupil
<b>McNairy County Virtual School K-12</b>	\$175,955.98	\$7,650.26
<b>Memphis Virtual School</b>	\$862,433.07	\$7,912.23
<b>MNPS Virtual School</b>	\$766,347.30	\$8,514.97
<b>Perry County Virtual School</b>	\$111,358.52	\$8,566.04
<b>Pioneer Virtual Academy</b>	\$80,539.47	\$7,321.77
<b>Polk Innovative Learning Academy</b>	\$587,603.25	\$7,834.71
<b>Putnam County VITAL</b>	\$918,990.62	\$7,532.71
<b>Roane County Virtual Academy</b>	\$652,062.20	\$7,671.32
<b>Robertson County Virtual School</b>	\$342,160.88	\$7,438.28
<b>Rutherford County Virtual School</b>	\$736,301.28	\$7,218.64
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Johnson County 9-12</b>	\$381,050.66	\$8,283.71
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Johnson County K-8</b>	\$1,623,607.16	\$8,283.71
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Robertson County 9-12</b>	\$3,942,288.40	\$7,438.28
<b>Tennessee Connections Academy Robertson County K-8</b>	\$5,169,604.60	\$7,438.28
<b>Tennessee Online Public School</b>	\$1,238,686.92	\$7,160.04
<b>Tennessee Virtual Academy</b>	\$10,053,759.75	\$7,452.75
<b>Tennessee Virtual Learning Academy</b>	\$211,520.49	\$7,293.81
<b>Virtual Academy of Maury County</b>	\$651,062.72	\$7,398.44
<b>Wayne County Virtual School</b>	\$41,785.05	\$8,357.01

## Conclusion and Next Steps

The number of virtual schools operating in Tennessee has grown steadily since the enactment of the Virtual Public Schools Act. In the 2020-21 school year, LEAs leveraged virtual education to both mitigate challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to offer a wider array of educational opportunities for students. During this time, enrollment in virtual schools more than doubled and LEAs continue to submit applications to open new public virtual schools.

Historically, Tennessee virtual schools have performed below expectations as indicated by state accountability data; therefore, the department has identified areas of focus to drive gains in student achievement and growth. The department has created an initiative to raise the quality of education provided by Tennessee's virtual schools. This will be accomplished by implementing the following:

1. Holding LEAs accountable to ensure that virtual schools operating under their purview align to the strengthened State Board of Education rules regarding the creation, operation, and accountability of virtual schools.
2. Providing tailored support and guidance for LEAs operating virtual schools.
3. Developing a monitoring framework for both virtual schools and virtual education programs.

Through this initiative, the department will provide continual support to LEAs and schools so that all Tennessee students receive the high-quality educational services they deserve.