



Virtual Schools

Frequently Asked Questions: Opening a New Public Virtual School

1. How can our school district open a virtual school?

To open a virtual school, a school district must complete and submit the Tennessee Department of Education's Program and School Authorization Form and the School Directory Online Change Request Form found on the department's [School Directory website](#). All documentation requested in Addendum C must be submitted with the completed form. All materials should be submitted by the school district's School Directory Contact or Director of Schools via the School Directory Online Change Request Form. A school district wishing to open and operate a virtual school in partnership with another school district should contact the Tennessee Department of Education's Division of Choice via email at Virtual.Schools@tn.gov for more information.

2. What is the deadline for submitting a request to open a virtual school?

The deadline for submitting a Program and School Authorization Form to create a virtual school is June 1.

3. What is the process for reviewing our school district's request to open a virtual school?

Upon receipt of the Program and School Authorization Form, the Division of Choice will review the submission to:

- ensure that all required materials have been provided;
- ensure that the proposed virtual school complies with applicable law and regulation; and
- seek any necessary clarification and/or modification.

After satisfactory completion of these steps, the virtual school will be authorized, and the school directory team will assign a new school number to the virtual school.

4. What is the expected turnaround time for authorizing a virtual school once our school district has submitted a Program and School Authorization Form?

The forms and accompanying materials will be reviewed on a rolling basis when received. The Division of Choice will conduct an initial review within 15 calendar days of receiving all materials from a school district. Because this is a collaborative process, the final authorization date will depend upon timely receipt of requested feedback.

5. If our school district wants to continue to provide a remote learning option to our families, instead of creating a virtual school, can we just continue our Continuous Learning Plan in school year 2021-22?

Continuous Learning Plans may not be used to provide remote instruction for the 2021-22 school year. A district desiring to provide a fully remote learning option for its families may apply to open a virtual school. In the alternative, students may enroll in the virtual schools of other districts that permit such enrollment under their out-of-district enrollment policy.

6. Are there any requirements regarding the location of our virtual school office?

A virtual school must maintain an administrative office within the State. That office will be considered its principal place of business. It is permissible to locate the virtual school office within a traditional school building.

7. Can districts partner to create a virtual school?

Yes. The districts should specify in an agreement how funding, accountability, staffing and other matters will be allocated between them. It is recommended that partnering districts contact their respective attorneys as well as the department for guidance.

8. Must a virtual school be overseen by a full-time principal?

T.C.A. §49-5-412 requires that each school having nine (9) or more teachers must have at least one (1) full-time supervising principal.

TDOE Contact Information:

For more information, please contact Virtual.Schools@tn.gov.