

TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Distance Learning and e-Learning

3.208

State of Tennessee BOARD OF EDUCATION

Policy on Distance Learning and e-Learning

1. General.

- 1.1. The following policy establishes requirements for distance learning and e-learning programs for all grade levels, including student needs, course content, teacher/facilitator guidelines, virtual classes, funding, and management at the state, county and school levels.
- 1.2. The purpose of this policy is to lend guidance to local school districts and assure consistent high quality education for the students of Tennessee while utilizing technology-delivered courses. This policy is intended to meet the needs of, and is limited to, those students enrolled in Tennessee public schools.
- 1.3. This policy is promulgated under authority of the State Board of Education as authorized in T.C.A. §49-1-301.
- 1.4. This policy becomes effective upon final approval by the State Board of Education.
- 1.5. Districts are encouraged to utilize e-learning and distance learning for students with health related issues, for credit recovery, for alternative learning settings, to ameliorate issues of education equity, or for any other student need where non-traditional instructional delivery is appropriate.
- 1.6. Students may be permitted to access distance learning and e-learning courses to expand and enhance the curricular offerings available to them. These may include highly rigorous courses that are otherwise unavailable including, but not limited to courses that lead to college credit. Further, distance learning and e-learning shall be permissible tools to remediate students towards obtaining the skills and knowledge necessary to meet Tennessee graduation requirements.

2. Course Approval.

- 2.1. Providers shall submit courses to the Department of Education for consideration. Course providers may include state agencies, private sector course developers, local education agencies, and public sector developers not associated with the State of Tennessee. Distance or e-learning courses offered for public school credit shall be analyzed by the State Department of Education and presented to

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- the State Board of Education for approval. This submission shall include, but not be limited to, course content, pedagogical strategies, interactivity, assignments, and assessments. All courses submitted for approval shall be evaluated based upon SREB/NACOL protocols.
- 2.2. Distance learning and e-learning course content will be reviewed by the State Department of Education for correlation with the State of Tennessee course content standards. The courses approved by the State Board of Education will be aligned with the standards and include appropriate course materials.
 - 2.3. Providers shall adhere to the state and federal privacy and safety regulations regarding students and teachers.
 - 2.4. In an onsite education setting, e-learning and distance learning may, in exceptional cases and in accordance with local education agency policy, be a student's primary source of instruction. Students who have been expelled from school for long-term periods may, at the student's expense, enroll in distance learning courses in accordance with local education agency policy and receive credit for completed courses.

3. Management.

- 3.1. In order for students to receive credit in e-learning or distance learning courses, a local education agency shall utilize content which has been submitted for consideration to the State Department of Education and approved by the State Board of Education.
- 3.2. Students may, at the local education agencies' discretion, take e-learning and distance learning courses at the school site, from home, or from any location deemed appropriate by local education agency policy.
- 3.3. Local education agencies shall provide for appropriate monitoring of those students taking courses offsite as determined by local education agency policy.
- 3.4. If the course is taken at the school site the student shall be monitored by either a licensed Tennessee teacher or a course facilitator. Course facilitators shall, at minimum, meet the same employment criteria as those who are educational assistants. Course facilitators shall be employees of the school district in which the school site is located.
- 3.5. Course facilitators located in Tennessee schools shall be required to complete appropriate training based upon State approved provider guidelines that may vary from course to course.

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- 3.6. The distance and e-learning course facilitators and teachers shall receive training or technology-delivered instructions pertaining to the course organization, classroom management, learning management system, technical aspects, monitoring of student testing, and securing other student services as needed. This training shall be provided as part of the agreement between the provider and the local education agency and shall be updated annually or more frequently if appropriate.
- 3.7. The local director of schools shall designate a distance learning contact at both the district level and school level to ensure that information is provided to students and parents, any necessary affiliation agreements with the course provider are secured, appropriate personnel have been identified and placed, and that other necessary duties are completed in order to provide student access.
- 3.8. An individual virtual school with a school number issued by the Tennessee Department of Education or a virtual school program administered by a public school with a school number issued by the Tennessee Department of Education may increase the enrollment in virtual classes by up to twenty-five percent (25%) over the numbers enumerated in T.C.A. § 49-1-104 if the school administering the instruction has a school effect score of three (3) or higher as reported by the Tennessee Department of Education in the prior year.

4. Evaluation of Progress.

- 4.1. The local education agency is responsible for establishing specific procedures for evaluating pupil progress and administering a final grade based upon provider guidelines and district policy. In any case, the final grading scale must be in accord with the State Board of Education's Uniform Grading Policy.
- 4.2. Students who take courses with associated end-of-course examinations shall take these examinations in order to receive credit in the course. These examinations shall count the percentage of the final grade as outlined in State Board of Education Rules and Policies. Local education agencies shall develop policies to ensure that these examinations are taken in a timely and secure manner in accordance with test security standards.

5. Technology Access.

- 5.1. Students who enroll in distance learning and e-learning courses shall, at minimum, have access to appropriate technologies and resources at the school.

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- 5.2. When available and appropriate, student access may be authorized at other equipped locations such as public libraries, community learning centers and homes.
- 5.3. The school distance learning coordinator will be responsible for assisting students in finding solutions for appropriate technology access.

6. Funding.

- 6.1. A student who participates in a distance learning and e-learning courses shall, for funding purposes, be counted as present for the portion of the school day that would otherwise be occupied if the student were taking the course in a traditional manner. This applies whether the student is taking the course either onsite or offsite.
- 6.2. Funding for distance and e-learning learning courses and associated materials may be provided through the local education agencies' instructional budgets. Further, local education agencies are encouraged to use grant awards or other appropriate funding sources to meet the needs of student in the district.
- 6.3. The local education agency may not be responsible for costs if the selected course is currently being offered at the school and there is no justifiable reason to duplicate the school course.

7. Guidelines and Procedures.

- 7.1. The State Department of Education will develop and the State Board of Education will approve guidelines and procedures that make timely accommodations to the rapidly changing options for e-learning and distance learning. The State Department of Education will report annually to the State Board of Education on the status of e-learning and distance learning in the State of Tennessee.
- 7.2. Local education agencies are encouraged to develop policies, guidelines, and procedures related to e-learning and distance learning management, evaluation of progress, technology access, and funding.