

## VIRTUAL EDUCATION POLICY

**Scope.** This policy establishes a virtual education program that offers eligible students in grades three through twelve an online pathway for earning a high school diploma in accordance with West Virginia Code §18-5F-1 et. seq. Virtual School applications for students in grades K-2 will be reviewed and approved on an individual basis.

### Definitions.

Blended program- a formal education program in which a student learns

1. At least in part through online learning, with some element of student control over time, place, path, or pace;
2. At least in part in a supervised setting outside the home; and
3. In such a way that the modalities of each student's learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience;

Eligible student- a student eligible for attendance in public schools in a school district that provides a virtual instructional program, that is a member of a multicounty consortium providing a virtual instruction program or that does not provide a virtual instruction program and is not a member of a multicounty consortium but participates through a collaborative agreement between the school district in which the student is enrolled and a school district or a multicounty consortium providing a virtual instruction program.

Full-time student- student enrolled for the full instructional day and completing required courses for a WV public school diploma (e.g. 6 half credit courses per semester).

Part-time student- student enrolled up to 50% of the instructional day (4 courses for SSAC eligibility).

Virtual course- any virtual pathway course offered by McDowell County that meets the specified state-approved standards for that course.

Virtual instruction program- a program implemented by a county board of a multicounty consortium that provides a full-time online or blended program of instruction for students enrolled in any composition of grades six through twelve.

Full-time virtual program- formal education program in which a student learns through a total online learning environment/platform.

### Student Eligibility and Requirements.

McDowell County Virtual School students are enrolled in classes for third through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Students in grades K-2 can be enrolled after individual review and approval is granted by the office of the Superintendent. Our students may be any of the following:

- Students who are homeschooled and wishing to enroll in the district school;
- Students who are taking courses both at home and at school. The student has the option to complete coursework at home or may choose to come to school to participate in specifically selected courses;
- Students who are enrolled in a traditional education program in the district school and take some courses through the Virtual School;
- Students who are full-time virtual school learners and complete all coursework online at home.
- Students receiving home/hospital instruction;
- Students receiving educational services in alternative setting.

Students who meet the following requirements are eligible to participate in the virtual education program:

- Enrolled in McDowell County Schools as a full-time student (6 courses per semester);

- Enrolled in courses to meet McDowell County Schools graduation requirements;
- Parents and students must successfully complete a district defined virtual education orientation course;
- Meet school system and/or state enrollment requirements for the county school system, including health requirements such as immunizations, physicals, dentals, etc.
- Meet school system and/or state enrollment requirements for the course(s) to be scheduled including successful completion of any prerequisite courses.
- Maintain a minimum grade of 70 on a numerical scale in courses taken during the current academic year (high enough to maintain a C average for sports).
- Have access to consistent, daily internet service.
- Weekly communication is required between an online student and the school.

**Attendance.**

Students who are enrolled in the full-time virtual program and otherwise meeting all course requirements are exempt from attendance requirements.

Students participating in the virtual education option will be considered as being in attendance if the students are successfully progressing in the virtual education coursework. Successful progression will mean completing courses to graduate with one's four-year cohort. To receive an eligibility form for a driver's license, students must be progressing successfully in the coursework and communicating weekly with staff. After being enrolled in virtual school coursework, students will stay on a probationary period for two weeks. If students do not start coursework within two weeks from the enrollment date, they will be automatically removed from the course, and their local school will be notified. Extension of the probationary period may be granted by the county administration in case of extenuating circumstances.

The county school system reserves the right to set specific attendance requirements for each virtual course. The superintendent of their designee is authorized to develop alternate attendance policies for virtual courses, provided that students in such programs are given notice of the attendance requirements. A student's failure to comply with such requirements may result in administrative action including, but not limited to, probation or removal from the class or a charge of truancy, if appropriate.

All virtual program students will be enrolled as a student in the school attendance area in which they reside. These students will be counted in the average daily enrollment. McDowell County Schools will only provide transportation for the regular morning and afternoon bus routes to the local schools.

**Extracurricular Activities.**

Students enrolled as a full-time student in the virtual program are eligible to participate in co-curricular or extracurricular activities in the school in which they are enrolled according to attendance areas. Students must meet the same extracurricular activity eligibility requirements as students enrolled in the traditional day program including any applicable WVSSAC requirements. Student residency for purposes of participating in extracurricular activities will be determined in accordance with applicable McDowell County Schools' policies and WVSSAC policies.

**Course Progression and Guidelines.**

Students are required to progress through online courses at a rate comparable to the progression of a traditional class. All courses must be completed by the end of each semester as determined by McDowell County Schools calendar. High school students are expected to earn at least 6 credits each year if they want to graduate on time. Students who do not complete a course by the last day of school will be issued the current grade they have. Student performance will be monitored and reported on a regular basis consistent with a traditional day program.

The following guidelines are to be followed if a student is attending school in the traditional manner:

- Students taking a virtual school course must be enrolled in one of the district's schools;

- The course is not offered at the student's home school;
- The school offers the course, but the student is unable to take it due to an unavoidable scheduling conflict;
- The district has expelled the student from the regular school setting or has placed student in alternative setting, but education services are to be continued;
- The student has been placed on home/hospital instruction;
- The school administration, the student's teachers, and the student's parents/guardians determine if the student requires a differentiated or accelerated learning environment;
- A student has failed a course and wishes to recover credits in the subject area;
- The course is part of summer school instruction;
- Any other specific condition that may warrant the use of virtual coursework for the student and is approved by the building principal;
- All courses will use the state approved grading scale as identified in WVBE Policy 2510; and
- Student privacy will be respected. WVBE Policy 4350 and FERPA will be followed.

**Removal.**

Students may be transitioned back to a traditional day instruction or returned to homeschool for the following reasons:

- Not maintaining a 70 % average in each course;
- Progressing through coursework below the minimum requirement for coursework (6 courses per semester);
- Not meeting attendance requirements (for the students in blended program);
- Cheating, falsifying information, or plagiarizing;
- Violating McDowell County Schools policies and procedures, including rules governing the use of technology.

The student will not be able to participate in any extracurricular activities if the student transfers back to homeschool or private school after the student is removed from virtual school.

**Withdrawal.**

A student may withdraw from a course before 15 calendar school days into a semester without a grade penalty. No grade will be recorded on the student's transcript. If a student withdraws from a virtual class after 15 school calendar days into a semester and enrolls in the same course at their high school, then the grade the student had online will be transferred to the traditional teacher of the record. If the student does not enroll in the class at the high school, the student will receive a grade of WF (withdrew with an F). Any student who withdraws after 12 weeks into the semester will have a grade of an F recorded on their transcript for the virtual course taken.

**Assessment, Grading, and Diploma.**

All virtual education students will participate in applicable state testing and accountability requirements. Students will be required to participate in testing at their school of enrollment on days identified by the county or the state. A student will not be permitted to enroll in virtual school the following year if they have not met all state testing and WVDE accountability requirements the previous year.

Upon satisfying all graduation requirements, students enrolled in the virtual pathway will receive a high school diploma from the high school in which they are enrolled in their attendance area.

Any virtual program course taken for high school credit, regardless of the grade in which the course was taken, will be entered onto the student's transcript and calculated in Grade Point Averages (GPA).

**Student Support.**

Students participating in virtual school will received at least the following supports:

- IEP committees will meet to determine the most appropriate least restrictive environment and the most reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.
- LEP committees will meet to determine the most reasonable accommodations for LEP students.

**Counseling and Guidance Services.**

McDowell County Schools will utilize personnel to assist with academic, career and social needs as they arise. In conjunction with school counselors, students will be assisted with developing an educational plan based on transcripts, standardized assessments, career interests, and other pertinent data. The plan will be reviewed periodically to assess its appropriateness and progress toward completion.

**Student Responsibilities.**

Students should spend the first days making sure they are comfortable with the technology of online learning and they are capable of mastering the content. Students are responsible for maintaining reliable, daily access to internet. Computer/internet problems will not be accepted as reasons for delays in meeting deadlines. Only through continuous communication and consistent work can students be successful in an online course. It is essential that students maintain regular contact with their instructor and submit assignments on time. Students must let the administrator for virtual school know immediately if he/she needs courses on the NCAA approval list.

**Technology.**

The school system will provide students with a computer. Reliable, high quality internet access is the responsibility of the family. Damage to or loss of school equipment will result in student or his/her parents required to pay for the replacement or damage. Use of technology will follow county policy and procedures.

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