

Conecuh County Board of Education

Virtual School Policy

The Conecuh County School System will provide a virtual pathway or virtual education options for students in grades 9-12. The system may also expand its offerings to include additional grade levels. Students enrolled in the virtual school will complete all coursework virtually from their computers. The coursework allows student scheduling flexibility to complete the course requirements.

Students must meet the following eligibility criteria to participate in the virtual pathway:

- Own an operational home computer
- Maintain a reliable internet connection
- Have an adult willing to serve as the learning coach
- Be proficient in reading, writing, and math
- Students must be highly self-motivated, independent learners.

Students must meet the established attendance criteria to participate in the virtual pathway.

Attendance and academic progress will be monitored daily by the virtual school staff.

All quarterly and state-mandated testing will be conducted. All full-time students enrolled in the virtual school will be counted in the average daily membership. All full-time students enrolled in the virtual school will participate in all state testing and accountability requirements. Upon satisfying all graduation requirements, students enrolled in the virtual school will receive a high school diploma.

Students enrolled in the virtual program will be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities in the school attendance zone in which they reside, and are subject to the same requirements, including Alabama High School Athletic Association rules.

The virtual school program may accept in county as well as out of county students at the discretion of the superintendent.

The virtual program shall be exempt from any provision of general law, local law, or administrative rules that apply to the traditional delivery of instruction, including, but not limited to, requirements to the physical presence of a student, student monitoring and security, staffing requirements, transportation obligations, facility requirements, space and location requirements, time requirements and physical education requirements, to the extent any of the forgoing conflict with the delivery of the virtual program.

Any online course delivery that is not supported by the Alabama State Department of Education shall be accredited by an institution recognized pursuant to the administrative rule adopted by the ALSDE.

Course work offered through the virtual program shall contain the requirement content as identified in the applicable Alabama Course of Study.

Legal Reference: Act No. 2015-89

Preamble

The utilization of *Virtual School Programming*¹ by public school systems provides alternative options made available by current technology. This option is available to students in general education programs and is also available to students who are eligible and enrolled in programs under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004)*. A presumption regarding any student who is enrolled in a special education program Virtual School Program is that they are, or can be with appropriate behavioral supports, motivated to actively engage in the operations of the Virtual School Program. Further, the student must be an individual who will consistently demonstrates appropriate time management skills that will provide the student a realistic opportunity to complete the assigned assignments and program in a reasonable time frame.

Application

A student with disabilities who wishes to enroll in the Conecuh County Board of Education Virtual School Program shall contact the office for the Coordinator of Special Education for the Conecuh County Board of Education for an application. The application shall be submitted in sufficient time for it to be processed and approved prior to the beginning of the next semester and within a time established by the Coordinator of Special Education. The Coordinator of Special Education will give serious consideration to each application that has been timely submitted and will provide the student's parent or guardian sufficient notice of whether or not the student has been accepted in the Conecuh County Board of Education Virtual School Program.

Requirements

The Conecuh County Board of Education will be diligent in ensuring that there will not be discrimination due to race, ethnic origin, religion, gender, sexual preference, or sexual identification in the consideration of enrollment in the Conecuh County Board of Education Virtual School Program. Due to the individualized nature of each student with a disability, each application will be considered independent of any other student.

Location. Unlike the traditional student in a general education program, the demands of special education services by the Conecuh County Board of Education require a more intensive involvement with the student who has a disability and is enrolled in the Virtual School Program. Further, evaluating benchmarks and measurable annual goals will also require that the student with a disability be seen more frequently by Conecuh County Board of Education staff. Accordingly, consideration will only be given to students with disabilities who reside as a permanent resident in the following counties: Butler, Conecuh, Covington, Escambia, and Monroe.

¹ The term "virtual school" is synonymous with terms such as, distant learning, internet learning, on-line programming, e-learning, cyber school, and non-traditional programming, among others.

Disabilities. All students with disabilities who meet the above designated geographical requirement will be given due consideration based on the individual nature and needs of the student who has a disability. However, there will be some students who will not be accepted into the Virtual School Program. Students who require special related services or more intensive program strategies (e.g. hand-over-hand instruction; social skills training; one-on-one applied behavior analysis; and/or the presence of an interpreter who interprets the various activities of the classroom environment, including conversations of classmates) would benefit more from attending a traditional school program.

Individual Education Plans

Personnel with the Conecuh County Board of Education, in cooperation with the student's parent(s) or guardian(s), will develop the student's IEP. Consideration will be given to the student's previous IEPs, all evaluations, and in-put from all appropriate providers. State standards and functional needs will be addressed in all IEPs.

Evaluations

In order to maintain the integrity of the evaluation and grading process, all evaluations will be conducted at a location designated by Conecuh County Board of Education personnel according to the student's residential address.