



# At-A-Glance: Virtual Schools

In general, virtual school refers to a school that provides instruction and student services mainly through internet technology.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many districts and schools temporarily shifted to online learning to reduce the spread of the disease. This temporary shift to online learning is distinct from virtual schools, however. Virtual schools are established to deliver online instruction on an ongoing basis.

School districts may manage their own virtual schools or contract for virtual school services with nonprofit and for-profit entities.

Students may enroll full-time or part-time. Full-time students take all of their courses online through the virtual school; part-time students take one or more courses online while enrolled in another public school.

Under a 2011 state law, virtual schools must comply with the same laws as traditional public schools regarding length of the school day and school year, regular student assessments, and other requirements. Virtual schools must ensure students have access to any necessary instructional materials and technology, such as a computer, printer, and internet connection.

As of 2019, 10 school districts have established virtual schools: Bradley County, Bristol City, Hamilton County, Metro Nashville, Robertson County, Shelby County, Sumner County, Union County, Washington County, and Wilson County.

