



Department of  
**Education**

# Virtual Education Report

School Year 2019-2020



# Introduction

Each year, the Tennessee Department of Education releases an annual report on virtual programs and virtual public schools operating in the state. In compliance with T.C.A. § 49-16-104, the report provides information on student enrollment, academic performance, as well as funding for virtual education.

Additional information regarding virtual education is available on the Tennessee Department of Education's [virtual school webpage](#).

## Background

In 2011, the Tennessee General Assembly passed the *Virtual Public Schools Act*, authorizing school districts to establish virtual public schools. A virtual school is a public school that “uses technology in order to deliver a significant portion of instruction to its students via the internet in a virtual or remote setting” (T.C.A. § 49-16-203). Virtual school students take all courses online, but in some cases, students may receive support in a physical location.

While school districts may manage their own virtual schools or may contract for services with non-profit and for-profit entities, all virtual schools must comply with the same laws, rules, and regulations as traditional public schools on curriculum standards, class size, length of the school day and school year, regular student assessments, and teacher qualifications.

*Virtual schools must comply with the same laws, rules, and regulations as traditional public schools.*

Of the seventeen virtual schools operating in Tennessee, twelve are operated by the school districts. Two in Union County, Tennessee Virtual Academy and Tennessee Virtual High School, are operated by K-12, Inc. The three virtual schools in Robertson County, Robertson County Virtual School, Tennessee Connections Academy K-8 and Tennessee Connections Academy 9-12, are operated by Connections Education LLC dba Pearson Online & Blended Learning K-12 USA.

Districts may determine enrollment criteria for their virtual schools. Districts have the option to charge tuition if an enrolling virtual school student does not live within district borders. Virtual schools in Tennessee offer a broad range of online courses and services to reach a variety of students who seek personalized pathways to learning opportunities.

Throughout Tennessee, virtual instruction takes many forms including:

- **Synchronous learning:** Students and instructors must be online at the same time. Instruction takes place in real time at a specific set time.
- **Asynchronous learning:** Students may take online courses at their own pace and on their own schedule. Instructors provide materials, lectures, tests, and assignments that can be accessed at any time.

Students with unique learning needs, including those with disabilities and limited English proficiency, may enroll and participate in a virtual school. Virtual schools are required to comply with federal laws addressing special populations, including the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and must provide all services required by a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), Section 504 Plan, or Individual Learning Plan (ILP).

# 2019-2020 Virtual School Information

The charts below provide details on all Tennessee virtual schools operating during the 2019-20 school year. The information includes grade configurations, enrollment, demographics, attendance, promotion, mobility, attrition, academics, and funding.

School	District	Date Opened	Grades Served	In-District/ Statewide
Barry Tatum Academy (formerly Tennessee Virtual On-Line School)	Wilson County	January 1, 2012	K-12	In-District
Bradley County Virtual School	Bradley County	April 20, 2012	3-12	In-District
Hamilton County Virtual School	Hamilton County	January 31, 2012	K-12	In-District
Marion Virtual High School	Marion County	August 1, 2019	9-12	In-District
Memphis Virtual School	Shelby County	July 1, 2013	6-12	Statewide
MNPS Virtual School	Davidson County	July 1, 2011	5-12	In-District
Pioneer Virtual Academy*	Perry County	August 2, 2019	6-12*	In-District
Polk Innovative Learning Academy	Polk County	July 1, 2019	K-10	Statewide
Robertson County Virtual School	Robertson County	July 1, 2012	3-12	In-District
Tennessee Connections Academy K-8	Robertson County	August 5, 2019	K-8	Statewide
Tennessee Connections Academy 9-12	Robertson County	August 5, 2019	9-12	Statewide
Tennessee Online Public School	Bristol City	November 21, 2011	9-12	Statewide
Tennessee Virtual Academy	Union County	July 1, 2011	K-8	Statewide
Tennessee Virtual High School	Union County	July 1, 2019	9-12	Statewide
Tennessee Virtual Learning Academy	Washington County	July 1, 2014	9-12	Statewide
VITAL: Upper Cumberland e- Learning Network	Putnam County	July 19, 2011	K-12	In-District
E. B. Wilson	Sumner County	August 1, 2013	K-12	In-District

Table 1. Full-Time Active Virtual Schools in Tennessee (2019-20 School Year.)

\*Pioneer Virtual Academy added 5<sup>th</sup> grade mid-way through the 2019-20 School Year.

## Overall Student Enrollment

School	Enrollment								
	SY 11-12	SY 12-13	SY 13-14	SY 14-15	SY 15-16	SY 16-17	SY 17-18	SY 18-19	SY 19-20
Barry Tatum Academy (formerly Tennessee Virtual On-Line School)	Not Opened	18	29	31	35	39	55	75	114
Bradley County Virtual School	Not Opened	34	69	85	70	48	43	51	67
Hamilton County Virtual School	Not Opened	22	26	19	30	27	28	31	35
Marion Virtual High School	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	3
Memphis Virtual School	Not Opened	111	150	97	102	168	93	163	106
MNPS Virtual School	16	85	89	140	122	97	98	92	90
Pioneer Virtual Academy	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	14
Polk Innovative Learning Academy	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	73
Robertson County Virtual School	Not Opened	19	19	25	38	38	50	42	44
Tennessee Connections Academy K-8	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	701
Tennessee Connections Academy 9-12	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	532
Tennessee Online Public School	Not Opened	58	138	222	208	222	224	216	173
Tennessee Virtual Academy	1,749	3,014	2,676	1,379	634	733	1,217	1,348	1,343
Tennessee Virtual High School	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	514
Tennessee Virtual Learning Academy	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	10	6	16	37	29
VITAL: Upper Cumberland e-Learning Network	Not Opened	Not Opened	Not Opened	9	7	4	5	53	127
E.B. Wilson	*	9	20	53	81	72	96	58	102

Table 2. Full-Time Student Enrollment  
*\*Data not available*

## School Demographics

School	% Economically Disadvantaged Students		% Students with Disabilities		% Limited English Proficient	
	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA
Barry Tatum Academy (formerly Tennessee Virtual On-Line School)	15.8%	12.5%	14.9%	12.7%	0.9%	5.2%
Bradley County Virtual School	23.9%	35%	4.5%	10.8%	0.0%	2.8%
Hamilton County Virtual School	0.0%	33.2%	2.9%	12.3%	0.0%	9.8%
Marion Virtual High School	*	42%	*	13.3%	*	1.4%
Memphis Virtual School	41.3%	55.6%	11.0%	11.0%	3.7%	12.0%
MNPS Virtual School	15.6%	39.7%	3.3%	12.5%	1.1%	26.4%
Pioneer Virtual Academy	0.0%	3.4%	7.7%	18.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Polk Innovative Learning Academy	52.0%	36.5%	18.7%	16.2%	0.0%	0.2%
Robertson County Virtual School	19.6%	21.6%	10.9%	14.0%	1.0%	9.4%
Tennessee Connections Academy K-8	0.3%	21.6%	10.2%	14.0%	0.3%	9.4%
Tennessee Connections Academy 9-12	0.2%	21.6%	7.9%	14.0%	0.0%	9.4%
Tennessee Online Public School	8.1%	26.4%	4.0%	13.7%	0.0%	1.4%
Tennessee Virtual Academy	44.3%	42.0%	13.0%	14.5%	2.2%	1.3%
Tennessee Virtual High School	38.6%	42.0%	16.3%	14.5%	2.3%	1.3%
Tennessee Virtual Learning Academy	27.6%	25.3%	0.0%	15.0%	0.0%	0.7%
VITAL: Upper Cumberland e-Learning Network	14.8%	31.5%	3.0%	14.8%	0.0%	9.1%
E.B. Wilson	1.1%	1.0%	44.2%	13.3%	0.0%	4.0%

Table 3. Virtual School Student Characteristics (2019-20 School Year)

\*Data not available



## Attendance and Graduation

School	K- 8 Attendance Rate		K-8 Promotion Rate		High School Attendance Rate		High School Graduation Rate	
	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA
Barry Tatum Academy (formerly Tennessee Virtual On-Line School)	94.0%	97.1%	100%	100%	92.9%	95.8%	100%	96.8%
Bradley County Virtual School	100%	96.6%	100%	100%	100%	95.9%	100%	95.0%
Hamilton County Virtual School	100%	96.3%	100%	98.9%	100%	94.5%	100%	87.0%
Marion Virtual High School	N/A	95.9%	N/A	98.6%	100%	94.7%	0.0%	89.2%
Memphis Virtual School	100%	95.3%	100%	99.0%	100%	93.1%	47.0%	77.7%
MNPS Virtual School	98.0%	96.2%	100%	99.9%	97.0%	93.1%	85.0%	82.3%
Pioneer Virtual Academy	98.7%	94.8%	100%	98.4%	99.5%	90.3%	100%	98.6%
Polk Innovative Learning Academy	97.3%	95.7%	100%	99.2%	96.4%	95.9%	N/A	94.8%
Robertson County Virtual School	97.3%	95.9%	100%	99.2%	97.2%	94.6%	84.2%	93.1%
Tennessee Connections Academy K-8	92.6%	95.9%	99.9%	99.2%	N/A	94.6%	N/A	93.1%
Tennessee Connections Academy 9-12	N/A	95.9%	N/A	99.2%	88.0%	94.6%	84.3%	93.1%
Tennessee Online Public School	N/A	96.3%	N/A	99.3%	97.7%	96.3%	97.4%	94.0%
Tennessee Virtual Academy	94.9%	95.4%	99.5%	99.6%	N/A	94.0%	N/A	95.4%
Tennessee Virtual High School	N/A	95.4%	N/A	99.6%	91.9%	94.0%	0.0%	95.4%
Tennessee Virtual Learning Academy	N/A	96.2%	N/A	98.7%	100%	95.3%	100%	96.7%
VITAL: Upper Cumberland e-Learning Network	100%	96.2%	100%	99.4%	93.1%	94.9%	66.7%	90.8%
E.B. Wilson	100%	96.4%	100%	99.9%	99.9%	95.8%	100%	95.7%

Table 4. Virtual School Student Attendance and Promotion Rates (2019-20 School Year)  
*N/A = School does not service these grade level*

## Student Mobility & Attrition

**Student mobility** refers to the number of students who leave the school after October 1 divided by total enrollment of the school. **Attrition rate** is the difference between the number of students who enter and exit after October 1.

School	Entering Enrollment	Exit Enrollment	Mobility Rate	Attrition Rate
Barry Tatum Academy (formerly Tennessee Virtual On-Line School)	114	63	11.7%	21.2
Bradley County Virtual School	67	10	9%	11.9
Hamilton County Virtual School	35	6	-5.3%	-5.7
Marion Virtual High School	3	1	16.7%	33.3
Memphis Virtual School	106	28	9.1%	13.8
MNPS Virtual School	90	18	-4.2%	-5.6
Pioneer Virtual Academy	14	1	10.5%	15.4
Polk Innovative Learning Academy	73	24	5.4%	8.2
Robertson County Virtual School	44	12	16.2%	26.1
Tennessee Connections Academy K-8	701	173	13%	22.7
Tennessee Connections Academy 9-12	532	90	20.6%	33.8
Tennessee Online Public School	173	50	-14.9%	-17.9
Tennessee Virtual Academy	1,343	168	-2.7%	-3.2
Tennessee Virtual High School	514	78	-13.8%	-14.6
Tennessee Virtual Learning Academy	29	12	-17.1%	-20.7
VITAL: Upper Cumberland e-Learning Network	127	9	2.7%	3.1
E. B. Wilson	102	34	-0.7%	-1

Table 5. Virtual School Student Mobility and Attrition Rates (2019-20 School Year)

## Accountability

Virtual schools are public schools created by a school district and, therefore, are subject to the same accountability laws, rules, and regulations as any other public school in Tennessee. The *Virtual Public Schools Act* specifically states that virtual school students shall be subject to regular assessments in language arts, math, science, and social studies. Like each traditional public school, virtual school accountability data is published as part of the annual state Report Card and available for public review.

*Virtual school accountability data is published as part of the state Report Card and available for public review.*

The General Assembly placed additional accountability measures on virtual schools in 2013, focusing on student achievement growth, as represented by the Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS). TVAAS composites are reported on a 1-5 scale and are one-year scores. If a virtual school demonstrates student achievement growth at a level 1 or “significantly below expectations” for any three consecutive years of the school’s operation, the commissioner of education has the authority to enforce an enrollment cap or direct the district to close the school.



Figure 1: Explanation of TVAAS

During the 2019-20 school year, school closures caused by the COVID-19 public health emergency resulted in the suspension of statewide testing. Therefore, the table below shows TVAAS scores for virtual schools from the 2018-19 school year. The six virtual schools that opened in the 2019-20 school year do not have any TVAAS scores to report.

For many of the virtual schools in operation prior to the 2019-20 school year, TVAAS scores are not available because class size tends to be lower in virtual school classrooms. In order to calculate a TVAAS score, there must be at least 10 valid tests. For virtual schools with available TVAAS scores, the scores are generally lower than the scores of the district that oversees the virtual school.



## Student Achievement Growth: School Year 2018-19

School	Literacy		Numeracy		Literacy and Numeracy		Science		Social Studies		Overall Composite	
	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA	SCH	LEA
Barry Tatum Academy (formerly Tennessee Virtual On-Line School)	1	5	1	5	1	5	N/A	N/A	2	5	1	5
Bradley County Virtual School	3	1	1	2	1	1	N/A	N/A	3	1	1	1
Hamilton County Virtual School	*	5	*	5	*	5	N/A	N/A	*	5	*	5
Marion Virtual High School**												
Memphis Virtual School	2	1	1	1	1	1	N/A	N/A	2	1	1	1
MNPS Virtual School	4	4	2	5	3	5	N/A	N/A	3	1	3	3
Pioneer Virtual Academy**												
Polk Innovative Learning Academy**												
Robertson County Virtual School	3	4	1	3	1	4	N/A	N/A	3	2	1	3
Tennessee Connections Academy K-8**												
Tennessee Connections Academy 9-12**												
Tennessee Online Public School	5	5	5	5	5	5	N/A	N/A	3	5	5	5
Tennessee Virtual Academy	1	1	1	1	1	1	N/A	N/A	1	1	1	1
Tennessee Virtual High School**												
Tennessee Virtual Learning Academy	*	5	*	5	*	3	N/A	N/A	*	5	*	5
VITAL: Upper Cumberland Learning Network	*	5	*	2	*	3	N/A	N/A	*	2	*	2
E.B. Wilson	*	5	2	5	2	5	N/A	N/A	*	5	2	5

Table 6. Virtual Schools TVAAS Scores (School Year 2018-19)

\*Indicates school had insufficient data to generate TVAAS scores in this subject

\*\*Indicates a virtual school that opened in 2019-20

N/A = Science not assessed during this academic year

## Funding

Virtual schools are funded in the same manner as traditional public schools are funded. Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-16-204, a virtual school “shall be provided resources as any other public school in the state.” State funding allocations for the basic education program (BEP) are district-based and not based on individual schools. School districts can use BEP funds from both state and local sources to implement and operate their virtual schools. The table below provides the BEP funding for each virtual school operating in the 2019-20 school year, including the state share and required local match, on both an aggregate and per pupil basis.

School	State Funds Generated - Total	State Funds Generated - Per Pupil
Barry Tatum Academy (formerly Tennessee Virtual On-Line School)	\$817,505.40	\$7,171.10
Bradley County Virtual School	\$495,682.75	\$7,398.25
Hamilton County Virtual School	\$259,040.25	\$7,401.15
Marion Virtual High School	\$22,381.53	\$7,460.51
Memphis Virtual School	\$839,795.60	\$7,922.60
MNPS Virtual School	\$755,291.70	\$8,392.13
Pioneer Virtual Academy	\$117,512.36	\$8,393.74
Polk Innovative Learning Academy	\$571,877.62	\$7,833.94
Robertson County Virtual School	\$337,499.36	\$7,670.44
Tennessee Connections Academy K-8	\$5,376,978.44	\$7,670.44
Tennessee Connections Academy 9-12	\$4,080,674.08	\$7,670.44
Tennessee Online Public School	\$1,276,193.32	\$7,376.84
Tennessee Virtual Academy	\$9,879,040.85	\$7,355.95
Tennessee Virtual High School	\$3,780,958.30	\$7,355.95
Tennessee Virtual Learning Academy	\$211,321.26	\$7,286.94
VITAL: Upper Cumberland e-Learning Network	\$956,428.11	\$7,530.93
E.B. Wilson	\$748,596.36	\$7,339.18

Table 7. State Funds Generated for Virtual Schools (School Year 2019-20)

## ***Conclusion***

The number of virtual schools operating in Tennessee has been growing steadily since the enactment of the Virtual Public Schools Act, and in the 2020-21 school year, the global COVID-19 pandemic necessitated new experiences with remote learning for some students. Parents continue to be interested in virtual public school options for their children. As more districts apply to open virtual schools, it will be important to continue to provide guidance and support to ensure a high-quality education for students learning in a virtual setting.