



Best Practice: Review Local Policies, Procedures, and Practice

In anticipation of receiving courses through the TxVSN, a district or open enrollment charter school should review local policy and procedural documentation related to distance learning and/or online courses. For example, how many transfer credits are allowable for local high school students? How does an online course effect class rank for a student? How will TxVSN course availability be articulated to students? In some cases local policy, procedures and practices may need to be revised or created specific to TxVSN online courses in order to maximize this option for students. Some key areas to review include

1. Local Course Offering Documentation

Such documentation may include course selection forms, sometimes called “Choice Sheets”, student handbook, and Parent or student informational websites.

Texas Education Code § 26.0031 requires that at the time and in the manner that a school district or open-enrollment charter school informs students and parents about courses that are offered in the district's or school's traditional classroom setting, the district or school shall notify parents and students of the option to enroll in a course offered through the state virtual school network under Chapter 30A. See <http://www.txvsn.org/documents/TEC26.0031.pdf>

Districts and open enrollment charter schools will need to incorporate this reference and local procedures for accessing TxVSN courses into documents and/or websites.

2. Local and Legal Policy Documents

Districts and open enrollment charter schools have policy documentation available for staff in print or electronic format. This documentation articulates local School Board decisions. A district's legal policy is an articulation of education code, State Board of Education Rules, and regulations from governing organizations such as the University Interscholastic League; however, local rules may supplement these, so a review of both legal and local education policy is recommended. Areas for consideration include, but are not limited to:

- a. Individualized Learning - EEJC Local and Legal
- b. Extended Instruction - EHDD Local and Legal
- c. Academic Achievement Class Rank - EIC Local and Legal
- d. Extended Instructional Programs / Distance Learning - EHDE Local and Legal
- e. Student Activities: FM Local and Legal

3. Advanced Placement (AP)

Review local procedures and practices for placing students in Advanced Placement courses. Consider if adjustment is needed specific to Advanced Placement courses taken online.

All provider courses listed as Advanced Placement (AP) in the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) catalog are approved by the College Board. However, the receiving district must access its district or campus AP Course Audit account to add these AP online courses. The College Board sets an annual timeline for schools to update entries. Once additions are made the online AP courses provided by the TxVSN catalog provider district will then be part of the district or campus' authorized AP courses in the ledger sent to colleges and universities. The current College Board process does *not* allow the TxVSN or its course provider districts to handle this step for receiving districts, so each school or district must be proactive to accomplish this important step by the College Board deadline. See the College Board AP Central website at <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc> for further information.



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4. **National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)**

Review local policy, procedures, and practices for placing student athletes in online courses.

Be aware that the NCAA Eligibility Center is tasked with certifying the academic and amateur credentials of all college-bound student-athletes wishing to compete in NCAA Division I and II athletics. If an online course from a TxVSN course provider district is approved by the NCAA, that approval will be indicated in the detailed course description.

After a student has successfully completed a course from a TxVSN course provider district, if a student athlete's Academic Achievement Record (AAR) needs to be submitted to the NCAA Eligibility Center, it is suggested that the receiving district attach a copy of the TxVSN Provider district's online course grade report. This attached documentation will assist the Certification Staff in finding the correct list of approved core courses, verifying that the online course has met NCAA standards, and expediting review of the student-athlete's AAR. Again, attaching a copy of the grade report is **not** mandatory; however, this additional documentation will assist the NCAA certification staff and keep the review process moving forward.

5. **University Interscholastic League Eligibility (UIL)**

As some UIL member districts may adopt more stringent eligibility rules for students, a review of local policy, procedures, and practices related to UIL eligibility and student participation in online courses is recommended. Consider updating local documentation to note that a student participating in UIL academic, music, and athletic competitions must maintain eligibility requirements when taking an online course as they do when taking a face-to-face class. Note any requirements about attendance accounting and grade reporting schedules that may need to be shared with the TxVSN course provider district.

6. **Funding**

Review local policy, procedures, and practices for determining if the district or campus is responsible for paying for a TxVSN course and under what circumstances the cost may be born by the parent or student. Consider adding this information to student handbooks, district or campus website, parent flyers and other communications.

7. **Participation of 8th Grade Students in High School Courses**

Review local policy, procedures, and practices for determining when it's instructionally appropriate for 8th grade students to participate in TxVSN high school courses. While the TxVSN gives enrollment priority to high school students (grades 9-12), course seats remaining available after high school enrollment closes might be considered for an 8th grade student. As with any course taken for acceleration, the 8th grade student should have successfully completed all course pre-requisites, have the approval of the middle school and feeder high school counselor, as well as, approval of the TxVSN course provider district. It is also critical that the student understand the rigor, pacing, and format of the TxVSN online courses.

8. **TxVSN Summer Session Courses**

TxVSN has courses available to students during the summer. Prior to enrolling students for summer courses, the district or campus must establish how student progress in TxVSN courses will be monitored. TxVSN site coordinators, for example, receive student progress reports from the TxVSN course provider district; as a result, planning for how those reports will be collected and any needed actions when staff is "off contract" should be planned in advanced.