

Texas Virtual School

What is the Texas Virtual School Initiative?

The Texas Virtual School is a web-based learning initiative designed to meet the needs of Texas public school students and educators. Private and charter school students and staff are welcome to take advantage of the programs offered through the Texas Virtual School. Its mission is to provide extended and flexible learning opportunities for secondary students and educators through web-based programs.

I. Inclusive Model

A. Supports local ISD's initiatives

- i. ADA funds remain with schools
- ii. Students remain on school records
- iii. Teachers are under personal contract with TVS and are not full-time employees

B. Keeps schools in control over their students

- i. Schools grant academic credit, not TVS
- ii. Schools maintain contact with teacher through a liaison/mentor

C. Allows ISD's to benefit in reduced costs

- i. State pricing for online course content
- ii. No upfront server costs, technology services in one location on one server
- iii. Administrated in one central location
- iv. No large upfront costs, ISD's only pay on a per student/per semester basis

D. Flexibility of choices for ISD's

- i. ISD's can choose to share statewide instructors and have open classes
- ii. ISD's can choose to develop their own closed Virtual School using their own teachers

II. Consortium of State ESC's

- A. 14 ESC's are presently partnering to bring this service to their school districts. (ESC's 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, and 17)
- B. Administered by Region 4 ESC
- C. Shared marketing strategies

III. Teacher Preparation and Selection

- A. All TVS teachers must be Texas State Certified in areas teaching
- B. Candidates must submit teaching resume
- C. Background check is done on all candidates
- D. All TVS teachers must complete intense Web Instructor's Certification Course, which is equivalent to a 3-hour college graduate level course. The course is designed to ensure that the online experience will be active as opposed to passive learning (i.e. correspondence course) This course will

be offered through the partner ESC's giving consistency in teacher training throughout the state.

i. Part I (6weeks): How to Teach in Online

1. Interactive strategies
2. Motivation and communication strategies
3. Discussion Board strategies
4. Formative Evaluation strategies

ii. Part II (6 weeks): How to Develop Online Course Content

1. Formal Instructional Design
2. Development of Syllabus, orientation letter, overview
3. Formal TEKS/TAKS review of course being taught
4. Development of content for missing curriculum component

IV. Quality of Course Content

- A. TEKS/TAKS compatible
- B. Due diligence of potential vendors
- C. Vendors submit to formal bid process
- D. Content will be required to go through TEA's IQ Standards beginning Fall 2002
- E. Both core academic and AP courses available

V. Active and Safe Learning Environment

- A. Teachers are required to respond to students questions within 24 hours
- B. Schools are required to provide a mentor/liaison for each online student
- C. Students, Parents, and School administrators are required to sign contract
- D. Students are not isolated but included in an active learning environment with other students sharing ideas, projects and discussions germane to topics being studied
- E. All courses are conducted in a password protected online environment**
 - i. All courses are being conducted through the Blackboard interface
 - ii. A separate server for TVS students only, with security in place, is being used
- F. A secure and safe message system is being set up for students**
 - i. Students can only interact with classmates enrolled in class
 - ii. Students cannot email to others outside of course or receive email from students from outside the course
 - iii. Teacher has complete control of messaging between students
 - iv. Relieves ISD's of providing email for participating students