



2021-2022 TCA+A Virtual Academy
A blueprint

On August 31, Senate Bill 15 was passed by the Texas Legislature. The bill provides funding mechanisms for Virtual Learning. While we await final approval from the Governor, TCA+A is setting the stage for its virtual campus. Assuming the bill is signed into law in the coming days, what follows is the blueprint for the TCA+A Virtual Learning Academy.

TCA+A is excited to announce the 2021-2022 Virtual Academy.

Senate Bill 15 authorizes funding for charter schools and public ISDs for virtual learning under certain conditions. TCA+A's Virtual Academy satisfies those conditions. Important to those conditions is that no district may exceed more than 10% of enrollment for virtual learning without specific waivers granted by the Texas Education Agency.

There are also a number of criteria that students must meet to participate in the 2021-2022 TCA+A Virtual Academy. Some are required by Senate Bill 15; others are specific to TCA+A. They include, but are not limited to:

- The student is already enrolled at Fort Worth Academy of Fine Arts or the Texas School of the Arts.
- The student must be in 6th grade or below or be under the age of 12.
- Only 10% of each district can be enrolled in the Virtual Academy. This means approximately 30 students for TeSA and 65 for FWAFA.
- The student must have passed all subjects during the 2020-2021 school year.
- The student must be currently passing all academic and fine art subjects.
- Student attendance must be more than 90% for the previous school year and current school year.
- If applicable, the student must have passed all STAAR exams during the 2020-2021 school year.

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- The student must be assessed periodically with statewide assessments, such as the annual STAAR exam.
- The student must begin virtual instruction on September 27 and is required to remain in virtual instruction until the end of the 1st semester. There is no entering or exiting the Virtual Academy outside of open enrollment periods except for exceptional extenuating circumstances approved by the Superintendent.
- The student will not be able to participate in top performance groups that require in-person auditions, rehearsals and class performances, such as Children's Choir of Texas, Singing Girls of Texas, Texas Boys' Choir, the musical, or dance companies.

Application Procedure

Overview

Virtual Academy spots, per funding guidelines, are limited to 10% of the total district population. For FWFA, that is approximately 65 students. For TeSA, that is approximately 30 students.

Applications will be received from September 8, 2021 to September 13, 2021. Applications will close at 10:00 p.m. on September 13, 2021. No application will be reviewed after the deadline.

If less than 10% of the total student population applies and each student meets the qualifications, then there will be automatic acceptance into the 2021-2022 Virtual Academy. If more than 10% of the population applies, priority will be first given to students with a documented medical condition. Then, all remaining applicants will be placed in a random lottery drawn on September 14, 2021 and notification of status will be given on September 17, 2021. If someone declines the spot, then the next person on the waiting list will be admitted.

No one will be admitted into 2021-2022 TCA+A Virtual Academy after September 23, 2021.

Note, this does not replace "remote conferencing." Remote conferencing is for in-person students who require short-term, temporary accommodations for learning. The Virtual Academy is semester-long and for those students who desire virtual learning as their primary educational mode and delivery.

Process

1. Between September 8 and 13, 2021 please fill out the Virtual Academy application here:

<https://forms.gle/EUrX4RPDXc73n63Y6> for FWFA

<https://forms.gle/dBjJTXBEjuYD4pyW6> for TeSA

Parents/Guardians must acknowledge they understand that students must meet all criteria. This will be the only time to initiate virtual learning for FWFA and TeSA students.

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2. Applications can be received from September 8, 2021 to September 13, 2021. Applications close at 10:00 p.m. September 13, 2021.
3. Lottery September 14, 2021 (if needed)
4. Notifications of status will be given on September 17, 2021
5. Virtual learning will begin on September 27, 2021
6. Virtual learning will continue through the end of the 1st semester. There is no opting in and out during the fall semester.
7. Between December 6 and 10, 2021, you must decide if you will continue to be in virtual learning for the second semester of the 2021-2022 school year. Open enrollment date for any available spots will occur between December 11, 2021, and December 17, 2021.

Instruction / Curriculum

You should think of TCA+A's Virtual Academy as a third-campus of TCA+A with its own curriculum, style, and flow. Chief Academic Officer, Anika Perkins, will serve as the campus administrator (anika.perkins@artsacademics.org). Texas Education Agency will view the Virtual Campus as a stand-alone for accountability reporting on STAAR exams. All instruction will include hybrid synchronous and asynchronous learning. Curriculum standards will be determined by TCA+A's Chief Academic Officer, who will act as the campus administrator. FWAFA and TeSA students may even attend classes together in grade levels that overlap and there is a possibility that other districts will opt to use TCA+A's Virtual Academy, as well. Additionally, there may be multiple grade levels that attend synchronous learning, together.

Because students who are accepted into the 2021-2022 Virtual Academy are enrolled virtually for at least an entire semester, it is important to know that your student will remain a student of TeSA or FWAFA. Attending TCA+A schools via the Virtual Academy does not mean the student will relinquish their spot at TeSA or FWAFA. When the student leaves the Virtual Academy, their spot will be guaranteed at the school in which they auditioned and were accepted.

The approach will infuse fine-arts within a Virtual Environment, which can include music, visual art, dance, physical education, and theatre. While there will be differences between in-person approaches and virtual approaches to the Fine Arts, it is TCA+A's belief that the best academic approach for students infuses the arts.

At-Home Role of Parents/Guardians

At-home virtual learning requires significant participation and guidance from adults who are with the student at home. The 2021-2022 TCA+A Virtual Academy is much more robust than previous forms of virtual learning and may require access to an adult for technical help, focus and scheduling. Please make sure that your student has access to an adult during the day where they can assist with at-home learning.

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Right to Require In-person Instruction

TCA+A administrators may require any student receiving instruction in the 2021-2022 Virtual Academy to return to in-person learning at any time. Automatic re-engagement with in-school learning will occur if a student's attendance drops below 90% for a grading period or if that student does not pass with a 70 or better in any subject in a grading period. In K-1 grades, any student that makes a grade of "1" (below standard) may also be required to initiate re-engagement to in-person school. While not automatic, other factors such as engagement level, academic progress, and behavior might result in a return to in-person instruction, which is solely at TCA+A administration's purview with parent/guardian consultation.

The grades TCA+A Virtual Academy will offer instruction are:

- Kindergarten
- 1st grade
- 2nd grade
- 3rd grade
- 4th grade
- 5th grade
- 6th grade

Synchronous work will include all-class lessons provided by highly qualified teachers, which may include contracted virtual curriculum. Individual small group work would be directed by highly qualified teachers and lead by para-professionals and volunteers.

Contact

For questions about the Virtual Academy, please contact TCA+A Chief Academic Officer, Anika Perkins at anika.perkins@artsacademics.org.