

Alabama State Profile

ACCESS Virtual Learning, a DLC State Affiliate, was instrumental in conducting the research for this profile.

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Much of the digital learning activity in Alabama is through the state virtual school, [ACCESS](#) (Alabama Connecting Classrooms, Educators, & Students Statewide) Distance Learning. There are multi-district fully online schools and district programs. In 2008, Alabama became the second state to establish an online learning requirement.

Alabama had six multi-district fully online schools that served 14,480 students during the 2021-22 SY after enrolling 8,992 students in SY 2020-21. Other school systems in the state have opened virtual schools providing full-time options for the 2022-23 SY.

State virtual school?	YES
Multi-district fully online schools?	YES
Online learning requirement for graduation?	YES
State approval process for online providers?	NO
State approval process for online courses?	NO

The ACCESS supplemental program started in fall 2005 and is one of the larger state virtual programs. It served 71,974 course enrollments in SY 2021-22. ACCESS also offers credit recovery courses supported by online teachers. Students are allowed to move at their own pace, demonstrating mastery through pre- and post-tests. Local LEAs determine how grades are applied based on their policies. Private school students are permitted to take ACCESS courses at no cost.

The ACCESS Franchise Model allows teachers in approved traditional high schools to use select ACCESS [courses](#) in a blended model for grades 7-12, with a few for courses in grade 6. ACCESS franchise courses are posted through a new statewide learning management system funded by the State Department of Education and accessed by districts, making tracking the number of course enrollments in the franchise model untenable for SY 2020-21.

There is extensive district activity in Alabama, including:

- Mobile County Public School System's [Academy of Virtual Learning](#) provides online courses with teacher support combined with time on campus.

- Baldwin County Public Schools operates [two full-time programs](#): the Virtual Secondary School for students in grades 9-12 and Baldwin County Virtual Elementary/Middle School that launched in fall 2020 to expand options to K-8 students.
- Florence City [Virtual School](#) provides part- and full-time options for students in grades 7-12.
- Hunstville City Schools has a [Virtual Academy](#) serving grades K-12.
- Blount County Schools' [Bridge Academy](#) serves part- and full-time students in grades 9-12.
- [Montgomery Public Schools](#) online program serves students in grades 9-12. Students are required to report to the Virtual Program Lab one day a week.

All students in Alabama must complete “one on-line / technology-enhanced course or experience prior to graduation,” which could include an online course or a blended “online experience incorporated into courses used to fulfill requirements for graduation.” Exceptions through individualized education plans are allowed. ALSDE has [published guidelines](#) on the essential characteristics of a quality online learning experience, specific course standards to meet the graduation requirement, and guidelines for online teachers.

State Policies

No major legislation impacting online and/or blended learning was passed January through August 2022.

Alabama does not have a charter school law, though schools authorized under the 2013 [Alabama Accountability Act](#) (HB84) may waive certain Alabama State Department of Education rules, policies, and procedures.