

Montana State Profile

Montana Digital Academy, a DLC State Affiliate, was instrumental in conducting the research for this profile.

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The only statewide online program in Montana is the state virtual school, [Montana Digital Academy](#) (MTDA). Montana does not have any multi-district fully online schools, although new legislation may open the door for statewide fully online charter schools. There are some online programs that are currently serving students in their own districts. There is at least one blended school and others experimenting with blended learning models.

MTDA, hosted by the University of Montana's Phyllis J. Washington College of Education, served 2,947 unique students in 5,717 course enrollments in SY 2022-23. MTDA classes are taught exclusively by Montana teachers, employed by their local districts and trained in online instructional techniques by MTDA. MTDA, through an interlocal agreement with each local school district, provides compensation for the local district teacher and reimburses each district for associated employment costs. MTDA teachers generally are assigned only one course section per semester to avoid conflict with teaching loads in their local districts. MTDA offers both original-credit and credit-recovery courses; small districts tend to enroll more students in original-credit classes, while larger districts tend to enroll more students in credit recovery courses. MTDA also offers a third course option, Individualized Pathway Courses, which provides students with a one-on-one environment with their teacher to assist with special circumstances that require increased teacher-student interaction.

MTDA's [EdReady Montana](#) provides a personalized learning tool designed to assist K-12 students, college, adult, and incarcerated learners in identifying and overcoming their challenges in mathematics (grades 5 to adult and higher ed) and English (grades 9 to adult and higher ed). The program is designed to prepare students for college math placement tests, high school equivalency tests, and for preparing adult learners for the math and English skills to enter or re-enter the workforce.

District and other online programs in Montana include:

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

- [Great Falls Public Schools](#) operates one of the largest district online programs in Montana; it uses originally developed courses, supplemented by MTDA courses.
- [Billings Public Schools](#) offers a full-time option to middle school and high school students, backed by MTDA courses.
- [Kalispell Public Schools' Linderman Educational Center](#) is an alternative program that uses MTDA content in a blended learning environment with district teachers and academic support.
- [Missoula Online Academy](#) is a fully online K-12 school accessible to all registered students within the district.

State Policies

The 2023 Montana Legislature passed [House Bill 749](#) which, along with reconfiguring MTDA's governing board, expands the mission of the program to offer additional distance and digital learning to students through their Montana public school. These new services will include blended learning content and platforms, industry certification preparation, additional online course offerings, and proficiency-based testing services.

[HB 562](#) (2023) establishes local charter boards and a state charter commission, which is attached to the Board of Public Education, to oversee charter schools. It allows for virtual community choice schools to enroll students full-time and establishes a set of requirements for virtual community schools (section 9).

[Rule10.55.907](#) governs schools using online and distance learning classes. It requires schools to report courses, enrollments and providers and requires providers to register and report districts they serve, including courses provided and student enrollment.

In 2023, the Montana Legislature passed two charter school bills that were signed into law by the Governor. One bill puts charter schools under the oversight of local school boards and the Board of Public Education. The other bill establishes local charter boards and a state charter commission, which is attached to the Board of Public Education, to oversee charter schools. Previously, "charters" were referred to in administrative rule, but, limited in scope.

Laws passed in the 2021 and 2023 Montana Legislature give schools and school boards more flexibility to allow students to utilize programs in other districts, which may include online and blended learning opportunities. The 2023 Montana Legislature also mandated that public schools allow part-time enrollments of students to allow access to programs like distance learning.

[*DLC State Profile Key Terms*](#)