

Wisconsin State Profile

The Wisconsin eSchool Network, a DLC State Affiliate, was instrumental in conducting the research for this profile.

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Wisconsin has a wide range of digital learning options for students: a supplemental state virtual school, multi-district fully online schools, consortia, and single district online schools or programs. A number of districts have online and blended programs and there are several hybrid schools. The Department of Public Instruction (DPI) provides [a list of multi-district virtual charter schools](#) serving full-time enrollments. The following illustrates the impact of the pandemic on the virtual charter school student enrollment.

- 7,944 students in SY 2019-20
- 16,020 students in SY 2020-21
- 13,395 students in SY 2021-22
- 12,768 students in SY 2022-23

Although enrollments have declined since the COVID peak, there is still a 61% increase for SY 2022-23 over the pre-pandemic enrollments.

The [Wisconsin Digital Learning Collaborative](#) (WDLC) was established by [Wis. Stat. §115.28\(53\)](#) to provide equitable access to online education by offering online learning to schools, districts, cooperative educational service agencies, charter schools and private schools in this state. The WDLC consists of two collaborating organizations, the [Wisconsin Virtual School](#) and the [Wisconsin eSchool Network](#), that partner with the DPI to provide a single point for school districts to access online courses, professional learning, research and best practices, and administrative planning support.

[Wisconsin Virtual School](#) (WVS) was created as a statewide online program originating out of Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) #9 in 2000. Through a partnership between the DPI and CESA #9, WVS has operated independently out of CESA 9 as the state virtual school since 2008. WVS served over 15,000 supplemental course enrollments in grades 6–12 in SY 2022-23.

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

WVS provides a K-5 option in a blended model. School districts provide the teacher and WVS supports the district with teacher training on the use of the technology infrastructure, online course content, and pedagogy, best practices, and other support services. WVS had 496 course enrollments during the 2022-23 SY after serving 1,394 K-5 course enrollments in SY 201-22 and 5,426 course enrollments in SY 2020-21.

The [Wisconsin eSchool Network \(WEN\)](#) is one of the largest online learning consortia in the country, consisting of 29 partner school districts, including eight of the 11 largest districts in the state, serving over 275 schools. WEN supports partner districts of all sizes and program types. Districts choose to offer supplemental, full-time and/or blended learning options for students based on the needs and resources of the district. WEN had 83,500 course enrollments during the 2022-23 SY. WEN launched in 2011 and operated as a district consortium through cooperative agreements and incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in 2011.

WEN has a two-tier member structure. Invested Partner membership is designed for members with a comprehensive plan for online and blended learning that includes an emphasis on local autonomy and use of local teachers and staff. The 17 Invested Partners make a significant one-time investment that provides the lowest operating expenses of any pathway and a voting seat on the WEN board of directors. Invested Partners are building scalable digital learning programs to support growing online enrollments, increased use of student devices on campus and greater integration of digital content and instruction in the classroom. WEN affords Invested Partners the opportunity for teachers and staff to collaborate with peers facing the same challenges and implementation issues. Invested Partners also contribute to the direction of online learning practice and policy at the state and local level. Many Invested Partners have developed virtual charter schools that supply the online learning needs of the district as well (in some cases) as enrolling students from across the state, while others have integrated online learning services into the schools in the district. Some focus on building local teacher capacity, while others use WEN for teaching the majority of the online enrollments. Some focus entirely on resident students while others embrace a philosophy of providing access to online learning for students across Wisconsin.

Affiliate Partner membership is appropriate for districts ready to take on more control and ownership of their program as they become members in the WEN consortium. The 11 Affiliate Partner districts have access to WEN's online course catalog, licensed teachers, technology tools, student orientation courses and professional learning while benefitting from lower cost, scalable enrollment fees. The Affiliate membership allows districts to retain a high degree of local control, using a combination of local instructors with online teachers from Network partners as needed. Most of WEN's Affiliate district members are small to medium-sized school districts, ranging from less than 1,000 students to nearly 7,000 students. A few have virtual charter schools or consortia that serve multiple districts. Although they are diverse in size, geography, community composition, and

stage of development of their online learning programs, most Affiliates usually have or are in the process of developing cohesive and comprehensive online learning plans.

Some online programs of note in Wisconsin include the following.

- [Kenosha eSchool](#) offers full and part-time enrollment options for Kenosha Unified School District students in grades K-12 since 2007.
- [Oshkosh Area School District's eAcademy](#) is a fully online program for grades K-12 partnered with the Wisconsin eSchool Network.
- [Wisconsin Virtual Academy](#) (WIVA) is the largest virtual charter school with 2,635 student enrollments in grades K-12; 1,365 in K-8.
- [Rural Virtual Academy](#) (RVA) is a virtual charter school out of the Medford School District that offers a consortium online program for districts. RVA served over 2,200 full-time and over 7,000 part-time students across a consortium of 61 school districts in SY 2022-23.

State Policies

No major new legislation impacting online and/or blended learning was passed through September 2023.

The Wisconsin legislatures passed two related bills in 2021. [SB109](#) expanded full-time open enrollment to allow students to attend a fully virtual program offered by a nonresident school district during the 2021-22 school year. [SB110](#) better defines the application process for full-time open enrollment in nonresident districts.

[Act 20](#) (2013) changed the part-time open enrollment program, now referred to as “[Course Options](#),” to allow K–12 students enrolled in public school districts to take up to two online courses at one time at no cost to the student.

[DLC State Profile Key Terms](#)