



Best Practices: Virtual School Enrollment

Key Message

States can minimize disruptions in education for military children by allowing them to participate in technology-based educational opportunities (virtual schools) while transitioning between duty stations.

Principles:

- When children move midterm as a result of their parents' military service, they are often at a disadvantage due to missed deadlines for course completion or registration. A child's family could anticipate a midterm move and alleviate disruptions by registering for virtual classes in the receiving or sending state for the transition semester.
- States can assist military families by modifying eligibility criteria to enable their children to participate in virtual school programs while stationed in another state.
 - If coursework is required to help the child graduate on time, parents can enroll their children in the receiving state's virtual school network to make up gaps in graduation requirements.
 - If students transfer midterm, parents can enroll their children in the sending or receiving state's virtual school network so their children can avoid receiving incomplete grades, providing a sense of comfort that the student's credits will transfer and they will not incur a setback in education.

Examples of Best Practices:

Alabama Senate Bill 143 (2020)

Senate Bill 143 provides access to virtual schools based on residency. The policy establishes that dependents of a member of the United States armed forces shall be considered residents of the state, for the purposes of enrolling in and attending a virtual school operating in the state, once the member receives orders to relocate to Alabama.

Section 1. Section §16-46A-1 of the Code of Alabama 1975, is amended to read as follows:

... (b) The policy adopted by the local board of education pursuant to this chapter shall govern the virtual school program offered by the local board of education. The policy shall offer students in grades nine to 12, inclusive, an online pathway for earning a high school diploma and, at a minimum, shall include all of the following:



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- (1) The scope and delivery of virtual options.
- (2) Student eligibility criteria for initial and continuing participation in the virtual program.
- (3) Specific requirements for monitoring performance and testing protocol consistent with this chapter.
- (4) Attendance requirements, if any...

... (d) For the purposes of this chapter, a dependent of a member of the United States Armed Forces who has received orders to relocate in this state shall be considered a resident of this state and the applicable local school system."

Texas Education Code

The Texas Education Code provides access to virtual schools based on eligibility for enrollment in the sending state's public school. Texas Code provides that a student who is a dependent of a member of the U.S. military, who has been deployed or transferred to Texas and who has enrolled in a publicly funded school outside of Texas in the preceding school year, may enroll full time in the Texas Virtual School Network without having been enrolled in a public school in Texas in the preceding school year:

Title 2, Subtitle F, Chapter 30A State Virtual School Network:
Sec. 30A.002. Student eligibility.

- (a) A student is eligible to enroll in a course provided through the state Virtual School Network only if the student:
 - (1) On Sept. 1 of the school year:
 - (A) Is younger than 21 years of age
 - (B) Is younger than 26 years of age and entitled to the benefits of the Foundation School Program under Section 42.003
 - (2) Has not graduated from high school
 - (3) Is otherwise eligible to enroll in a public school in this state



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Texas Education Code

Sec. 30A.002. Student eligibility.

- (b) A student is eligible to enroll full time in courses provided through the state Virtual School Network only if the student:
 - (1) Was enrolled in a public school in this state in the preceding school year
 - (2) Is a dependent of a member of the United States military who has been deployed or transferred to this state and was enrolled in a publicly funded school outside of this state in the preceding school year
 - (3) Has been placed in substitute care in this state, regardless of whether the student was enrolled in a public school in this state in the preceding school year
- (c) Notwithstanding Subsection (a)(3) or (b), a student is eligible to enroll in one or more courses provided through the state Virtual School Network or enroll full time in courses provided through the network if the student:
 - (1) Is a dependent of a member of the United States military
 - (2) Was previously enrolled in high school in this state
 - (3) Does not reside in this state due to a military deployment or transfer