



**Alternative Instruction Report**  
Report to the  
Education Oversight Committee  
Part 1 – The South Carolina Landscape of Alternative Instruction Methods  
February 14, 2022

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## Part 1 – The South Carolina Landscape of Alternative Instruction Methods

The following is Part 1 of a report from the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee pursuant to Proviso 1A. 69 of the General Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2021-2022.

### **Proviso 1A. 69**

*... with funds appropriated, the Education Oversight Committee is responsible for evaluating the impact of alternative methods of instruction on student learning and working with other agencies to expand access to quality remote instruction which can be dispatched if necessary. Alternative methods of instruction may include, but are not limited to, online or virtual instruction, remote learning, and hybrid models. The Department of Education and school districts providing alternative methods of instruction must provide data as requested by the committee to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction. The Education Oversight Committee shall report annually to the Governor, the General Assembly, the Department of Education, and the State Board of Education.*

Part 1 of this report seeks to answer five questions:

1. How many districts have a State Board Approved Virtual Program?
2. How many students are participating in a State Board Approved Virtual Program?
3. How many students are participating in alternative instruction (e.g., SC Virtual School, Distance Learning, Online In-State, Online Out-of-State) that is not a State Board Approved Virtual Program?
4. How many students at the 45<sup>th</sup> Day have received temporary virtual delivery of instruction?
5. What is the experience of districts implementing State Board Approved Virtual Programs?

## Implementation Plan

The eLearning Pilot Project administered by the Education Oversight Committee concluded with three years of data in 2020-2021. The [final eLearning report](#) delivered in April 2021 identified critical elements necessary in a district's digital learning environment for successful implementation. These findings became even more evident as all districts attempted to deliver instruction virtually during the COVID-19 school disruptions. Questions from parents, students, teachers, and legislators prompted the need for an evaluation of the impact these alternative methods have on student learning.

This report will be prepared and delivered in two parts. Part One contains the landscape of district enrollment presented in multiple tables showing the data aggregated in various ways. All the data is based on information recorded by districts and delivered from the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) to the EOC. Directions from SCDE to the districts regarding coding instruction types and course coding are found in memorandums dated August 17 and 19, 2021 (see Appendix B, C and D). This report intended to reveal the alternative instruction landscape, to include districts coding students in the district SBE approved virtual program **and** the section instructional delivery type data provided for grades 3-8 in ELA and math as well as by EOCEP course – English 2, Algebra 1, Biology and US History (includes grades 8-11).

Unfortunately, examination of the data showed inconsistencies, errors, and omissions in the coding of Instruction Type by districts. While the totals of all virtual types would not necessarily equal the SBAVRL total, as all grades were not examined, often no virtual Instruction Types were coded at grades 3-8 nor any of the end-of-course examination courses. The EOC staff and consultant worked with the SCDE team to verify/correct data inconsistencies. Additional memoranda were sent from the SCDE to the districts asking that directions for coding students and course type be checked and followed before the 135<sup>th</sup> day data is retrieved. In addition, other errors or inconsistencies appeared between the Instruction Type and SBAVRL data. For example, some districts not approved by the South Carolina State Board of Education to provide virtual program show students enrolled in a course marked as in-district virtual instruction types.

Also included in Part One are the results of on-site visits to a diverse sample of the districts approved by the State Board of Education to provide virtual programs. Each on-site visit included questions (see Appendix E), discussion and class reviews.

Part Two will include the enrollment data (as described above) on the 135<sup>th</sup> day as well and an analysis of the student achievement results on SC READY assessments in ELA and math for grades 3-8, and by EOCEP course – English 2, Algebra 1, Biology and US History (includes grades 8-11).

### **Districts Approved to Offer Virtual Programs**

During the summer of 2021, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE), notified districts they could offer local virtual programs during SY 2021-22 through an application and approval by the South Carolina State Board of Education (SBE). According to a SCDE memorandum on August 17, 2021, Re: Virtual Program Approval and Coding (Appendix C), approvals were based on:

- At least 25 percent of the instruction must be through synchronous instructional opportunities;
- Each course must be taught by a teacher holding a valid SC teaching certificate for the course(s) being taught virtually;
- Provide for frequent, ongoing monitoring of an individual student's program to verify each student is participating in the program;
- Include proctored assessments for core subjects per semester that are graded or evaluated by the teacher;
- Conduct required state assessments for all students following testing requirements;
- Conduct at least bi-weekly parent-teacher contact in person, electronically, or by telephone;
- Provide for a method to define and verify student attendance;
- Provide for verification of ongoing student progress and performance in each course as documented by assessments and examples of coursework; and
- Participate annually in a program review conducted by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE).

In addition, enrollment limits for State Board Approved Virtual Programs (SBAVRL) were established through funding formulas and allocations.

**Proviso 1.103**

*School districts offering a virtual program must report their ADM counts for students participating in their virtual program and the number of students participating face to face for the 5th, 45th, 90th, and 135th day to the Department of Education. For every student participating in the virtual program above the five percent threshold, the school district will not receive 47.22 percent of the State per pupil funding provided to that district as reported in the latest Revenue and Fiscal Affairs revenue per pupil report pursuant to Proviso 1.3. This amount shall be withheld from the EFA portion of the State Aid to Classroom's district allocation and, if necessary, the state minimum teacher salary schedule portion of State Aid to Classrooms.*

According to records provided by the SCDE, the SBE approved applications for virtual programs at four meetings. The following districts were approved to offer a local virtual program.

District Name	Program Type	Grade Levels Served	Meets Established Criteria	State Board Approval
Aiken	Full Time	6-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Anderson 1	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Barnwell 45	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Chesterfield	Supplemental	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Darlington	Full Time	5K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Dorchester 2	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Fairfield	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Florence 3	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Greenwood 50	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Greenwood 52	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Horry	Supplemental & Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Jasper	Full Time	3-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Kershaw	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Lancaster	Full Time	PK-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Lexington 1	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Lexington 5	Full Time	1-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Low Country Education Consortium	Full Time	K-8	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021



District Name	Program Type	Grade Levels Served	Meets Established Criteria	State Board Approval
Marion	Full Time	2-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Oconee	Full Time (2-8), Supplemental (9-12)	2-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Orangeburg	Full Time	PK-9	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Pickens	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Richland 1	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Salkehatchie Consortium	Full Time	4-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Saluda	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Spartanburg 4	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Spartanburg 6	Supplemental	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Sumter	Full Time	6-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Union	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Williamsburg	Full Time	6-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
York 1	Full Time	K-8	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
York 2	Full Time	2-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
York 3	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
York 4	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - July 19, 2021
Laurens 56	Full Time	5K-12	Yes	Yes - August 10, 2021
Marlboro	Full Time	4-12	Yes	Yes - August 10, 2021
Greenville	Full Time	5K-12	Yes	Yes - August 10, 2021
Laurens 55	Full Time	5K-12	Yes	Yes - August 10, 2021
Berkeley	Full Time & Supplemental	7-12	Yes	Yes - August 10, 2021
Richland 2	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - August 10, 2021
Lexington 2	Supplemental	K-12	Yes	Yes - August 10, 2021
Chester	Full Time	3-12	Yes	Yes - August 10, 2021
Charleston	Full Time & Supplemental	K-12	Yes	Yes - August 10, 2021
Dorchester 4	Full Time & Supplemental	9-12	Yes	Yes - August 10, 2021
Lexington 3	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - August 10, 2021
Dillon 3	Full Time	1-12	Yes	Yes - August 10, 2021
Florence 1	Full Time	K-12	Yes	Yes - September 14, 2021
Riverwalk Academy	Full Time	K-9	Yes	Yes - September 14, 2021
Spartanburg Preparatory School	Full Time	K-9	Yes	Yes - September 14, 2021
SC Green Charter Schools	Full Time	K4-12	Yes	Yes - September 14, 2021
Horse Creek Academy	Full Time	5K-10	Yes	Yes - September 14, 2021
Georgetown	Full Time	K-6	Yes	Yes - September 14, 2021
Oceanside Collegiate Academy	Full Time	9-12	Yes	Yes - September 14, 2021
Colleton	Full Time	K-8	Yes	Yes - November 16, 2021

In the memorandum cited above, Re: Virtual Program Approval and Coding, districts with approved virtual programs were instructed as follows:

*Students enrolled in a full-time, SBE-approved virtual program that meets the defined program requirements for the student’s grade level as outlined in Defined Program, Grades K-5, Defined Program, Grades 6-8 or Defined Program, Grades 9-12 and Graduation Requirements must be coded with the special program code SBAVRL with appropriate dates of entry and exit.*

Data in the following table reflects the landscape on the 45<sup>th</sup> day of enrollment in the school year 2021-2022.

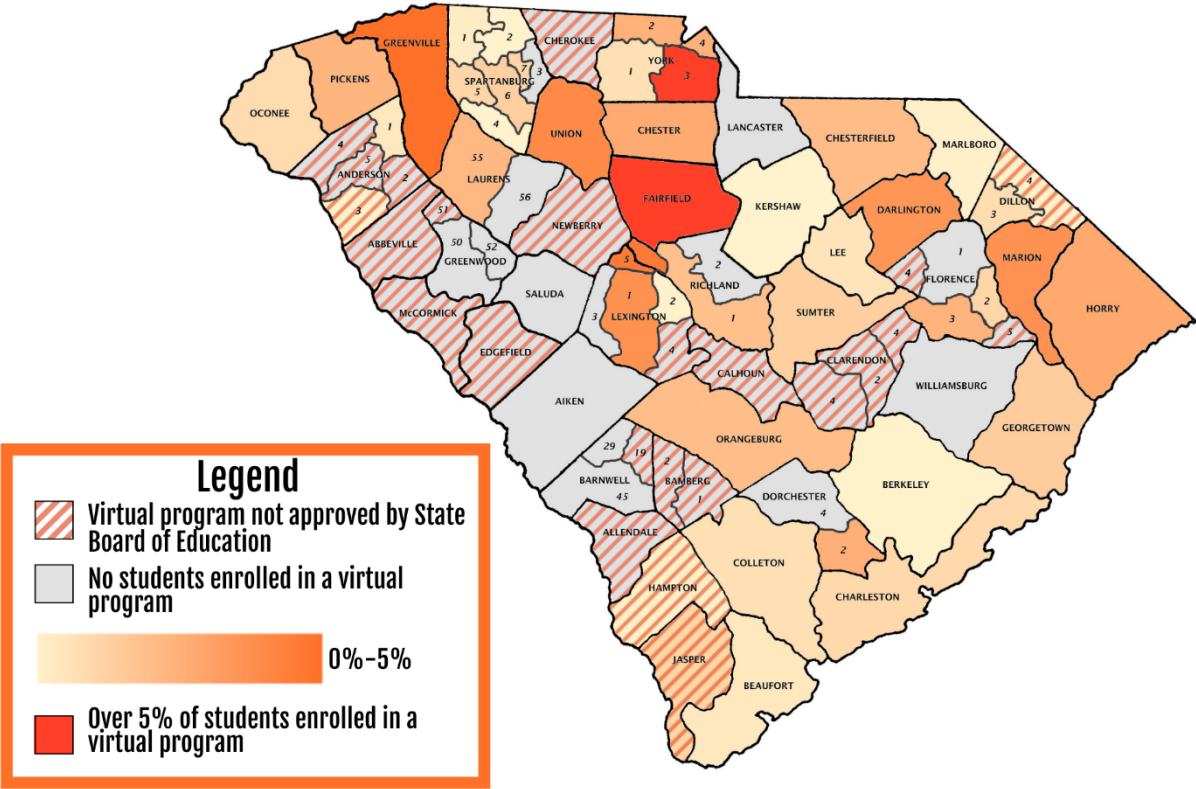
**45 Day Data: SBAVRL Virtual and Instructor-Led Enrollments by District**

<i>57 districts (including two Consortia) and five charter schools approved); 7 districts and one consortium decided not to offer a virtual program; visits to districts highlighted in yellow and blue (all in Low Country Consortium)</i>	<b>Approved Virtual Program</b>	<b>District Enrolled Student Count</b>	<b>SBAVRL Student Count</b>	<b>% of Students Enrolled in District Virtual Program</b>
<b>District</b>				
Abbeville County School District	No	2,949	-	0%
Aiken County Public School District	Yes	22,848	-	0%
Allendale County Schools	No	964	-	0%
Anderson School District 4	No	2,896	-	0%
Anderson School District Five	No	12,430	-	0%
Anderson School District Two	No	3,418	-	0%
Bamberg School District 2	No	656	-	0%
Bamberg School District One	No	1,173	-	0%
Barnwell School District 45	Yes	1,969	-	0%
Blackville-Hilda Public Schools (Barnwell 19)	No	540	-	0%
Calhoun County Public Schools	No	1,535	-	0%
Cherokee County School District	No	7,595	-	0%
Clarendon School District Four	No	1,850	-	0%
Clarendon School District Two	No	2,482	-	0%
Dorchester School District Four	Yes	2,029	-	0%
Edgefield County School District	No	3,135	-	0%
Florence County School District Four	No	605	-	0%
Florence County School District Five	No	1,213	-	0%
Florence Public School District One	Yes	15,297	-	0%
Greenwood County School District 52	Yes	1,482	-	0%
Greenwood School District 50	Yes	8,427	-	0%
Lancaster County School District	Yes	14,730	-	0%
Laurens County School District 56	Yes	2,745	-	0%

<i>57 districts (including two Consortia) and five charter schools approved); 7 districts and one consortium decided not to offer a virtual program; visits to districts highlighted in yellow and blue (all in Low Country Consortium)</i>	Approved Virtual Program	District Enrolled Student Count	SBAVRL Student Count	% of Students Enrolled in District Virtual Program
Lexington County School District Three	Yes	2,006	-	0%
Lexington School District Four	No	3,053	-	0%
McCormick County School District	No	627	-	0%
Palmetto Unified School District	No	204	-	0%
Richland School District Two	Yes	28,310	-	0%
Saluda County Schools	Yes	2,363	-	0%
SC Department of Juvenile Justice	No	732	-	0%
SC Governor's School for Agriculture at John de la Howe School	No	61	-	0%
SC Governor's School for Science and Mathematics	No	211	-	0%
SC Public Charter School District	Yes	17,662	-	0%
SC School for the Deaf and the Blind	No	176	-	0%
School District of Newberry County	No	5,668	-	0%
Spartanburg School District Three	Yes	2,633	-	0%
Ware Shoals School District 51 (Greenwood 51)	No	930	-	0%
Williamsburg County School District	Yes	3,105	-	0%
Williston School District 29 (Barnwell 29)	Yes	735	-	0%
Kershaw County School District	Yes	10,828	3	0%
Spartanburg School District Four	Yes	2,817	1	0%
Spartanburg School District 2	Yes	10,854	4	0%
Anderson School District Three	No	2,632	1	0%
Berkeley County School District	Yes	37,120	22	0%
Dillon School District Four	No	3,906	3	0%
Lexington County School District Two	Yes	8,706	7	0%
Marlboro County School District	Yes	3,754	4	0%
Charter Institute at Erskine	Yes	25,654	30	0%
Hampton County School District	No	2,434	4	0%
Spartanburg School District One	Yes	5,189	15	0%
Anderson School District One	Yes	10,442	45	0%
Beaufort County School District	Yes	20,421	93	0%
Lee County School District	Yes	1,405	8	1%
York School District 1	Yes	4,951	35	1%
Colleton County School District	Yes	5,035	38	1%
Dillon School District Three	Yes	1,440	12	1%
School District of Oconee County	Yes	10,276	89	1%
Charleston County School District	Yes	43,646	425	1%
Spartanburg School District 7	Yes	7,118	77	1%
Jasper County School District	No	2,676	29	1%
Florence County School District 2	Yes	1,092	12	1%
Spartanburg School District Five	Yes	9,771	129	1%
Sumter School District	Yes	15,191	201	1%
Spartanburg School District Six	Yes	11,307	151	1%

<i>57 districts (including two Consortia) and five charter schools approved); 7 districts and one consortium decided not to offer a virtual program; visits to districts highlighted in yellow and blue (all in Low Country Consortium)</i>	Approved Virtual Program	District Enrolled Student Count	SBAVRL Student Count	% of Students Enrolled in District Virtual Program
Georgetown County School District	Yes	8,146	114	1%
Richland County School District One	Yes	22,398	427	2%
Orangeburg County School District	Yes	10,905	216	2%
Chesterfield County School District	Yes	6,851	140	2%
Laurens County School District 55	Yes	5,352	118	2%
School District of Pickens County	Yes	16,508	381	2%
Florence County School District 3	Yes	3,126	73	2%
Fort Mill School District (York 4)	Yes	18,041	439	2%
Clover School District (York 2)	Yes	8,756	215	2%
Dorchester School District Two	Yes	25,356	638	3%
Chester County School District	Yes	4,488	121	3%
Horry County Schools	Yes	45,555	1,245	3%
Darlington County School District	Yes	9,131	316	3%
Marion County School District (Marion 10)	Yes	3,863	139	4%
Lexington County School District One	Yes	27,932	1,007	4%
Union County Schools	Yes	3,788	147	4%
School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties (Lexington/Richland 5)	Yes	17,420	772	4%
The School District of Greenville County	Yes	77,710	3,723	5%
Rock Hill School District Three (York 3)	Yes	17,180	1,009	6%
Fairfield County School District	Yes	2,228	180	8%
SC Governor's School for Arts and Humanities	No			
<b>Totals and Statewide Average</b>		745,186.00	12,858	2%

# Percent of Students Enrolled in District Virtual Program



### **45-day Data: All Virtual Types Enrollment by Grade or Course**

This question cannot be answered based on currently available data. Examination of the data provided by districts to SCDE showed inconsistencies, errors, and omissions in the coding of Instruction Type by districts. The EOC staff and consultant worked with the SCDE to attempt to verify/correct data inconsistencies. Additional memoranda will be sent from the SCDE to the districts instructing that previously communicated directions for coding students and course type be checked and followed before the 135<sup>th</sup> day data is retrieved.

### **Approved Virtual Program vs. Temporary Virtual Delivery**

Student enrollment in virtual education has been a concern expressed by multiple stakeholder groups. Given the relatively low percentage of students currently enrolled in a SABVRL, the issue may be more related to students experiencing temporary virtual days potentially due to COVID-19 disruptions.

Data exists to allow us to partially track this phenomenon. This Temporary Virtual designation exists in the student information system per the memorandum cited earlier. According to the August 17, 2021, communication Re: PowerSchool Coding,

*Students participating in temporary and previously unplanned virtual learning for a designated period of time must be assigned the following Special Programs Code with appropriate start and stop dates: TMPVIR Temporary Virtual Instruction (Appendix B).*

According to the 45-day data file, the percent of time that students enrolled in face-to-face instructor led classes (grades 3-8, Algebra 1, English 2, Biology and US History), but were forced into temporary virtual delivery varied greatly by district. Knowing that COVID illness and related quarantine situations varied by district and even school within a county, this variance is expected. The following table provides a glimpse of the landscape. It should be noted that some districts reported no students in a TMPVIR setting. It is unclear if this is an issue with coding or with the type of services students who are under quarantine are receiving.

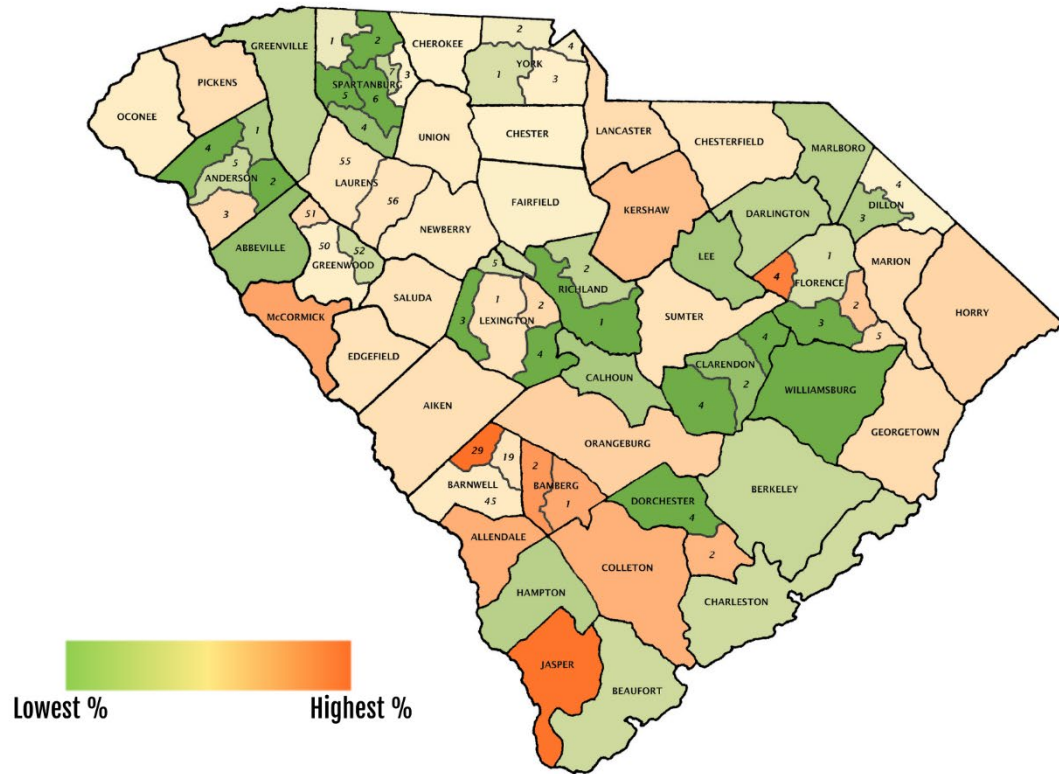
### 45 Day Data: TMPVIR Virtual Enrollments by District

District	Approved Virtual Program	District Enrolled Student Count	Total District Membership Days	TMPVIR Membership Day Total	% Time Students in TMPVIR
Aiken County Public School District	Yes	22848	990299	98331	9.93
Allendale County Schools	Yes	964	41329	8189	19.81
Anderson School District One	Yes	10442	458797	13130	2.86
Barnwell School District 45	Yes	1969	85781	6809	7.94
Beaufort County School District	Yes	20421	888201	37054	4.17
Berkeley County School District	Yes	37120	1597915	62451	3.91
Blackville-Hilda Public Schools (Barnwell 19)	Yes	540	23231	2120	9.13
Charleston County School District	Yes	43646	1896542	80755	4.26
Charter Institute at Erskine	Yes	25654	1055167	58085	5.50
Chester County School District	Yes	4488	193923	12254	6.32
Chesterfield County School District	Yes	6851	299080	25599	8.56
Clover School District (York 2)	Yes	8756	382054	22158	5.80
Colleton County School District	Yes	5035	215455	41624	19.32
Darlington County School District	Yes	9131	401092	14283	3.56
Dillon School District Three	Yes	1440	63024	1873	2.97
Dorchester School District Four	Yes	2029	87523	0	0.00
Dorchester School District Two	Yes	25356	1106627	201828	18.24
Fairfield County School District	Yes	2228	96513	5995	6.21
Florence County School District 2	Yes	1092	47761	7005	14.67
Florence County School District 3	Yes	3126	134480	0	0.00
Florence Public School District One	Yes	15297	658378	30585	4.65
Fort Mill School District (York 4)	Yes	18041	759331	46212	6.09
Georgetown County School District	Yes	8146	354516	38223	10.78
Greenwood County School District 52	Yes	1482	64636	2725	4.22
Greenwood School District 50	Yes	8427	365979	25743	7.03
Hampton County School District	Yes	2434	105441	3432	3.25
Horry County Schools	Yes	45555	1977154	237744	12.02
Jasper County School District	Yes	2676	111837	35275	31.54
Kershaw County School District	Yes	10828	469841	77633	16.52
Lancaster County School District	Yes	14730	642102	69536	10.83
Laurens County School District 55	Yes	5352	230608	19626	8.51
Laurens County School District 56	Yes	2745	119190	10722	9.00
Lee County School District	Yes	1405	59963	1431	2.39
Lexington County School District One	Yes	27932	1218125	114287	9.38
Lexington County School District Three	Yes	2006	87931	0	0.00
Lexington County School District Two	Yes	8706	373531	42150	11.28
Marion County School District (Marion 10)	Yes	3863	164137	16924	10.31
Marlboro County School District	Yes	3754	160226	5361	3.35
Orangeburg County School District	Yes	10905	467950	60787	12.99
Richland County School District One	Yes	22398	928408	0	0.00
Richland School District Two	Yes	28310	1227160	43721	3.56
Rock Hill School District Three (York 3)	Yes	17180	735325	52233	7.10

District	Approved Virtual Program	District Enrolled Student Count	Total District Membership Days	TMPVIR Membership Day Total	% Time Students in TMPVIR
Saluda County Schools	Yes	2363	103500	9333	9.02
SC Public Charter School District	Yes	17662	755521	53530	7.09
School District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties (Lexington/Richland 5)	Yes	17420	751199	31770	4.23
School District of Oconee County	Yes	10276	440844	32880	7.46
School District of Pickens County	Yes	16508	697167	70600	10.13
Spartanburg School District 2	Yes	10854	472737	0	0.00
Spartanburg School District 7	Yes	7118	305164	12291	4.03
Spartanburg School District Five	Yes	9771	427031	0	0.00
Spartanburg School District Four	Yes	2817	121855	2268	1.86
Spartanburg School District One	Yes	5189	213222	11856	5.56
Spartanburg School District Six	Yes	11307	493861	0	0.00
Spartanburg School District Three	Yes	2633	112649	7322	6.50
Sumter School District	Yes	15191	653178	61872	9.47
The School District of Greenville County	Yes	77710	3331636	120172	3.61
Union County Schools	Yes	3788	165935	12960	7.81
Williamsburg County School District	Yes	3105	130951	0	0.00
Williston School District 29 (Barnwell 29)	Yes	735	31842	10178	31.96
York School District 1	Yes	4951	214741	9981	4.65
Abbeville County School District	No	2949	124184	2261	1.82
Anderson School District 4	No	2896	126466	0	0.00
Anderson School District Five	No	12430	544006	22067	4.06
Anderson School District Three	No	2632	114947	12826	11.16
Anderson School District Two	No	3418	148877	0	0.00
Bamberg School District 2	No	656	27165	6592	24.27
Bamberg School District One	No	1173	50840	10599	20.85
Calhoun County Public Schools	No	1535	66099	1771	2.68
Cherokee County School District	No	7595	330659	21207	6.41
Clarendon School District Four	No	1850	80631	0	0.00
Clarendon School District Two	No	2482	105730	1771	1.68
Dillon School District Four	No	3906	168481	10504	6.23
Edgefield County School District	No	3135	136302	12721	9.33
Florence County School District Four	No	605	25613	7371	28.78
Florence County School District Five	No	1213	52422	5759	10.99
Lexington School District Four	No	3053	130710	0	0.00
McCormick County School District	No	627	26999	5915	21.91
School District of Newberry County	No	5668	247193	19667	7.96
Ware Shoals School District 51 (Greenwood 51)	No	930	39705	4411	11.11
<b>Totals</b>		<b>774843</b>	<b>33358672</b>	<b>2226348</b>	<b>6.67</b>



# Percentage of Time Students in TMPVIR



## Observations from District Visits

On-site district visits were made in the fall of 2021 to a diverse sample of SBE approved virtual programs. Included in the visits were the following:

District Name	Visit Date for Alternative Instruction Report
Aiken	11/15
SC Public Charter - Spartanburg Preparatory Academy	11/29
Union	11/29
Greenville	12/6
Darlington	12/7
Georgetown	12/8
Lowcountry Ed Consortium	12/8
York 3	12/10

<b>Lowcountry Education Consortium includes:</b>
1) Beaufort
2) Berkeley
3) Charleston
4) Colleton
5) Dorchester District 2
6) Dorchester District 4
7) Florence 2
8) Greenwood 52

While each district was asked to respond to a structured set of questions (See Appendix E), conversations evolved organically, and follow-up questions occurred based on responses and site observations. The following observations are a result of the aggregated information gathered during the on-site visits.

- Virtual program structure – organizational structures of district virtual programs reflect the size of the district. Smaller districts have fewer dedicated staff in every area. All districts did have one person responsible for the overall virtual program. In at least two districts, this person also had other areas of responsibility. The

teaching staff ranged from 100% dedicated to virtual program grades and/or courses to a combination of virtual and face-to-face assignments. If dual modality, the district reported compensating the teachers. In addition to the overall structure, the selection process for staff varied. Some districts asked for volunteers to assume roles in the virtual program, others held interviews and teaching demonstrations, and others made assignment through attrition within the district.

- Grades and content offered – The overwhelming number of districts provide K-12 virtual programs. Two districts did not offer virtual programs to kindergarten. Many districts did not offer the full high school course catalog to virtual program students, to include IB or dual credit offerings. Staffing numbers and/or equipment restrictions limited the options. Most districts create the instructional content based on South Carolina Ready College and Career Standards, having teachers develop units and lessons. A few districts contracted with an outside vendor to purchase the content (e.g., Education Options). Some districts established a consortium to deliver the content with instruction leaders facilitating the content development process and ensuring rigor.
- Policies regarding attendance – Attendance is captured in districts based on several different criteria. About half of the districts visited, take attendance during the synchronous time of instruction. According to the SCDE application and approval process, *at least 25 percent of the instruction must be through synchronous instructional opportunities*. For these times, many districts require the camera to be turned on. Although, three districts reported some parents and older students shared this was a concern. The reasons provided included the student did not look good that day or the home was embarrassing. If the teacher sees the student during the class, the student is counted present. Three districts require the students to complete the assigned work during the class to be counted present. In each case, the district provided a handbook with policies on attendance as part of the orientation to the virtual program.

- Teacher preparation to work in an alternative instruction environment – Districts reported that in the initial year of the COVID pandemic, teachers had to teach in the virtual instruction environment. As schools returned to face-to-face, those teachers most at risk often remained in the virtual program. With the “reset” for 2021-2022 and the SCDE application process, some districts created updated criteria for staff selection in a virtual program, including demonstration of a virtual lesson, previous demonstrated success, additional training (modules from National Institute for Excellence in Teaching - NIET, or endorsements from higher education), and of course, a SC teaching certificate. One district reported that some of the teachers employed in the virtual program live in other states; some had lived and taught here but moved away, and others were trying to move into SC and had already earned the credential. While districts were addressing the preparation and the ongoing professional development necessary for teaching in a virtual classroom, a lack of standard state-level expectation and/or endorsement needed across the state was evident. This presented a challenge in at least one district when a teacher was not chosen to teach in the virtual program when the district used their own rubric.
- Observing and evaluating teachers – The person responsible for monitoring teacher performance and conducting evaluations varied and depended upon the structure of the virtual program. In the districts where the virtual program supervisor was a certified administrator (principal), this person did daily drop-ins to the virtual classes, observed teachers, and conducted formal evaluations of teachers. In districts where the virtual program supervisor was the programmatic leader and teachers remained assigned to brick-and-mortar schools, teachers were evaluated by the school principal. In these situations, the program leader might also conduct teacher observations, informal virtual monitoring and conduct instructional coaching with feedback session regarding the virtual instruction. On the two visits where this structure existed, both leaders reported good communication and trusted working relationships.

- Parent engagement and communication – All visited districts reported orientation sessions, phone calls to parents, handbooks, and some websites as sources of communication. A few districts offered face-to-face meetings to demonstrate how to use the Learning Management System (LMS), parent portal and other communications tools. Other districts reported parent meetings were, in fact, better attended in the virtual environment than in the brick-and mortar school. Convenience for scheduling and lack of travel demands seemed to be the primary reasons. Each of the visited districts reported that a parent, or a learning coach, is required for K-3students in a virtual environment. Teachers shared that having an adult near the student’s computer and work helped with parent communication, engagement, and student discipline.

### **Conclusion**

The initial, or Part 1, observations in the preparation of the Alternative Instruction Report capture a landscape a bit different than anticipated. Overall, fewer districts are providing students a virtual program option than applied for State Board of Education approval. In some districts, the demand by parents was simply less than initially indicated. In other cases, the demand was low, and because of the provision of virtual programs provided through the SC Virtual School at the SCDE, economies of scale dictated not offering a standalone district program. In one other situation, multiple districts created a consortium thus providing a virtual program option to students in all eight (8) districts within the consortium.

In interviews, districts indicated they see virtual programs as a valid and valuable option for students for a multitude of reasons. One district shared that a family works and travels with the Carolina Panthers, and the ability for the children to enroll in the public-school virtual program was a perfect fit for them. Another district shared that a student competes in gymnastics at a national level, travels a lot and finds the district virtual program the best option for learning/school. Finding the most effective teaching strategies in the virtual environment while operating efficiently are the current demands and areas of concern at the district level.

Teacher preparation and professional development may be an area for the state to insert some level of common expectations and/or requirements. Perhaps Part 2 of the Alternative Instruction Report focusing on student achievement may shed more light on this conversation and need.

Overall, districts invested a lot of time and preparation to provide a virtual program in 2021-2022. The effectiveness and the efficiency of these virtual programs (with all the supports needed) operating in every school district side-by-side with brick-and-mortar schools may or may not yield a significant return on the investment (ROI). The examination and evaluation continue with student achievement data in summer 2022. This answer will help develop future frameworks and guidelines to better support all students.

## Appendix A

### General Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2021-2022

1A.69. (SDE-EIA: Digital Learning Plan) The implementation of the pilot program shall become the responsibility of the Department of Education. Those e-Learning school districts who meet the criteria for an e-Learning district as determined by the Department of Education may use up to five e-Learning days to allow for the make-up of short-term disruptions to in-person teaching and learning.

With funds appropriated, the Education Oversight Committee is responsible for evaluating the impact of alternative methods of instruction on student learning and working with other agencies to expand access to quality remote instruction which can be dispatched if necessary. Alternative methods of instruction may include, but are not limited to, online or virtual instruction, remote learning, and hybrid models. The Department of Education and school districts providing alternative methods of instruction must provide data as requested by the committee to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction. The Education Oversight Committee shall report annually to the Governor, the General Assembly, the Department of Education, and the State Board of Education.





## Appendix B



### STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

### DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**MOLLY M. SPEARMAN**

*STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION*

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** District Superintendents  
District Instructional Leaders  
District Instructional Technology  
Coordinators Attendance Coordinators  
PowerSchool Coordinators

**FROM:** Dan Ralyea  
Director, Office of Data and Research Analysis

**DATE:** August 17, 2021

**RE:** PowerSchool Coding

The purpose of this memo is to provide information to districts on coding student virtual/remote learning participation and coding course section instructional modality in PowerSchool.

### **CODING STUDENT VIRTUAL/REMOTE LEARNING PARTICIPATION IN POWERSCHOOL**

#### **State Board Approved Virtual Programs**

Students enrolled in a full-time, State Board of Education (SBE) approved virtual program that meets the defined program requirements for the student's grade level as outlined in [Defined Program, Grades K-5](#); [Defined Program, Grades 6-8](#); or [Defined Program, Grades 9-12 and Graduation Requirements](#) must be coded with the special program code SBAVRL with appropriate dates of entry and exit.

Students participating in any face-to-face activities or receiving instruction on school premises should not use this code.

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FAX: 803-734-3389 · ED.SC.GOV

The SBE approved virtual program represents a long-term instructional choice. It is not to be used for temporary changes in instructional mode due to illness or a community illness prevention technique.

Students for whom this code is used will count toward the five-percent threshold as outlined in Proviso 1.103 (SDE: Public School Virtual Program Funding).

Students who are enrolled full-time in a SBE-approved virtual program must be assigned the following Special Programs Code:

*SBAVRL*

Additional information on SBE-approved virtual programs may be found [here](#).

*Please note:* SBE-approved virtual programs are a separate program from the eLearning pilot project. Information on the eLearning pilot project may be found [here](#).

### **Temporary Virtual Instruction**

Students participating in temporary and previously unplanned virtual learning for a designated period of time must be assigned the following Special Programs Code with appropriate start and stop dates:

*TMPVIR*

*Important:* In order to ensure that students receiving temporary virtual instruction are not counted towards the five-percent threshold as outlined in Proviso 1.103 (SDE: Public School Virtual Program Funding), they must be coded as TMPVIR.

Complete instructions on adding and entering the above information into PowerSchool may be found [here](#).

## **CODING COURSE SECTION INSTRUCTIONAL MODALITY IN POWERSCHOOL**

This guidance is to assist districts with accurately reporting Instruction Type. All instructional course sections must have the “Instruction Type” field completed to identify On-Site/In-Person and Virtual instruction. When a section is created for a course, the school/district must select the appropriate type of instruction for each section. Non-instructional course sections (those that begin with a 0) are not subject to this requirement. Instruction Type data can be imported into PowerSchool. Contact [powerschool@ed.sc.gov](mailto:powerschool@ed.sc.gov) if assistance in that process is required.

Previously, the Office of Research and Data Analysis (ORDA) has not provided districts with guidance regarding the Instruction Type values. However, the Instruction Type field is now required for accurate data reporting. This data begins being reported on the 45th date of the

school year; however, such data must be accurately reflected in PowerSchool back to the firstday of school in the district.

The Instruction Type table below shows the currently available values for this field, theirdescription, and the modality categorization for each.

<b>Value</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Instruction Delivery Modality</b>
(blank) – Select One	Default value only allowed for non-instructional courses (those that begin with a 0).	-
A – Instructor Led	The teacher is physically present in the classroom providing in-person instruction to students.	On-Site/In-Person
B – SC Virtual School Program	The teacher provides instruction to students through VirtualSC. None of the other Instruction Types should be used for VirtualSC course sections.	Virtual
C – Online In-State	The teacher provides virtual instruction in some capacity as part of a school/district/state entity for the state of South Carolina	Virtual
D – Distance Learning	The teacher provides instruction for students physically located at another location. For example, the teacher may be located physically at a television studio, yet teaching several groups of students housed in different schools or districts.	Virtual
E – Online Out-of-State	The teacher provides virtual instruction to students is not part of a school/districts/state entity for the state of South Carolina.	Virtual

The above information related to instructional modality in PowerSchool may also be found [here](#).



Appendix C



**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**MOLLY M. SPEARMAN**

*STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION*

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** District Superintendents  
District Instructional Leaders  
District Instructional Technology  
Coordinators Attendance Coordinators  
PowerSchool Coordinators

**FROM:** David M. Mathis, Ed.D.  
Deputy Superintendent, Division of College and Career Readiness

**DATE:** August 17, 2021

**RE:** Virtual Program Approval and Coding

The South Carolina State Board of Education (SBE) has approved district plans to implement a virtual instructional delivery program for the 2021–22 school year. The approvals were based on a virtual program’s meeting of the following criteria:

- At least 25 percent of the instruction must be through synchronous instructional opportunities;
- Each course must be taught by a teacher holding a valid SC teaching certificate for the course(s) being taught virtually;
- Provide for frequent, ongoing monitoring of an individual student’s program to verify each student is participating in the program;
- Include proctored assessments for core subjects per semester that are graded or evaluated by the teacher;
- Conduct required state assessments for all students following testing requirements;
- Conduct at least bi-weekly parent-teacher contact in person, electronically, or by telephone;
- Provide for a method to define and verify student attendance;
- Provide for verification of ongoing student progress and performance in each course as documented by assessments and examples of coursework; and

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## Appendix C

Virtual Program Approval and Coding

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- Participate annually in a program review conducted by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE).

Additionally, Proviso 1.103 states:

School districts offering a virtual program must report their ADM counts for students participating in their virtual program and the number of students participating face to face for the 5th, 45th, 90th, and 135th day to the Department of Education. For every student participating in the virtual program above the five percent threshold, the school district will not receive 47.22 percent of the State per pupil funding provided to that district as reported in the latest Revenue and Fiscal Affairs revenue per pupil report pursuant to Proviso 1.3. This amount shall be withheld from the EFA portion of the State Aid to Classroom's district allocation and, if necessary, the state minimum teacher salary schedule portion of State Aid to Classrooms.

To meet the reporting requirement of Proviso 1.103, the SCDE is defining a special program code and an expanded series of section coding requirements.

Students enrolled in a full-time, SBE-approved virtual program that meets the defined program requirements for the student's grade level as outlined in [Defined Program, Grades K–5](#), [Defined Program, Grades 6–8](#) or [Defined Program, Grades 9–12 and Graduation Requirements](#) **must be coded with the special program code SBAVRL** with appropriate dates of entry and exit.

Students participating in any face-to-face activities or receiving instruction on school premises should not use this code.

The SBE approved virtual program represents a long-term instructional choice. It is not to be used for temporary changes in instructional mode due to illness or a community illness prevention technique. Instead, the TMPVIR code will be used to monitor that process. The SCDE has released guidance documents on [Coding Course Section Instructional Modality in PowerSchool](#) and [Coding Student Virtual or Remote Learning Participation in PowerSchool](#).

For questions related to implementation of virtual programs contact Bradley Mitchell, [bmitchell@ed.sc.gov](mailto:bmitchell@ed.sc.gov) and for questions related to coding of virtual students contact [PowerSchool@ed.sc.gov](mailto:PowerSchool@ed.sc.gov).

Appendix D



**STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**MOLLY M. SPEARMAN**

*STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION*

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** District Superintendents  
Principals  
District Technology Coordinators

**FROM:** Sabrina Moore  
Director, Office of Student Intervention Services

**DATE:** August 19, 2021

**RE:** 2021–22 Attendance Guidance

The purpose of this memo is to address onsite attendance and attendance in a virtual environment for students temporarily impacted by COVID-19.

The South Carolina Department of Education recommends that districts make appropriate accommodations for students who may be required to quarantine or self-isolate in accordance with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control’s [K–12 Schools Interim Guidance for Management of COVID-19 Cases](#). Accommodations may include temporarily moving the student(s) to a distance learning environment, such as electronic platforms or offsite environments (including home) utilizing instructional packets.

**On-site attendance** is determined by whether or not a student is physically present in a classroom on school grounds or during an activity approved by the classroom teacher. If a student is not physically present, the decision as to whether the absence is “excused” or “unexcused” should be established by district procedures and policies and be consistent with state law, policy, and guidelines.

**Virtual attendance** refers to the temporary delivery of virtual instruction that does not occur onsite in a classroom on school grounds. This temporary delivery of virtual instruction should be in response to the impact of COVID-19 on students and/or staff. Temporary delivery of virtual instruction includes instruction provided via an online or electronic platform, as well as instruction provided in a physical offsite location via learning packets.

Virtual attendance shall be determined by whether or not a student submits assignments or

## Appendix D

Confirming Student Attendance Guidance

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participates in assigned activities in accordance with the classroom teacher's written requirements.

Students in temporary virtual learning situations due to COVID-19 should be marked as **TMPVIR** in special programs for placement and **SC-VTP** in attendance only if the student submits assignments and/or participates in activities as required by the teacher.

The attendance codes (SC-VTP & SC-COVD) are used to mark attendance behavior in virtual learning environments. SC-VTP is a present code and is currently available. SC-COVD is an absent code and will be available soon. Until such time, districts should continue to use the SC-FLU code, marking COVID in the comment field.

For example:

- Students who submit assignments and/or participate in the assigned learning experience(s) by the deadline established in district policy should be considered present and coded as **SC-VTP** in PowerSchool for attendance purposes, with **TMPVIR** marked in the special programs for placement.
- Students who fail to submit assignments or participate in the assigned learning experience(s) by the deadline established in district policy should be considered absent and coded as such in PowerSchool.
- Students who are not physically present due to COVID-19 (isolation or quarantine) and are physically unable to complete assignments should be considered absent and be coded using **SC-FLU**, marking **"COVID" in the comment field**, until the newly established **SC-COVD** code is available in PowerSchool. Once SC-COVD is available, districts will be notified.

*NOTE:* Students enrolled in full-time [State Board of Education approved virtual learning program](#) should be marked as **SBAVRL** in special programs for placement and **SC-VTP** in attendance if the student submits assignments or participates in activities as required by the teacher.

Virtual enrollment guidance may be applied to individual students, an entire classroom(s) of students, or an entire school. Virtual attendance guidance should be applied to all students receiving instruction through a virtual program.

Nothing in this guidance is intended to modify current procedures related to the 10-day drop period or truancy reporting. Districts shall continue to adhere to state law requiring all public schools to track attendance beginning with the first day of school and to monitor truancy.

If you have any questions about the above guidance, please contact Aveene Coleman at [acoleman@ed.sc.gov](mailto:acoleman@ed.sc.gov) or me at [smoore@ed.sc.gov](mailto:smoore@ed.sc.gov). If you have any questions about PowerSchool coding, please contact Dan Ralyea at [DRalyea@ed.sc.gov](mailto:DRalyea@ed.sc.gov).



## **Appendix E**

### **District and Charter School Visits Alternative (Approved Virtual) Programs Report Education Oversight Committee Fall 2021**

- Tell us about your virtual program structure - include administration staff, teachers, and staff (IT).
- What grades and content are you providing? What are your enrollment numbers?
- What are your policies regarding attendance? Is this available in writing or on the website? How do you take attendance? Presence or work turned in?
- How are your teachers prepared/trained to work in an alternative instruction environment?
- Who is monitoring teacher online time? Quality of teaching, etc.?
- Please show us a sample lesson (either live or recorded).
- How are parents engaged and what communications do teachers and administrators have with parents?
- How is the administration ensuring high quality content and engaging lesson strategies are employed in the virtual classroom? Tell us about the teacher prepared content. What, if any purchased content are you using? SCDE units, etc.?
- What adjustments will you make pending the formative assessment results?