



Alternative Instruction Report

Report to the

Education Oversight Committee

Part 1 – The South Carolina Landscape of Alternative Instruction Methods

December 12, 2022

Prepared by Lee M. D'Andrea, Ph.D.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1 – THE SOUTH CAROLINA LANDSCAPE OF ALTERNATIVE INSTRUCTION METHODS	3
BACKGROUND AND STATUTE.....	3
IMPLEMENTATION PLAN	3
DISTRICTS APPROVED TO OFFER VIRTUAL PROGRAMS.....	6
45-DAY DATA: ALL INSTRUCTION TYPES ENROLLMENT BY GRADE OR COURSE	8
OBSERVATIONS FROM DISTRICT VISITS	8
INITIAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	12
CONCLUSION.....	14
APPENDICES.....	15
APPENDIX A: GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS BILL FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023.....	15
APPENDIX B: SCDE MEMO RE: VIRTUAL PROGRAM APPROVAL (08/02/2022).....	16
APPENDIX C: SCDE MEMO RE: POWERSCHOOL CODING (9/13/2022)	18
APPENDIX D: SCDE MEMO RE: VIRTUAL PROGRAM APPROVAL AND CODING (8/17/2021).....	20
APPENDIX E: INITIAL QUESTIONS ON DISTRICT SITE VISITS	22

Part 1 – The South Carolina Landscape of Alternative Instruction Methods

Background and Statute

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 2022-2023.

Proviso 1A. 73 (SDE-EIA: Evaluation of Alternative Instruction Methods):

... 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:

- How many districts have a State Board Approved Virtual Program (SBAVRL)?
- How many students are participating in a State Board Approved Virtual Program?
- 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?
- What are the essential elements in district programs implementing State Board Approved Virtual Programs?
- Which students are included and enrolling in the State Board Approved Virtual Programs and in alternative instruction classes?

Implementation Plan

After additional work and communication from the department to the districts, data quality prevented the completion of the 2021-2022 Alternative Instruction Report Part 2. The 2021-2022 Alternative Instruction Report, Part 1 included the following paragraph:

“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 135th 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.”

Thus, in preparation for the 2022-2023 report, the Education Oversight Committee (EOC) and the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) staff met to outline a more diligent and targeted approach to accurate data recording and reporting. Two memoranda to the districts were included in the general Tuesday communications batch. The August 2, 2022, memo updates districts on Public School Virtual Program applications and continuation (See Appendix B). Parameters for this process are based on Proviso 1.91. (SDE: Public School Virtual Program Funding): For Fiscal Year 2022-23, school districts shall be permitted to offer a virtual education program for up to five percent of its student population based on the most recent 135-day ADM count without impacting any state funding. The Department of Education shall establish guidelines for the virtual program and parameters students must meet to participate in the virtual program. School districts must submit their plans for the virtual program to the State Board of Education for approval. 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.

On September 13, 2022, a second communication directs the districts to identify all courses and sections by Instruction Type (See Appendix C). The identification of all courses taught in the various Instruction Types captures data to examine student achievement results in the different delivery models. This data will provide accurate information to legislators, districts, parents, and students to inform future decisions about the use of instructional delivery models.

As follow-up to these communications, a webinar, face-to-face, and virtual visits were conducted to ensure quality in the 2022-23 data. The Education Oversight staff in collaboration

with SCDE provided a webinar (See Appendix F) to all districts with an SBAVRL Virtual Program. Districts were invited to the webinar based on the SBAVRL approved program list provided by the SCDE. The webinar was recorded for all districts unable to attend. In addition, EOC staff conducted twelve virtual meetings (via ZOOM) with a random sample of districts without a State Board Approved Virtual Program to ensure that all courses taught virtually are coded correctly as directed in the previously cited memorandum from the SCDE on September 13, 2022. Non-SBAVRL districts with which the EOC staff and consultant engaged in a virtual meeting and review of data are:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. Anderson 4 | 5. Dillion 4 | 9. Georgetown |
| 2. Beaufort County | 6. Edgefield | 10. Laurens 55 |
| 3. Calhoun County | 7. Florence 2 | 11. Spartanburg 1 |
| 4. Charter Institute of Erskine | 8. Florence 5 | 12. Spartanburg 2 |

During the webinar, the virtual visits, and following the watching of the recording, districts had questions and conversations seeking to clarify specific scenarios of course offerings.

These questions and conversation led directly to two findings:

- Districts are working diligently to provide all students with options to high-quality instruction.
- The Instruction Type options are currently categorized in the student information system as (A) Instructor led, (B) SC Virtual School, (C) Online in-state, (D) Distance learning, (E) Online out-of-state, or (F) Hybrid. The work is new in many districts, the different instruction types demand detailed planning and professional development, and the resources to establish robust, high quality digital ecosystems require financial resources. (Examination of possible redirection of funds, ROI on some Instruction Types and cost analysis must be considered.) More details are provided in the Findings Section.

Data consistency and data quality are the foundations for good decision making in multiple areas – student progress, program provision and Instruction Type effectiveness. First, the data must be captured accurately in a timely schedule and then provided to other Divisions and Offices in the SCDE as well as the districts. Then, there must be support for using the data to make needed changes and adjustments in student achievement, program offerings and classes in the various Instruction Types.

The EOC staff made face-to-face visits to twelve randomly selected districts from the list of districts providing State Board of Education Approved (SBA) Virtual Programs and virtual visits to twelve randomly selected districts not providing SBA Virtual Programs from the full list of districts. The in-person visits included a series of questions (See Appendix E) designed to gather information about the overall program participant populations, curriculum, teacher selection and professional development (PD), monitoring, assessment, and parent engagement.

Part 1 of the Alternative Instruction Report provides a summary of the visits' findings, enrollment numbers, and initial recommendations. Part 2 of the Alternative Instruction Report will provide a summary of the achievement results that compare the SBAVRL population to the non-SBAVRL population achievement results in grades 3-8 English Language Arts (ELA), grades 3-8 math, Algebra 1, biology, English 2, and US History.

Districts Approved to Offer Virtual Programs

During the summer of 2022, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE), notified districts that virtual programs could be offered during SY 2022-23 through an extension of the approved program in 2021-2022 or a new 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 D), approved programs meet 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
- The district will participate annually in a program review conducted by SCDE.

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

Proviso 1.91

.... 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/programs/consortia/charter schools were approved to offer a local virtual program in 2022-2023.

- | | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Aiken | 14. Greenville | 27. Richland 1 |
| 2. Beaufort | 15. Greenwood 50 | 28. Richland 2 |
| 3. Berkeley | 16. Greenwood 52 | 29. Salkehatchie Consortium |
| 4. Charleston | 17. Horry | 30. SC Green Charter Schools |
| 5. Chester | 18. Jasper | 31. Spartanburg 4 |
| 6. Chesterfield | 19. Kershaw | 32. Spartanburg 6 |
| 7. Colleton | 20. Lexington 1 | 33. Sumter |
| 8. Darlington | 21. Lexington 2 | 34. Union |
| 9. Dorchester 2 | 22. Lexington 5 | 35. Williamsburg |
| 10. Dorchester 4 | 23. Low Country Education Consortium | 36. York 1 |
| 11. Fairfield | 24. Marion | 37. York 2 |
| 12. Florence 1 | 25. Oceanside Collegiate Academy | 38. York 3 |
| 13. Florence 3 | 26. Pickens | |

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.

45-day Data: All Instruction Types Enrollment by Grade or Course

At the time of the preparation of Part 1 of this report, the SCDE has not provided the EOC the data file containing enrollment numbers by Instruction Type, nor the students enrolled in a SBAVRL.

Observations from District Visits

On-site district visits were made in the fall of 2022 to a diverse sample of SBE approved virtual programs. Included in the visits were the following:

District Name	Visit Date for Alternative Instruction Report
Union County	9/21/2022
Greenville County	9/22/2022
Berkley County and Lowcountry Consortium*	9/26/2022
Dorchester 2	9/26/2022
Colleton County	9/27/2022
Florence 1	9/28/2022
Richland 1	10/3/2022
York 1	10/11/2022
Spartanburg 6	10/11/2022
Kershaw County	10/13/2022
Sumter County	10/13/2022
Lexington 1	10/17/2022

* Lowcountry Education Consortium includes: 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.

Student Populations Vary According to the Design of the Program and its Purpose

Following the COVID pandemic years of offering virtual options to all students in the district, each district reported a revisiting of the purpose of a virtual program and its intended audiences. Some programs are designed for K-12 while others are for grades 6-12 and still others are alternative school options. In many cases, the student and family need as well as the community input shaped the Virtual Program design. Examples of meeting the needs of students and families include:

- Medically fragile students, i.e., receiving chemotherapy, post-surgery and in therapy
- Medically fragile adults in the home, i.e., receiving chemotherapy
- Parents traveling for job and taking children/students with them
- Parents temporarily relocated for military deployment and taking children with them, keeping permanent residence in SC
- Students engaged in high-level competitions, cheerleading, baseball, etc. and desire to study virtually due to practice schedule
- Students engaged in apprenticeships in the mornings and need core classes outside of the high school offerings in person
- Alternatives to suspension and/or expulsion combined with family counseling (program has a 135-day plan for possible return to face-to-face)
- Combining a few students at multiple high schools to “make a class”

Virtual Program Staff Structure Reflects District Capacity

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.

Professional Development for Teachers and Staff Reflects Critical Needs

Every district reported that professional development was provided for teachers either in the summer of 2022 or during the fall of 2022. Plans included providing additional professional development in the winter and spring of 2023. Topics for professional development included:

- Developing fluency using the district Learning Management System (LMS), such as Schoology, Canvas, Google, Teams, or Blackboard, i.e., creating “rooms” for groups in instruction.
- Developing engaging strategies in the virtual teaching environment
- Monitoring virtual classroom environments

Grades Levels Offered Varies

The majority of districts provide grades 6-12 in the virtual programs. The districts that dropped the K-5 options in their districts reported too little demand from parents.

Content Offered/Provided

Districts were instructed to code all SC Virtual School course sections with the SC Virtual teachers as SC Virtual. All course sections using a local district teacher with SC Virtual or other South Carolina created curriculum are to be coded as Online in-state. Finally, any course section using purchased content, i.e., Edgenuity (now Imagine Learning), Apex, EdOptions, or FLVS Flex are to be coded as Online out-of-state. All of these courses use SC certified teachers although the teacher may reside in another state. The data reflecting actual distribution of the Instruction Type is pending.

In the review of the student achievement data later this 2022-23 school year, the differently coded Instruction Types will provide information which may be used make significant decisions at both the state and local level. Effectiveness of Instruction Type, return on investment, and program adjustments are some examples of the types of decisions that these data could influence.

Policies Regarding Attendance

Attendance is captured in districts based on several different criteria. About half of the districts visited take attendance during the synchronous instructional time. According to the SCDE application and approval process, “*at least 25 percent of the instruction must be through synchronous instructional opportunities.*” If the teacher sees the student during the class, the student is counted present. Some 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 2022-2023 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 SC certification. 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.

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 (i.e., 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 sessions regarding the virtual instruction.

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 of 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-3 students 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.

Initial Findings and Recommendations

Following the initial visits, three findings are clear. After the collection of student achievement data, additional findings may emerge. From Part 1 of the Alternative Instruction

Report, these areas are evident and initial solutions and/or actions should be considered immediately.

1. Data entry and quality at the point of entry in the school district is a challenge. This data is essential to accurate decision-making and an emphasis must be placed on districts following directions from the SCDE, including data verification checks and perhaps even on-site visits. In addition, on-time information must be available to district leaders, legislators, and other policy makers (school board members).
2. Developing or purchasing virtual courses is essential in today's landscape. Families and students have a need for more options and flexibility. The time-honored thirty students in a classroom with one teacher is no longer the only option. Business, industry, and health care now provide a significant amount of their teaching through virtual classes. Students are regularly engaging in YouTube, gaming, podcasts, and social media for information. Their education may also be delivered in such formats. But the development of these courses through these media is arduous, time-consuming and beyond the capacity of many of our districts due to the lack of staff and/or limits on teachers' time. Therefore, the SCDE must develop an office for digital learning from which this work can be created and made available to all districts.
3. Teaching in this new "space" requires some additional or different instructional strategies. Professional development is much needed to support teachers and ultimately deliver successful instruction for students. The office of digital learning must work with teacher effectiveness to provide statewide PD for teachers. In essence, certification may consider the additional/different skills needed for teaching virtual classes. At a minimum, the technology competencies required for all teachers

must be revised and updated to meet the demands of teaching in the new digital ecosystem of today.

Conclusion

The initial, or Part 1, observations in the preparation of the Alternative Instruction Report capture a landscape that is a bit different than anticipated. Overall, fewer districts are providing students with 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, because the demand was low and other virtual programs are 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 that they see virtual programs as a valid and valuable option for students for a multitude of reasons.

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 significant time and preparation to provide virtual programs in 2022-2023. 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 investment (ROI). The examination and evaluation will continue with student achievement data in summer 2023. This data will help develop future frameworks and guidelines to better support all students.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: General Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2022-2023

1A.73. (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: SCDE Memo RE: Virtual Program Approval (08/02/2022)



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents

FROM: Bradley Mitchell
Director, Office of Virtual Learning

DATE: August 2, 2022

RE: Proviso 1.91 (SDE: Public School Virtual Program Funding)

The purpose of this memo is to remind districts that the following proviso remains in effect for the 2022-23 school year:

***1.91. (SDE: Public School Virtual Program Funding):** For Fiscal Year 2022-23, school districts shall be permitted to offer a virtual education program for up to five percent of its student population based on the most recent 135 day ADM count without impacting any state funding. The Department of Education shall establish guidelines for the virtual program and parameters students must meet in order to participate in the virtual program. School districts must submit their plans for the virtual program to the State Board of Education for approval. 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% 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 State Aid to Classroom's district allocation.

The five percent threshold shall not apply to students whose IEP or 504 status requires their participation in a program administered in a virtual format.

Based on the proviso, if a district was approved by the State Board of Education to offer a virtual education program for the 2021-22 school year, they do not need to seek approval again.

RUTLEDGE BUILDING · 1429 SENATE STREET · COLUMBIA, SC 29201
PHONE: 803-734-8500 · FAX: 803-734-3389 · ED.SC.GOV

Proviso 1.91
Page 2
August 2, 2022

However, if an approved district plans to continue offering a virtual education program, the district must inform the South Carolina Department of Education Office of Virtual Education using the following [form](#) no later than August 19, 2022.

For additional questions, please contact Bradley Mitchell, Director, Office of Virtual Education, at BMitchell@ed.sc.gov.

Appendix C: SCDE Memo Re: PowerSchool Coding (9/13/2022)



STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

MOLLY M. SPEARMAN
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: District Superintendents
Report Card Coordinators
Technology Coordinators
PowerSchool Coordinators

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

DATE: September 13, 2022

RE: Recording Virtual Enrollment – Mode of Instruction

The South Carolina General Assembly has passed several provisos that impact data collection. Provisos 1.24 and 1.116 (competency-based education) of Fiscal Year 2022–23 call for identification of students receiving virtual instruction. Proviso 1A.73 requires the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) *and districts* to provide the Education Oversight Committee with data to evaluate the effectiveness of “[a]lternative methods of instruction,” defined as including “online or virtual instruction, remote learning, and hybrid models.” To assist districts in meeting the requirements of these provisos, the SCDE is prescribing the accurate population of the Instruction Type field under the SC Additional Section Information heading. Failure to comply with these requirements will impact district funding and reporting accuracy. Please ensure that your staff entering information in PowerSchool identify sections correctly. Your staff can review summaries of the district’s and schools’ coding through the SCDE’s Application Web Portal (Member Center), Report Portal, Reports, Other Reports, Remote Learning reports.

The SC Additional Section Information drop down currently has the following options:

- A-Instructor Led,
- B-SC Virtual School Program,
- C-Online In-State,
- D-Distance Learning,
- E-Online Out-of-State, and
- *F-Hybrid.*

RUTLEDGE BUILDING · 1429 SENATE STREET · COLUMBIA, SC 29201
PHONE: 803-734-8500 · FAX: 803-734-3389 · ED.SC.GOV

Because Proviso 1A.73 specifically references hybrid instruction, the SCDE has asked that PowerSchool add F-Hybrid as a section type for instruction that has both in-person and virtual instruction. Hybrid does not include dual modality where the teacher is concurrently instructing face to face for some students and virtually for others unless the students receiving the instruction switch modes. Specifically, when the in-person instructional time does not meet the seat time requirement for the initial offering of a credit bearing course, the section should be marked as F-Hybrid. Students receiving hybrid instruction should not be coded SBAVRL. Any section marked A-Instructor Led should be face-to-face instruction. Virtual instruction may be coded as B-SC Virtual School Program, C-Online In-State, D-Distance Learning, or E-Online Out-of-State (including any course contracted with a vendor (i.e. EdOptions, Edmentum, Florida Virtual)), depending upon the circumstances; please see the PowerSchool Manual definitions below.

Capturing this data will allow distinctions to be made between the emergency response of a school switching to remote learning and the programmatic offering of virtual instruction. In the event of a schoolwide transition, schools are required to maintain accurate records of systemic changes in instructional modality.

Initial reporting will be based upon the 45th day data collection. Please ensure that your staff has accurately recorded section instructional mode by **October 14, 2022**. Future collections will occur on the 90th and 135th dates. As student enrollment changes, schedules should be updated to reflect enrollment in sections indicating the correct instructional mode.

Please contact Dan Ralyea, DRalyea@ed.sc.gov with questions or concerns.

Value	Description	Instruction Delivery Modality
(blank) – Select One	Default value only allowed for non-instructional courses (those that began 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 the VirtualSC program. No other instruction types should be used for VirtualSC course sections.	Virtual
C – Online In-State	The teacher who provides virtual instruction in some capacity a 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 school 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 who provides virtual instruction to students is not a part of a school/district/state entity for the state of South Carolina.	Virtual
F – Hybrid	The teacher provides in-person and virtual instruction in some capacity that is part of a school/district/state entity for the state of South Carolina. This is not referring to dual modality.	Hybrid

Appendix D: SCDE Memo Re: Virtual Program Approval and Coding (8/17/2021)



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

RUTLEDGE BUILDING · 1429 SENATE STREET · COLUMBIA, SC 29201
PHONE: 803-734-8500 · FAX: 803-734-3389 · ED.SC.GOV

- 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 and for questions related to coding of virtual students contact PowerSchool@ed.sc.gov.

Appendix E: Initial Questions on District Site Visits

District and Charter School Visits with Approved Virtual Programs Alternative Instruction Impact Report by Education Oversight Committee Fall 2022

District Name _____

Person(s) at Visit Interview _____

Grades Served _____

Enrollment: K-5 _____ 6-8 _____ 9-12 _____

Teachers: K-5 _____ 6-8 _____ 9-12 _____

Counselors: K-5 _____ 6-8 _____ 9-12 _____

Administrators: K-5 _____ 6-8 _____ 9-12 _____

Other staff: K-5 _____ 6-8 _____ 9-12 _____

Please describe other staff _____

1. What curriculum are you using (purchased, if so which one or if teacher designed, describe the process)? How is the administration ensuring high quality content and engaging lesson strategies are used in the classroom?
2. How (process and/or credentials) were your teachers chosen for this assignment?
3. How are your teachers prepared/trained to work in an alternative instruction environment? What unique PD are they offered?
4. What are your policies regarding attendance? Is this available in writing or on the website? How do you take attendance? Presence of work turned in?
5. Who is monitoring teacher online time?
6. Please show us a sample lesson (either live or recorded).
7. How are parents engaged and what communications do teachers and administrators have with parents?
8. For 21-22, how did the outcomes for students in virtual compare to those in brick and mortar? What process did you use, and you were included?
9. What adjustments will you make pending the formative assessment results this year?