

160-8-1-.01 GEORGIA VIRTUAL SCHOOL.

(1) DEFINITIONS.

(a) **Administrative Costs** - expenses incurred by the local school systems for delivery of online learning courses via the Georgia Virtual School. Examples include: certain maintenance and operations expenses and facilitator stipends.

(b) **Approved Entity** – local school system online learning program or private school online learning program that agrees to operate under the terms and conditions established by the State Board of Education.

(c) **Eligible Student** – student, age 21 years or younger, who attends a public or private school or is in a home study program in the state of Georgia.

(d) **Facilitator** – full-time, part-time, contracted, and instructional or support staff from public, private or an Educational Technology Center (ETC) who has been selected to act as the designated contact for the Georgia Virtual School and students in their school or district. ETC staff shall act as facilitators for home study students.

(e) **Full Time Equivalent (FTE)** – formula that divides high school students' regular school day into six reporting segments or their equivalent for funding purposes.

(f) **Georgia Virtual School** – Georgia Department of Education instructional program offering students online learning courses in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-319.1 hereto referred to as the Georgia Virtual School.

(g) **Learning Management System** – instructional technology used to teach online classes.

(h) **Local Teacher-Led Virtual Course** – a type of virtual course in which the local school provides the highly qualified teacher and course materials, and Georgia Virtual School provides the standards-based curriculum, enrollment of students and locally provided teacher in Georgia Virtual School courses, training and full-use of virtual classroom tools, technical support to locally provided teachers and students, and instructional support to locally provided teachers.

(i) **Online Learning Courses** – State Board of Education-approved courses of instruction directly correlated to the state-approved curriculum that is delivered via the Internet or in any other electronic medium not involving on-site interaction with a teacher.

(j) **Regular School Day** – schedule of courses taken as part of public school students’ regular school day which consists of six segments or its FTE equivalent. For private and home study students the regular school day is the equivalent of four and one half hours during 180 instructional days.

(k) **Seat** – equivalent of one student enrolled in an online learning course for one half unit credit.

(l) **Summer School** – time period in excess of 180 instructional days.

(2) **REQUIREMENTS.**

(a) **General.**

1. The Georgia Virtual School is authorized to provide online learning courses to eligible students in the State of Georgia. In accordance with O.C.G.A. §20-2-319.1, priority shall be given to public school students enrolled in Georgia public schools and services shall be provided to private and home study students through a procedure established by the State Board of Education and implemented by the Department.

2. Local school systems and private schools, as a condition for participation in the Georgia Virtual School shall agree to transcribe and award credit earned by students completing coursework through the Georgia Virtual School. A record of home study students’ participation in Georgia Virtual School courses shall be maintained at their local Educational Technology Center.

3. The Department shall coordinate all Georgia Virtual School activities and services for private and home study students.

4. The Department shall develop and maintain the necessary guidelines and protocols for operation of the Georgia Virtual School.

(b) **Funding and Tuition.**

1. The Department is authorized to establish a Georgia Virtual School grant account with funds appropriated by the General Assembly. The amount of funds requested by the State Board for this account shall be based on the following criteria:

(i) For public school students in the amount that the participating students would have earned if they had been in equivalent FTE general education programs in a local school system for that portion of the instructional day in which the students were enrolled in Georgia Virtual School courses.

(ii) For private and home study students an equivalent amount that the participating students would have generated if they had been in corresponding FTE general

education programs in a local school system for that portion of the instructional day in which the students were enrolled in Georgia Virtual School courses.

2. Funds may be appropriated for online learning courses taken by students in Georgia Virtual School courses who meet the following criteria for course enrollments during the regular school day:

(i) Public school student who is taking a course(s) as a part of their regular five and one half hours instructional day or its time equivalent pursuant to State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1.02 School Day and School Year for Students and Employees.

(ii) Private or home study student who is taking a course(s) as a part of his or her regular four and one half hours instructional day or its time equivalent pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-690.

3. Pursuant to O.C.G.A. § 20-2-160(a), no school, program, or local school system shall receive state funding for class periods in which its students take an online course through the Georgia Virtual School.

4. Based on appropriations, local school systems shall be reimbursed for a portion of administrative costs for students enrolled in courses through the Georgia Virtual School.

5. Local school boards with students enrolled in approved entities online learning programs for courses during the regular school day shall be funded in the amount that the participating students would have earned if those students had been in an equivalent FTE general education programs in a local school for that portion of the instructional day in which the students were enrolled in an approved entity online learning course.

6. Tuition shall be collected by the Georgia Virtual School staff for public school, private school, and home study students:

(i) Who are enrolled outside of the regular school day, as defined by the Department.

(ii) Who are enrolled in a summer school term as defined in this rule.

(iii) Who are enrolled in local teacher-led virtual courses, as defined in this rule.

(c) **Registration.**

1. A student shall register for Georgia Virtual School courses through an online registration system developed in accordance with program guidelines.

2. Students registered in a Georgia public school, private school or home study program shall receive written approval from a facilitator prior to being enrolled in a Georgia Virtual School online learning course.

3. Students enrolled in a Georgia Virtual School online learning course shall be assigned a Georgia Testing Identifier (GTID) as set forth in State Board of Education Rule 160-5-1-.07 Student Data Collection.

4. Priority in registration shall be given to public school students.

(d) Personnel.

1. Instructional staff employed or contracted by the Georgia Virtual School shall meet the requirements for teacher certification as required by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. Every Georgia Virtual School teacher is also required to complete training as outlined in the *Georgia Virtual School Teacher Handbook*.

2. As a condition of employment, instructional staff employed by the Georgia Virtual School shall abide by the responsibilities, guidelines and procedures as set forth in the *Georgia Virtual School Teacher Handbook*.

3. As a condition of employment, instructional staff employed by the Georgia Virtual School shall be evaluated per O.C.G.A. § 20-2-210.

4. Facilitators shall be appointed by local school systems, private school administrators, or Educational Technology Center Directors and may be full-time, part-time, contracted, and instructional or support staff. Facilitators shall abide by the responsibilities, guidelines and procedures as set forth in the *Georgia Virtual School Facilitator Handbook*.

(e) Student Expectations.

1. Students must agree to abide by the Georgia Virtual School guidelines, procedures, and policies as outlined in the *Georgia Virtual School Student Handbook*.

2. A student enrolled in the Georgia Virtual School and any approved entity shall earn a final numeric grade at the end of every course attempted unless the student withdraws from the course according to the guidelines in the *Georgia Virtual School Student Handbook* or approved entity handbook. Grades earned, including final grades, final exams and End of Course Tests shall comply with State Board of Education Rule 160-4-2-.13 Statewide Passing Score. Local school systems and private schools that approve student course enrollment(s) shall accurately transcribe a student's Georgia Virtual School final grade to the student's permanent record/transcript. A home study student shall be provided a certificate of completion

indicating date, course, and numeric grade from the Georgia Virtual School or an approved entity.

(f) Instruction Process.

1. The Georgia Virtual School and approved entities shall provide access to students through a learning management system that adequately teaches and assesses courses through the online medium.

2. The Georgia Virtual School and approved entities shall provide all instructional materials necessary for all participating students and teachers, except those in local teacher-led virtual courses, as defined in this rule. Approved entities or local school systems with online programs shall provide the instructional materials through their programs.

3. The Georgia Virtual School and all approved entities shall maintain records of students' participation in online learning courses pursuant to applicable records retention policies.

4. The Georgia Virtual School and approved entities shall authorize the administration and abide by rules of all tests as required by the Department for completion of a course(s).

5. The Georgia Virtual School and approved entities shall maintain minimum accessibility to course content as outlined by the Department.

(g) Curriculum and Course Quality.

1. The Georgia Virtual School and approved entities shall adhere to course and course numbering as set forth in State Board of Education rule.

(h) Approved Entity Requirements.

1. The Georgia Department of Education shall develop criteria for schools or local school systems to become a Georgia Virtual School Approved Entity for the purposes of operating a virtual school program. Approved schools or local school systems shall abide by the responsibilities, guidelines and procedures as set forth in the *Georgia Virtual School Approved Entities Manual*.

Authority O.C.G.A. § 20-2-319.1

Adopted: July 21, 2011

Effective: August 11, 2011