

Virtual Learning Program

Mission

Our mission is to educate and empower all students to be college and career ready graduates – prepared to make positive contributions to our global society.

Beliefs

- High expectations are necessary to achieve goals and expand opportunities for all.
- Education is a shared responsibility that positively impacts the quality of life.
- Equity, fairness, accountability, and fiscal responsibility are foundations of our decision-making.
- Safe, well-equipped, student-centered schools support student success.
- Diversity and individual learning needs are respected, included, and valued.

Through the TCSS Virtual Learning Program, the Tuscaloosa County School System provides students the option to complete courses by way of an online, virtual platform. Virtual courses, which align with the Alabama College and Career Ready Standards, offer students the benefits of time, flexibility and program customization. Students who utilize the virtual program also assume increased responsibility in personal time management, organization, self-direction, and personal discipline to complete course and school requirements.

What do I need to be successful as a full-time online learner through the Tuscaloosa County Virtual Learning Program?

- ✓ On-line courses require more commitment and self-discipline than classroom courses because you must take responsibility for doing the assigned work, getting assignments completed and submitted on time, and being prepared for tests and quizzes.
- ✓ You will need to pace yourself, rather than relying on feedback from the teacher or other students. It is easy to put off your on-line course when you are not required to be in a classroom each week.
- ✓ If you are a self-starter, possess self-discipline, and can work independently on a task until it is complete, then you will be a successful on-line student. The ideal virtual learner is able to answer these questions positively:

- ☑ Am I self-motivated?
(Student Initials)
- ☑ Can I work well independently?
(Student Initials)
- ☑ Do I manage my time well?
(Student Initials)
- ☑ Can I establish and stick to a regular weekly schedule for class work/assignments?
(Student Initials)
- ☑ Am I computer and web literate?
(Student Initials)

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Requirements – Expectations – Guidelines

What are the minimum requirements to remain enrolled as a full-time online student in the Tuscaloosa County Virtual Learning Program?

- ✓ Students must reside within the Tuscaloosa County School zones and be enrolled in the high school of their zone.
- ✓ Students must apply within the first five school days of the beginning of a new school year. Students applying for admission after the first five days will be denied admission unless extenuating circumstances are approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
- ✓ Students must maintain consistent, daily access to the Internet. You should also have easy access to a computer that is connected to the internet (preferably not dial-up), be able to store information on your hard drive or a storage device, have a printer and have the software needed for the course (usually at least a word processor).
- ✓ Students must maintain a passing grade for all courses taken during the academic year.
NOTE: Extracurricular eligibility requires a numerical composite average of 70.
- ✓ Students must maintain appropriate course progression as measured by the completion of weekly assignments, quizzes, and/or tests as outlined in the course pacing guidelines.
- ✓ Students must adhere to the Academic Integrity Contract.
- ✓ Students must remain in good standing as a student of the Tuscaloosa County School System.
- ✓ Students with discipline infractions resulting in a Class III offense will be immediately referred to the Department of Students Services for disciplinary action.
- ✓ Students must be very comfortable using a computer before taking online courses.
- ✓ Students must check their TCSS email (created and assigned by TCSS) and their ACCESS email (created through their Desire2Learn-D2L course) daily and manage their email accounts.

What are the academic requirements of a full-time online student enrolled in the Tuscaloosa County Virtual Learning Program?

- ✓ Students enrolled in the Tuscaloosa County School System are promoted based on credits earned. (Policy 5.26)
Grade classification is based on the following guidelines:

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Grade 9 | 0 – 4 credits |
| Grade 10 | 5 – 10 credits |
| Grade 11 | 11 – 16 credits |
| Grade 12 | 17 – 24 credits |
| GRADUATION REQUIREMENT | 24 credits |
- ✓ To ensure that adequate progress towards graduation is maintained, students are required to take a minimum of six courses per academic year with at least four of those courses being core courses (English, math, science and social studies).
- ✓ Courses must be selected from the approved ACCESS Virtual Learning offerings. <http://accessdl.state.al.us/courses> NOTE: All ACCESS Virtual Learning core courses meet Alabama Course of Study standards. The ALSDE has received approval from the NCAA for 51

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ACCESS courses. These courses may be viewed by going to the Courses Tab above and following the directions.

- ✓ All tests/exams must be supervised by the student's academic advisor or advisor's designee at the high school where the student is enrolled.
- ✓ Students must maintain a passing grade for all courses taken during the academic year.
- ✓ Students must maintain appropriate course progression as measured by the completion of weekly assignments, quizzes, and/or tests as outlined in the course pacing guidelines.
- ✓ Parents/guardians must have login information for their student's ACCESS account.

What type of bell schedule is used by the Tuscaloosa County Virtual Learning Program?

- ✓ The bell schedule followed by students enrolled in the Tuscaloosa County Virtual Learning Program is a traditional seven-period day bell schedule.
- ✓ An exception may be made to seven-period day bell schedule if the student wants to participate in High School Early Exit/Early Graduation. Further information regarding High School Early Exit/Early Graduation may be found in the Parent-Student Information Guide and in the High School Course Catalog.

What are the communication guidelines for full-time online students enrolled in the Tuscaloosa County Virtual Learning Program?

- ✓ Students and their parents/guardians must schedule at least one face-to-face meeting per academic semester (Fall, Spring and/or Summer) with the academic advisor to discuss course planning, registration, and progress towards meeting graduation requirements.
- ✓ All students are required to check their TCSS and ACCESS email daily.
- ✓ All parents/guardians are required to provide the high school with a working email address that is to be checked daily.
- ✓ The academic advisor will maintain, at a minimum, weekly email communication with students and their parents/guardians.
- ✓ ACCESS teachers maintain up-to-date grades in the student's D2L course, and those grades are updated nightly in InformationLIVE. School officials may check student progress daily through InformationLIVE.

Why do students and parents/guardians have to schedule a face-to-face meeting with the academic advisor before classes are scheduled?

- ✓ The primary reason students and their parents/guardians must see the academic advisor is to have an engaged discussion about the academic progress, goals and career path.
- ✓ During this meeting, the academic advisor will help you make good academic decisions so you will be on the right track to graduate in a timely manner.
- ✓ In addition to discussing your academic progress, you can explore your four-year plan, career interest inventory, and resources to help you succeed.

How do I make an appointment with my academic advisor?

- ✓ To schedule an appointment with your advisor, you should establish with your advisor if it is best to email or call.

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- ✓ Use the preferred method to schedule an appointment with your advisor at least one week before your preferred date.

What should I bring to an advising meeting?

- ✓ Your parents/guardians.
- ✓ Questions you may have regarding the information you need.
- ✓ Plan for classes you want to take.
- ✓ Previous advising sheets.

What information is required to be reviewed before beginning course work?

Students must review the information below about ACCESS Virtual Learning before beginning the course.

- ✓ Policy Manual for Students -
<http://accessdl.state.al.us/sites/default/files/documents/manuals/StudentPolicyManual7-13-12.pdf>
- ✓ ACCESS Student Orientation
http://accessdl.state.al.us/AventaCourses/student_orientation/tutorials/tutorials/Orientation_Table_ofContents.html

Orientation Topics:

- Student Expectations
(Student Initials)
http://accessdl.state.al.us/AventaCourses/student_orientation/tutorials/tutorials/01_unit/01-02/01-02_introduction.htm
- Navigating D2L
(Student Initials)
http://accessdl.state.al.us/AventaCourses/student_orientation/tutorials/tutorials/01_unit/01-03/01-03_introduction.htm
- Assignments and Grades
(Student Initials)
http://accessdl.state.al.us/AventaCourses/student_orientation/tutorials/tutorials/01_unit/01-04/01-04_introduction.htm

By our signatures below, we indicate that we understand the following:

- ✓ Failure to comply with the above stated expectations, requirements and guidelines could result in removal from the Tuscaloosa County Virtual Learning Program;
- ✓ Removal from the Tuscaloosa County Virtual Learning Program can occur at any time during the year;
- ✓ Students who are removed and who are granted enrollment at their zoned school or any other school will not be guaranteed course equivalents in the traditional, face-to-face format.

Student: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian: _____ Date: _____

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Application for Enrollment

Student Information

Name: _____ Date: ___/___/___

Address: _____

Zoned School: _____ Grade: _____

Parent Information

Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Consent to apply:

We understand the opportunities afforded in the Tuscaloosa County Virtual Learning Program.

By our signatures below, we consent to this application and agree to the responsibilities on our part if enrollment is approved.

_____/_____/_____
Student Signature Date

_____/_____/_____
Parent Signature Date

FEES:

- ✓ **TCSS Virtual Learning Program Fee August through May: \$25.00**
- ✓ **TCSS Virtual Learning Program Summer School Fee: \$100.00 per course**
The Tuscaloosa County School System receives no funding for summer school-credit improvement programs; therefore, the availability of summer course offerings at all grade levels shall be based on sufficient student demand to financially support the summer school-credit improvement programs. The costs associated with the operation of the programs shall be borne by the enrolled students. The fee for any course during the summer is \$100.00.
- ✓ **TCSS AP Course Fee: \$25.00 plus Exam Fee**
- ✓ **TEXTBOOKS: If the ACCESS required textbook differs from the text adopted by TCSS, the costs associated with the purchase of the textbook shall be borne by the student.**

REGISTRATION:

- ✓ Online registration through INFOSNAP required after acceptance to the program.

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Academic Integrity Contract

Academic integrity ensures students possess the responsibility to acquire skills honestly in the classroom that aids them in college and the workforce. Academic integrity also guarantees students a quality learning experience in which work is evaluated fairly and hard work is recognized and valued. Students in the Tuscaloosa County School System are expected to submit original work and give credit to other peoples' ideas.

Maintaining academic integrity involves:

- ✓ Creating and expressing your own ideas in course work;
- ✓ Acknowledging all sources of information;
- ✓ Completing assignments independently or acknowledging collaboration;
- ✓ Accurately reporting results when conducting your own research or with respect to labs;
- ✓ Honesty during examinations.

The Academic Integrity Contract of the Tuscaloosa County Virtual Learning Program combines the existing Academic Integrity policy of ACCESS Virtual Learning and additional requirements from the Tuscaloosa County School System.

Students enrolled in courses offered through ACCESS Virtual Learning must sign a commitment form attesting to academic integrity regarding each of the following topics:

- ✓ All work must be completed only by the student.
- ✓ Any collaboration among students must be pre-approved by the teacher.
- ✓ Plagiarism will not be allowed in any form. This will include copying or using the ideas or words of others and presenting them as one's own.
- ✓ Students will not allow others to copy their work.
- ✓ Content from the internet will not be misused or misrepresented.

If a student fails to abide by these policies, the student will be removed from the course(s) with a failing grade and will be subject to other consequences as determined by ACCESS and local school administrators.

All ACCESS Virtual Learning teachers utilize a variety of technologies to check student work for authenticity. If an instructor confirms that a student has plagiarized work in any manner, the student will be subject to consequences determined by ACCESS Virtual Learning administrative staff, the virtual learning teacher, and the Tuscaloosa County School System Academic Integrity Committee, and will be subject to removal from the course(s) with a failing grade.

Students enrolled in the Tuscaloosa County Virtual Learning Program must take all examinations as required by the ACCESS Virtual Learning teacher and by the Alabama State Department of Education. Students must take these in an environment proctored by a Tuscaloosa County School System employee.

Students are responsible for the following:

- ✓ Completing unit tests and course examinations in the proctored environment without the use of study aids or computer help unless so allowed by the online teacher.
- ✓ Provide reliable transportation to and from the testing site(s) designated by the Tuscaloosa County School System. (Zoned High School)
- ✓ Verify the proctor records the student's test title, assigning teacher, test date, start and end time.
- ✓ Advanced Placement courses are taught at the college level. Completion of Advanced Placement

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courses and satisfactory performance on the related AP exams may enable students to receive advanced credit and/or placement upon entering college. Students enrolled in any AP course must take the AP exam to earn AP weighted credit. The fees for all Advanced Placement courses are \$25 plus the AP exam.

Scores earned on tests or exams not taken at an approved Tuscaloosa County School System testing site without a proctor are subject to invalidation and review by the Tuscaloosa County School System Academic Integrity Committee. Additionally, in accordance with ACCESS Virtual Learning policy, the student may be removed from the course(s) with a failing grade and may be subject to dismissal from the Tuscaloosa County Virtual Learning Program.

Student: _____ Date: _____

Parent: _____ Date: _____

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Enrollment/Schedule Information

Student Information

Name: _____ Date: ___/___/___

Address: _____

Zoned School: _____ Grade: _____

TCSS Email: _____

Parent Information

Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Course Schedule/School Year _____

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 8. _____ |

To ensure that adequate progress towards graduation is maintained, students are required to take a minimum of six courses per academic year with at least four of those courses being core courses (English, math, science and social studies).

Transcript Audit performed using an Alabama High School Diploma Credit Check Sheet:

| | # completed | # still needed | | # completed | # still needed |
|----------|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| English: | _____ | _____ | Career Prep: | _____ | _____ |
| Math: | _____ | _____ | Health: | _____ | _____ |
| Science: | _____ | _____ | LIFE: | _____ | _____ |
| History: | _____ | _____ | Arts Education: | _____ | _____ |
| | | | Career Tech: | _____ | _____ |
| | | | Foreign Language: | _____ | _____ |
| | | | Electives: | _____ | _____ |

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Extracurricular Activities

What are the enrollment requirements for extracurricular activities?

- ✓ All students enrolled in the Tuscaloosa County Virtual Learning Program who participate in extracurricular activities must follow all policies and procedures established by the Alabama State Department of Education and the Tuscaloosa County School System.

What are the physical education or extracurricular class requirements?

- ✓ The Alabama High School Athletic Association and the Tuscaloosa County School System recommend taking the class affiliated with the extracurricular activity.
- ✓ If a high school requires an athlete to be enrolled in and participate in a weight training course to be able to participate on the team, the same requirement would apply for a student enrolled as a full-time online student. The full-time online student would be required to be enrolled in and participate in the same weight training course.

What are the expectation for the amount of time a full-time online student participates in practice?

- ✓ A student enrolled as a full-time online student in the Tuscaloosa County Virtual Learning Program must practice the same amount of time as a traditional student during a school day.

Additional Information

What should students know?

- ✓ Ask your instructor questions when you need information. That's why he or she is there!
- ✓ It is your responsibility to schedule any proctored exams at least three to five days in advance of when you need to take the exam.
- ✓ Check your TCSS email and ACCESS Virtual Learning email often!
- ✓ Make sure your mailing address and phone number are current in INOW. If not, you may not receive important mailings/phone calls from your school and/or instructor.
- ✓ Notify the high school immediately should you have a change in your phone number and/or address.
- ✓ Take these courses seriously; you have to stick with them to be successful.
- ✓ Work hard and enjoy the academic credit you are earning—on your own!
- ✓ You must see your academic advisor before classes may be scheduled.

What should students expect if they are at-risk of failing a class?

- ✓ As you know, it will affect your GPA. If you fail a course, you will be placed on Academic Probation and will need to file an Academic Success Plan to help you chart a course for success.
- ✓ Potential ineligibility for participation in extracurricular activities. Students entering grades 10 - 12 must, for the last two (2) terms/semesters of attendance and summer school, if applicable, have a passing grade and earn the appropriate number of credits in each of six (6) subjects that total six (6) Carnegie units of credit, including four (4) credits from the four (4) core subjects composed of English, science, social studies, and mathematics with a numerical composite average of 70.

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- ✓ An Academic Success Plan may only be used one time during your high school career.
- ✓ You may not repeat this course at another institution; you must repeat it with the Tuscaloosa County School System.
- ✓ Consider how you will improve your work for this class in the future:
 - Will you get tutoring?
 - Will you work on time management?
 - Will you seek help from the teacher during regularly scheduled office hours?

What is an Academic Success Plan?

- ✓ The Academic Success Plan is exactly that – a way for you to get back on track with your studies! Sometimes students have difficulties and fail a course, which means they will be put on academic probation.
- ✓ To help those students plan for future improvement, they must meet with their advisors to complete an Academic Success Plan.
- ✓ Students must do this in order to register for classes for the next semester.
- ✓ The Tuscaloosa County School System wants you to succeed! Work closely with your academic advisor and you will be on your way to graduation.

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Academic Success Plan

Step 1: Identify the obstacles you encountered last semester.

Using the matrix below, identify the three greatest obstacles you faced last semester and how they interfered with your academic success.

| Obstacle | How did this obstacle interfere with your success? (Be specific.) |
|----------|---|
| 1. | |
| 2. | |
| 3. | |

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p><input type="checkbox"/> I didn't login to my course.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I didn't take notes.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I had difficulty prioritizing between school work and social activities.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I didn't turn in assignments (or turned them in late).</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I didn't study enough.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I wasn't sure how to study effectively.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I didn't manage my time well.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I watched too much TV.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I spent too much time on the internet, social media or playing video games.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I became frustrated about my performance and just gave up.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I had trouble adjusting to online learning.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I had difficulty with the subject matter in one or more of my classes.</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am uncertain about my goals.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I didn't pay attention.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I wasn't motivated enough.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I wasn't sure I wanted to be an online student.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I had personal problems or issues.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I had health problems.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I didn't get enough sleep.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I had trouble balancing work and class.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I spent too much time texting.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I wasn't organized enough.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I missed a test.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I procrastinated too much.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I didn't keep up with the reading.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I had test anxiety.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am uncertain about my goals.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I allowed use of alcohol or other drugs to interfere with my academics.</p> |
|---|--|

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Step 2: Generate potential solutions for overcoming the obstacles you listed.

Using the matrix below, list the obstacles you faced last semester and three potential solutions for each obstacle.

| Obstacle | Solution #1 | Solution #2 | Solution #3 |
|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. | | | |
| 2. | | | |
| 3. | | | |

- _____ I will meet my academic advisor to discuss my schedule and develop a plan for success.
- _____ I will develop a time management plan that works for me.
- _____ I will follow the pacing guidelines.
- _____ I will be prepared for my classes.
- _____ I will set a study schedule for each class and follow it.
- _____ I will make better choices regarding my health, sleeping and eating habits.
- _____ I will attend tutoring sessions.
- _____ Other solutions that will allow me to be successful. _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

- _____ I will ask my teacher(s) for help if I am having difficulty in a course.
- _____ I will meet with a licensed counselor (LPC) outside of school.
- _____ I will utilize the four-year plan in Career Cruising.
- _____ I will stay focused while completing my work.
- _____ I will study in a place that allows me to get my work done.
- _____ I will get involved in fitness activities.
- _____ I will make better choices regarding my use of alcohol and/or other drugs.

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Step 3: Commit to workable and achievable solutions

Using the matrix below, list the three most achievable solutions you are willing to try, how these solutions may help you, and the sacrifices you will need to make to achieve your goals

| Solution | How will this solution help me? | What will this solution require of me in terms of time and effort? |
|----------|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |

Step 4: Develop your plan of action!

Write your most important goal down below. Using the solutions you generated, list the steps you will take to reach your goal and the date by which you will complete these steps. Use the **SMART** formula for achieving your goal.

S = Specific Make your goal as specific as possible.
 Example: I will have a 2.5 cumulative GPA by the end of the upcoming spring semester.

M = Measurable Be sure that your goal is measurable.
 Example: I will be able to calculate my GPA to determine if I have reached my GPA goal at the end of the year.

A = Attainable Set goals that you can achieve.
 Example: I have done the math and know that earning a 76 in Algebra II with Trig by the end of the year is possible.

R = Realistic Set goals that are realistic.
 Example: I can realistically achieve a 2.5 cumulative GPA if I earn 5 Bs and 2 Cs this semester.

T = Timely Establish a timeline for reaching your goal.
 Example: I can achieve my goal by the end of the upcoming spring semester.

My TOP Goal: _____

Steps I will take to reach this goal:

1. _____ by _____, 20__

2. _____ by _____, 20__

3. _____ by _____, 20__

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Step 5: Remember that with effort and persistence, you can return to good academic standing!

Keep the following in mind:

1. **Be committed** to achieving academic success
2. **Understand** what academic probation means and what grades you will need to earn to return to good academic standing and to continue your status as a full-time online student
3. **Identify** the problems that led to your poor grades
4. **Consider** all of your options – including adjusting your course load, cutting back on extracurricular activities, repeating courses
5. **Know** the deadlines as well as other academic policies that pertain to you
6. **Let others assist you** and take advantage of the student support services
7. **Think positively and work hard! Never give up!**

Notes: