PIONEER

VIRTUAL ACADEMY

EST.
2020

2026-2027

HANDBOOK

Mission

By providing a rigorous, relevant, state-accredited, technology-based education, Pioneer Virtual Academy prepares students for college and careers through which they will become lifelong learners and contributors to a global society.

Beliefs

- We believe all students can learn.
- We believe that the school staff should be connected with students and their families because learning is a shared responsibility for which the school, home, students, and community are jointly responsible.
- We believe student engagement is crucial to success, and students should have access to a safe, secure, and supportive environment.
- We believe every student deserves a rigorous, relevant, and accredited learning experience.
- We believe it is essential for students to take ownership of their learning in order to gain the most from every learning opportunity.
- We believe technology is a progressive learning tool that provides opportunities for students to reach their greatest potential.
- We believe every student is unique and can benefit from a tailored learning plan that meets their individual needs.

Scope and Delivery

Instruction is delivered virtually through the Learning Management System (LMS) provided by Harmony, our educational service partner. Students will participate exclusively in virtual learning with significant parent support. Parents will act as the student's Learning Coach. Each student and his/her parents will develop a customized educational plan with the site coordinator to meet the student's individual needs and is in line with Tennessee State Standards. All courses are state-accredited and approved by the Lawrence County Board of Education.

Learning Coach: Role of Parent/Guardian within the PVA setting/environment

Parents or Guardians will serve as Learning Coaches for students. The younger the students, the more involved the Learning Coach will be. Learning Coaches will help monitor student progress and grades. Learning Coaches will also help students learn and implement organizational skills to help students stay on track in their school work. It is not the responsibility of the Learning Coach to complete work for students nor to provide answers. Learning is achieved by experiencing both success and failure.

Accreditation

This non-traditional, virtual program is state-accredited and taught by highly qualified, certified teachers. Courses are aligned to Tennessee State Standards, thus leading to a high school diploma upon completion of the program.

Enrollment Fees

Pioneer Virtual Academy courses are free for full-time enrolled students. Additional courses above full-time enrollment may be subject to tuition fees.

Application Process

- ❏ Complete application
- ❏ Submit all required forms and documentation through the Harmony platform
- ❏ Complete transcript review with Pioneer Virtual Academy Coordinator
- ❏ Establish Individual Learning Plan (Attendance, Participation, Achievement)
- ❏ Attend technology orientation (first week of enrollment)
- ❏ Agree to participate in all testing required by the State of Tennessee Department of Education

Admission

Virtual Learning

Students admitted to the virtual learning program must be highly motivated and self-disciplined. Students must take initiative and ownership of their learning in order to be successful in this type of program. Students must be in good standing at their current school and must have acceptable discipline records. Students must maintain a minimum average (as outlined in their personal learning plan) in all courses in order to maintain enrollment in PVA. Students must also be in good standing with regard to truancy. Non-traditional attendance is measured weekly through a process developed by Harmony and monitored by the PVA Coordinator. Students are required to remain on pace and must complete all assignments with a minimum score of 60 to be considered present and attending. In the event that a student does not meet the grade or truancy requirements, a plan will be developed to bring the student into compliance. In the event that a solution cannot be reached where the student maintains satisfactory progress in each course or continues to have truancy issues, then the student may be withdrawn to a traditional school for in-person learning. It is our goal to retain all students in the virtual learning program, and we will make every effort to help students meet the requirements of successful virtual learning.

Faculty-Parent Communication via Skyward Student-Parent Portal

In an effort to communicate student performance in a more effective manner, the Lawrence County School System provides parents with an internet-based system to communicate with teachers and administrators. For the 2024-2025 academic year, Skyward will be used to communicate attendance, final grades, and other important information to parents.

Testing

The Pioneer Virtual Academy is governed by the policies and procedures of Lawrence County Schools set forth by the Lawrence County Board of Education regarding state-mandated testing policies. Students are required to take any and all state or locally-mandated exams, including but not limited to Benchmark Testing, the TCAP for grades 3-8, the EOC exams in grades 9-11, the United States Civics Exam, and the ACT for high school students. There are no exemptions granted for TCAP, EOC, Civics, or ACT exams. These exams will count, when applicable, for a percentage of the student's semester average for the course. State-mandated tests must be administered by a Tennessee-licensed person in a proctored setting. If Lawrence County Schools chooses to administer the 2nd grade TCAP for all schools, PVA students will also be required to test.

End of Course/TN Ready

End of Course exams will be administered at the completion of courses as determined by the Tennessee Department of Education. These exams will count as 15% of the final grade in accordance with district policy.

Biology U. S. History Geometry Algebra 1 Algebra 2 English 9 English 10

TNReady(TCAP) scores shall be included in students' final grades as follows:

3rd - 5th Grades	15%
6th - 8th Grades	15%

ACT

This test is mandatory for all 11th grade students. It will be given on a school day, and scores will be reportable for college admission. There is no cost to the student for school-day testing. The ACT is a state graduation requirement.

United States Civics Test

All students are given the US Civics test in each grade level in a social science/studies course until passing the test with a minimum of 70. This test can be taken each year of high school (grades 9-12) until the student earns a passing grade.

K-3 Universal Reading Screener

As part of the Tennessee Literacy Success Act, districts are required to administer an approved universal reading screener to all students in grades K-3 during three administration windows each school year and report data to the Tennessee Department of Education. In addition, K-8 students will complete the aimswebPlus Benchmark Testing three times a year.

Attendance Requirements

Prior to or during the first week of enrollment, all students are required to attend Orientation with Harmony. This allows the staff to get to know the students and their needs, as well as familiarize them with the learning management program.

Exclusively "virtual" students must maintain their pace in completing assignments and maintaining their percentage complete. Simply logging in does not satisfy attendance. Students must complete assignments satisfactorily in order to be considered present for attendance purposes. Students and parents can monitor progress through the learning management system. A student is considered "truant" when they are more than 15% off pace without a legitimate reason or approval absences from the PVA Coordinator.

Repeated truant issues or off pace with course completion as outlined by the PVA Coordinator and PVA guidelines may result in removal from PVA after intervention measures have failed to correct the issue.

Truancy

Percentage Off-Pace in the Course	Intervention
5%	The Teacher will communicate directly with the student and parent/guardian that the student is off pace.
10%	The Program Director or designee will send an official notification to the student and parent/guardian that the student is off-pace.
15%	The Program Director or designee will send an official notification to the student and parent/guardian that the student is truant and in violation of Tennessee's Compulsory School Attendance Law. Such notification will result in the student and the parent/guardian being petitioned to juvenile court.

Once a student has accumulated 3, 5, or 8 absences, then the Program Director or designee will send an official notification to the parent/guardian which will include the Lawrence County Schools Truancy Policy and the Tennessee Compulsory School Attendance Law. Once a student has accumulated 10 unexcused absences, the Program Director or designee will send an official notification to the student and parent/guardian that the student is truant and in violation of Tennessee's Compulsory School Attendance Law. Such notification will result in the student and the parent/guardian being petitioned to juvenile court.

Internet Use and School-Issued Devices

Internet access is required for all students and must be provided by students. Students are expected to use the internet in a responsible, safe, and ethical manner. Use of the internet must be in accordance with the Lawrence County Acceptable Use Policy. Parents and students are required to sign the Lawrence County Acceptable Use Policy upon enrollment. In the event that a PVA student chooses to use an LCSS Chromebook, these devices shall be returned at the end of each school year or if a student withdraws prior to the end of school and transfers to a school outside of Lawrence County Schools. Records, including grades, may be held until devices are returned in satisfactory condition. Students may elect to use personal devices.

Withdrawal/Cancellation of Enrollment

Students may be withdrawn from courses and transitioned back to a traditional school for the following reasons:

- The student has made no significant progress in his or her courses during the first two weeks of enrollment.
- The student has extensive truancy issues and needs the accountability of daily physical attendance at a traditional setting or school.
- The student no longer attends Pioneer Virtual Academy.
- The student no longer qualifies for enrollment because they do not meet established grade requirements as outlined in their individualized learning plan.

Code of Honor - Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is fundamental to a successful non-traditional learning experience and mastery of the standards. In order to protect the validity of the student's intellectual work, students should complete all work without unauthorized help of any kind. Academic integrity means the following:

1. The student will complete each assignment independently and without help.
2. The student will not practice plagiarism in any form.
3. The student will not cheat in any form.
4. The student will not allow others to copy their work.
5. The student will not misuse content from the Internet.

Students in violation of academic integrity may receive a grade of 0% on all assignments submitted in violation of the policy. In addition, students may be withdrawn from the course and/or school if the policy is violated.

Grading Scale

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A = 100 - 90 B = 89-80 C = 79-70 D = 79-60 F = Below 60

Graduation Requirements

The Lawrence County Virtual School curriculum is designed to challenge students and prepare them for college and the workforce while providing flexibility in scheduling and pacing. Students are required to take 4 courses each semester (8 total for the year) and must meet the minimum state requirements of **28** credits to graduate. Graduation ceremonies are held each year to recognize the accomplishments of these students.

Math (4 credits)	English (4 credits)	Science (3 credits)	Social Studies (3 credits)	Additional Credits
Algebra I **Algebra II **Geometry **Higher level math course ***Enrollment in a math course is required each year of high school.*	**English I **English II **English III **English IV	**Lab Science **Biology **Chemistry or Physics	**World History & Geography **U.S. History **U.S. Government (½ credit) **Economics (½ credit)	**Physical Education (½ credit) **Wellness **Personal Finance (½ credit) **Foreign Language (2 credits in the same foreign language) **Fine Art **Elective Focus (3 credits in the same area) **Computer Science (1 credit)

- Students who wish to waive the foreign language and fine art requirement must fill out a waiver and substitute them with courses that explore their elective focus.
- State-mandated EOC tests are administered in the following classes: Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, English I, English II, Biology, and U.S. History.

Special Populations (IDEA & Section 504)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act state that parents of a child with a disability have specific procedural safeguards. The Notice of Procedural Safeguards for Parents of Students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and/or 504 Service Plan explains all parent/guardian and student rights. Students with an IEP and/or Section 504 plan may apply to Pioneer Virtual Academy (PVA). These individualized plans document the services and/or supports the student needs to access a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Related services such as speech, language, and occupational therapy may be provided through a FERPA/HIPAA-compliant platform, drop-in services at the student's LCSS-enrolled school, or other options as necessary. At any time, an IEP or Section 504 team may convene to determine if the traditional or virtual setting best meets the needs of the student. If a student with an IEP or Section 504 plan is enrolled in PVA, it is the responsibility of LCSS to ensure the school system meets all requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education (IEP) Act and Section 504.

PVA will follow all modifications and accommodations documented on the IEP or Section 504 plan as appropriate. There are some instances in which accommodations listed in the individualized plan are not conducive to the virtual environment resulting in adjusting the accommodation or modification to best meet the needs of the student.

Parent/Learning Mentor Role for Students with Disabilities

Parents or Guardians will serve as Learning Coaches for students. The younger the students, the more involved the Learning Coach will be. Learning Coaches will help monitor student progress and grades. Learning Coaches will also help students learn and implement organizational skills to help students stay on track in their school work. It is not the responsibility of the Learning Coach to complete work for students nor to provide answers. Learning is achieved by experiencing both success and failure.

Individual Education Plan and/or 504 Service Plan Team Meeting

PVA is a school of choice and requires specific enrollment requirements outlined in the PVA Handbook. The IEP or Section 504 team will determine the type and amount of services necessary to meet the student's needs while enrolled in PVA. Upon enrollment, the committee may meet at any time to determine the appropriate and individualized accommodations, modifications, aids, and/or services, including parent training and orientation necessary. If the program is appropriate for the student to receive a FAPE in light of their unique needs, then the IEP or Section 504 plan will be revised to include the services, aids, supports, accommodations, and modifications that will be required in order for the IEP or Section 504 plan to be reasonably calculated to confer educational benefits in PVA. The IEP or Section 504 team may determine that based on some students' unique needs, PVA is not appropriate to confer a FAPE, even with the provision of appropriate and individualized accommodations, modifications, aids, and/or services. Such a determination may be made in the initial application process or after the student has participated in the program for some time. Moreover, such a determination is subject to the parents' rights and procedural safeguards under IDEA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Special Staff and Case Managers

All students with disabilities enrolled in PVA will be supported by their assigned general education teacher in the least restrictive environment. Students who have an IEP will also have access to a licensed, highly qualified special education teacher. Students with disabilities who have a current IEP or Section 504 plan through LCSS will be assigned a teacher or other staff to serve as their case manager. The case manager will ensure compliance and appropriate services, facilitate communication between home and school, and coordinate the annual review and re-evaluation.

Instruction

Students enrolled in PVA will have access to a scientifically based, research-validated curriculum. Students with disabilities will participate in the general education program to the greatest extent possible offered by PVA and as determined by the IEP or Section 504 team. The student's teachers will have access to the IEP or Section 504 accommodations document once the student is placed and assigned classes.

If deemed necessary by the student's IEP, an LCSS special education teacher will support students with disabilities and provide specially designed instruction through synchronous learning web-conferencing. All IEP services will be synchronous to support students with a disability and assess progress towards IEP goals. Academic services provided through web conferencing could be presented within a co-taught online classroom, small group, or individual session with the special education teacher. In addition, parent/legal guardian education and support can be effectively delivered using web conferencing and other training resources.

Attendance for all services under IDEA and/or Section 504 is essential for students' success. Due to the nature of this individualized instruction/service, attendance at these sessions is mandatory. Students with individualized plans follow the same truancy rules when it affects their service time.

Accessibility

Despite the web-based and online nature of PVA instructional programs, the District will ensure that students with disabilities enjoy equal access to the educational benefits and opportunities offered by the technology, as well as equal treatment in the use of such technology. Students with disabilities shall not be excluded from, or be denied the benefits of, the web-based and online program on the basis of disability as long as their respective committee of knowledgeable persons determines that the web-based and online program is appropriate to provide them a FAPE with or without the provision of appropriate and individualized accommodations, modifications, aids, and/or services.

Students with disabilities enrolled in PVA may require access to assistive technology in addition to the equipment provided to every PVA student as outlined in the student's IEP or Section 504 plan. Should PVA use a device or feature that is not fully accessible, the District will provide accommodations, assistive technology, or modifications that permit students with disabilities to receive all the educational benefits provided by the technology in an equally effective and equally integrated manner and with substantially equivalent ease of use.

Equipment

Parents/Legal guardians must understand and acknowledge that any equipment provided by the District remains the property of the District and must be returned at the end of each school year or if the student withdraws from PVA, graduates, or services are otherwise terminated. Parents/legal guardians and students must commit to using the technology as directed and make best efforts to avoid damage to either hardware or software. Misuse of, or damage to, the technology despite warnings and training is a factor that the student's IEP or Section 504 team may consider in determining whether the PVA school of choice is appropriate to meet the student's needs.

Related Services

A student with an IEP or Section 504 plan enrolled in PVA may need to receive certain related services outlined in the student's individualized plan. These may include speech services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, nursing, and/or vision services. As a District, we are required to supply students with the services that are outlined in the IEP or Section 504 plan. Some related services can feasibly and appropriately be provided to the student on a web-based or online basis, while some services, such as occupational therapy, may require in-person delivery of services. Should transportation be necessary in order for a student to access related services, the District will provide transportation from and to the home.

PVA Meeting Process

The meeting processes for an IEP or Section 504 plan will remain the same for all LCSS students with disabilities except for the location of the individualized plans for students enrolled in PVA. Most IEP or Section 504 meetings for PVA students will be held virtually unless otherwise requested or deemed necessary. Also, after the meeting, all members of the IEP or Section 504 team will be asked individually if they agree to the content of the IEP or Section 504 plan and the decisions discussed during the meeting. If all are in agreement, the meeting will be adjourned, and the documents will be signed electronically or through email. The final copy of the individualized plan will be sent to the parent/guardian electronically via the Parent Portal or through an email.

PVA Compliance and Students with Disabilities

LCSS is responsible for providing a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) under the federal guidelines of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act IDEA. As a public school, PVA is required to provide access to the curriculum for students in their least restrictive environment. For students with a current Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan, teachers and supporting staff members are expected to follow the components within the individualized plan. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination based on disability in any program or activity. PVA has the responsibility to identify, evaluate, and provide access to appropriate educational services if a child is determined eligible. Students who are identified as students with disabilities and served under an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 plan must follow school compliance requirements unless exempt or adjusted within the IEP or 504. The non-compliant process should be followed consistently for all students at the school. When a student reaches the last level of noncompliance, where the school would normally institute administrative transfer from PVA into the student's home school, the special education or Section 504 case manager needs to be notified, and an

IEP or Section 504 meeting will be held with the entire IEP or Section 504 team, including parent/legal guardian as mandated by state guidelines to determine if a change of placement is necessary.

Glossary of Terms

- *Academic Focus* - an area of focus for high school students outside of the basic, required classes. Generally related to a specific area of interest or career field.
- *Graduation Requirements* - 28 earned credits, take ACT, Civics exam
- *ILP* - Individualized Learning Plan - a learning plan that is written for each student to address their academic needs. Much like an educational contract between parents, students, and school.
- *Learning Coach* - the role of the parent or guardian in a student's virtual learning experience.
- *Learning Management System* - Virtual Program used for PVA curriculum. Harmony provides Founders curriculum and teachers for PVA students.
- *PVA Coordinator* - person of contact at Pioneer Virtual Academy. Handles all student enrollment, academic, and technology
- *Orientation* - a scheduled session where students & parents are introduced to the virtual program & technology associated with it
- *Resident Requirements* - prospective students must reside in Lawrence County per LCSS Board of Education policy
- *State Mandated Testing*:

  - EOC (End of Course) for certain high school courses and
  - TNReady (TCAP) for grades 3-8
- *Waiver* - a form provided by the TN Dept of Education that waives a class requirement (such as foreign language class requirements)

LAWRENCE COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM

2026 - 2027 Assessment Calendar

Kindergarten Screener	**Literacy & Math**	**Aug. 4 - Aug. 5, 2026**
Universal Screening	**K-8 (HMH Math, STAR, AIMS Web)**	**Aug. 4- September 25, 2025** **Jan. 5- Feb. 2, 2026** **April 10 - May 15, 2026**
Mastery View **Predictive Assessments**	**Grades 2-8** **Grades 2-8; Alg. I** **Grades 2-8; Alg. I** **Fall Block EOC Courses** **Spring Block EOC Courses**	**Sept. 15 - 23, 2026** **Dec. 8 - 17, 2026** **Mar. 15 - 19, 2027** **Nov. 2 - 6, 2026** **Mar. 30 - Apr. 2, 2027**
TCAP Grades 2-5 **Grades 6-8**	**Spring** **Spring**	**April 7 - May 6, 2027** **April7 - May 6 , 2027**
TCAP ALT Grades 3 - 11	**Fall ELA and Math** **Spring ELA and Math** **Science and Social Studies**	**Sept. 14 - Dec. 18, 2026** **Feb. 1 - May 21, 2027** **March 15 - April 30, 2027**
TCAP EOC	**Fall Block** **Spring Block/Traditional**	**Nov. 30 - Dec. 17, 2026** **April 19 - May 6, 2027**
ACT	**Fall Senior Retake** **Junior Testing**	**Oct. 21, 2026** **March 31, 2027**
ELPA 21	**Spring**	**Feb. 2 - March 27, 2026**
NAEP (if selected)	**Winter/Spring**	**Jan. 26 - March 20, 2026**