

TIPS/TOOLS FOR FAMILIES -- Online Schools

Online schooling has become an increasingly popular option for students to complete some or all of their academic coursework. Washington State has a number of approved and accredited online schooling options that students can access for free.

I'm interested in online learning, where should I start?

- Check with the school district where you live (your "resident district") to see what online learning options might be available to your student and ask for their policy regarding access to online learning (usually #2024).
- Check OSPI's Digital Learning Department's list of approved providers, (which includes academic information, contacts, and reviews):
<https://digitallearning.k12.wa.us/approval/providers/>

How do I enroll in an online school or program?

Enrollment will depend on if your online provider is part of your local district and whether or not you'll be accessing a full school program or just a couple courses (if your district allows it).

To transfer to an online provider offered by your district, talk with your district about their transfer procedure.

To transfer into another district's online program, contact the school district where you live to request a Choice Transfer (for full-time enrollment). If your district allows part-time enrollment ask if they have already established an Inter-district Agreement with your preferred provider. If they haven't, you can ask them if they would be willing to establish one or what other providers they already have agreements with.

Definitions:

An **online school** is "a school program that offers a sequential set of online courses or grade-level coursework that may be taken in a single school term or throughout the school year in a manner that could provide a full-time basic education program if so desired by the student."

An **online course** is one where:

- "More than half of the course content is delivered electronically using the Internet or other computer-based methods, and
- More than half of the teaching is conducted from a remote location through an online course learning management system or other online or electronic tools.
- A certificated teacher has the primary responsibility for the student's instructional interaction...; and
- Students have access to the teacher synchronously, asynchronously, or both."

The above and other definitions are available in [RCW 28A.250.010](https://leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.250.010).

Online providers are approved through the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI).

How much does an online school or course cost?

If you are accessing an online school or course as part of your student's regular school day through an approved provider, it is free (except for fines, materials fees, etc.). Families may pay for courses outside of a full school day if they wish to supplement their child's education.

Can my child with an IEP or 504 Plan enroll in online learning?

Students with disabilities must be provided the same access to online programs as students without disabilities. An online program may not deny a student solely because the student has, or is eligible for, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan.

If your student is accepted into an online program through the nonresident transfer process, the nonresident district is legally responsible for providing special education and related aids and services to the student. The nonresident district should review the student's educational records, including evaluations and IEPs, to determine how services will be provided. Given the different nature of online learning, the IEP may need to be revised.

If the student needs related services, the district providing the online program must determine how related services will be delivered.

Can my child still participate in sports and other activities?

If your child is participating in an online program in their resident district they may access and participate in extracurricular activities (e.g., sports, clubs). If they are participating full-time in a *nonresident* district program, they may continue to offer access to extracurricular activities in their resident district. Ask your resident district for their policy for further clarification.

Other resources:

- OSPI's [Digital Learning Department](http://digitallearning.k12.wa.us/) (<http://digitallearning.k12.wa.us/>) and their guides to [accessing individual online courses](http://digitallearning.k12.wa.us/options/courseguide.php) (<http://digitallearning.k12.wa.us/options/courseguide.php>) and [enrolling in an online school program](http://digitallearning.k12.wa.us/options/programguide.php) (<http://digitallearning.k12.wa.us/options/programguide.php>).
- [OSPI's Learning By Choice Booklet](http://www.k12.wa.us/GeneralInfo/EnrollmentOptions.aspx) (<http://www.k12.wa.us/GeneralInfo/EnrollmentOptions.aspx>). Also available in [Spanish](#).

Enrollment tips:

Speak with enrollment administrators of the online school program to verify that new students are being accepted.

Check with your school **before** you enroll in an online course if you are hoping to transfer credit(s).

If your transfer request is denied (or you do not hear back in 45 days) you may appeal the decision to OSPI.