

Student Attendance and Virtual/Distance/Remote Learning

FAQ

June 26, 2020

The questions below have been compiled to assist school districts in determining the effects of virtual/distance/remote learning on student attendance requirements and Full Time Equivalent (FTE) reporting and funding.

1. How will student attendance requirements be affected by the possibility of virtual/distance/remote or hybrid instructional models considered by districts?

In the 2020-2021 school year, districts and schools will still be required to take student attendance and report student attendance data to the Georgia Department of Education. The recording of student attendance should not be impacted by the district's determination of a traditional, virtual/distance/remote, or hybrid instructional model. Students are considered to be in attendance when participating in active instruction and/or educational services from a school or district. This active instruction may occur in-person or through virtual/distance/remote learning.

Examples of how some virtual schools collect attendance for full or hybrid virtual instruction/distance/remote learning include (but are not limited to):

- Track student duration in online course and time spent in the online classroom/platform
- Track student log-in into online platform
- Track student attendance during live virtual instruction
- Track student submission of assignments and student/teacher interactions

2. How will FTE be affected by virtual or hybrid instructional models considered by districts?

FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) reporting refers to the state funding mechanism based on the student enrollment and the educational services local school districts provide for students. Students are considered to be enrolled within a school district when they have formal and current enrollment paperwork on file with the district and receive educational services from the district, regardless of whether those services are provided in-person or virtually/distanced/remotely. Districts considering virtual/distance/remote or hybrid instructional options for the 2020-2021 school year, in response to the impacts and effects of

COVID-19, should not experience a negative impact to their funding for offering virtual/distance/remote or hybrid instructional options . The normal and regular FTE reporting requirements remain applicable. For those schools that have chosen the distance/remote learning model, FTE reporting should continue to reflect the student’s regularly scheduled classes as of the FTE count day the same as if all students were still in a traditional school building.

FTE is earned for students who are present for at least one of the 10 days prior to the FTE count day. Please note that “present” refers to the student’s active participation in the educational program or service being provided. In other words, the student has attended class. This active participation can be recorded for students receiving instruction in-person or virtually/distanced/remotely. *(Please refer to attendance question above.)*

“Attended class” for virtual and/or distance learning students means that the student has been acknowledged through direct interaction between the student and the instructor at some time during the 10-day period preceding the FTE count day. This interaction can take several forms, but would be most commonly demonstrated by a communication such as an email or other digital message transmitted from the student to the instructor indicating that the student is both present and actively engaged in the instructional setting, which the instructor then acknowledges.

All providers of virtual and/or distance learning services shall maintain a record of this interaction to be considered demonstrable proof that the student for which QBE funding is received is in fact present and attending class during this 10-day period. This requirement shall apply equally to students in full-time virtual and/or distance learning settings, or in part-time (segment-based) settings. There is no distinction between traditional, virtual/distance/remote, or hybrid instructional model.

Be sure to refer to the [FTE Data Collection General Information](#) guidance for detailed instructions for accurate FTE reporting.