



## **Your connection to quality online high school courses!**

### **How can a district or open enrollment charter school participate in TxVSN?**

The TxVSN provides courses to districts and open enrollment charter schools. Schools interested in receiving courses through TxVSN must complete the TxVSN registration process. This process includes seven (7) steps:

1. Complete the TxVSN agreement
2. Activation of campus(es)
3. Uploading student data
4. Registering a Site Coordinator
5. Completion of a district or open enrollment charter school Needs Assessment.
6. Utilization of READI Secondary account
7. Designating a district or campus Financial Approver

### **What are the eligibility requirements for students to be able to participate in TxVSN?**

A student is eligible to enroll in a course provided by the TxVSN only if the student

1. is younger than 21 years of age on September 1 of the school year,
2. has not graduated from high school, **and**
3. is otherwise eligible to enroll in a public school in Texas.

***Special note:*** Student eligibility requirements for Summer 2010 courses

1. Student must meet eligibility requirements for enrollment in a Texas high school.
2. **Student must have been enrolled in a Texas high school during the 2009-2010 school year.**
3. Student must have met all course prerequisites and/or eligibility for dual credit courses.

### **What is the Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN)?**

During the 80th Texas Legislative Session, Senate Bill 1788 established a state virtual school network to provide online courses for Texas students. The legislation also set forth the operational, course evaluation, and professional development requirements. Region 10 Education Service Center, in collaboration with Harris County Department of Education, serves as TxVSN Central Operations to coordinate course registration and student enrollments, to ensure the eligibility of virtual school providers, provide an online catalog of approved courses, and to coordinate reporting requirements. Region 4 Education Service Center conducts the review of electronic courses to be offered in the TxVSN catalog. In addition, a cadre of professional development providers has been identified to train educators to deliver online instruction through the TxVSN.

The Texas Virtual School Network (TxVSN) first offered courses to students in Texas districts and open enrollment charter schools beginning January 2009. The inaugural course catalog offered courses for grades 9-12 that were

reviewed to ensure 100% alignment with the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills as well as the iNACOL National Standards of Quality for Online Courses. All courses offered through the TxVSN are provided by public school districts, open-enrollment charter schools, institutions of higher education, or education service centers. All high school courses are taught by an instructor that is Texas-certified in the course subject area and grade level that have completed a TxVSN approved professional development on effective online instruction.

The TxVSN provides courses to supplement the instructional programs of public school districts and open enrollment charter schools. Through regular review of student needs schools may determine that TxVSN online courses provide useful instructional options for some students. To participate in the TxVSN a district is required to complete an annual TxVSN agreement and provides designated "TxVSN site coordinators" to identify students with academic needs and learning styles appropriate for online learning. The district's TxVSN Site Coordinators register and approve all student course enrollments.

Recently the 81<sup>st</sup> Texas Legislature provided funding for electronic courses provided by the TxVSN in House Bill 3646. All funding is contingent upon successful course completion by the high school student.

### **Are students able to attend TxVSN as a full time student?**

TxVSN is intended to be supplemental in nature and not meant to replace other options that districts and open enrollment charter schools already have in place. Currently, students may take two courses per semester.

There are two groups of students specifically mentioned in SB 1788 and HB 3646 who are able to attend TxVSN full time if they meet certain specifications:

- (1) A student may enroll in one or more courses provided through the TxVSN or enroll full-time in courses provided through the network if the student
  - a. is a dependent of a member of the United States **military**,
  - b. was previously enrolled in a high school in the state of Texas,  
**and**
  - c. does **not** reside in the state as a result of military deployment or transfer.
- (2) A student in **substitute care** in Texas.

Full time enrollment for these students will also depend on what their academic needs are in comparison to what is offered in the TxVSN course catalog at the time, and also whether or not an online learning environment is the appropriate educational setting for the student.

### **How do students access courses offered through TxVSN?**

In order to access courses through TxVSN a student should speak with their high school counselor or designated TxVSN Site Coordinator. Only a Site Coordinator is able to enroll students to take courses through TxVSN.

### **Do districts have to participate in TxVSN?**

All Texas public school districts and open enrollment charter schools have been asked by the Commissioner of Education to complete the TxVSN registration process.

### **Are home schooled students eligible to take courses through TxVSN?**

Home schooled students may access TxVSN courses through their attendance zone school district. The school district will register the student and accept payment for the course(s). After registering the student and collecting payment, the student is not entitled to any right, privilege, activities, or services available to a student enrolled in a public school, other than the right to receive the appropriate unit of credit for completing the TxVSN course. Information on when home schooled students may begin to enroll in TxVSN courses may be located at [http://www.txvsn.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=IKKR8aMU\\_bY%3d&tabid=39](http://www.txvsn.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=IKKR8aMU_bY%3d&tabid=39).

### **Are private school students eligible to take courses through TxVSN?**

Private school students may access TxVSN courses through their attendance zone school district. The school district will register students and accept payment for the course(s). After registering the student and collecting payment, the student is not entitled to any right, privilege, activities, or services available to a student enrolled in a public school, other than the right to receive the appropriate unit of credit for completing the TxVSN course. Information on when private school students may begin to enroll in TxVSN courses may be located at [http://www.txvsn.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=IKKR8aMU\\_bY%3d&tabid=39](http://www.txvsn.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=IKKR8aMU_bY%3d&tabid=39).

### **What is the maximum number of courses a student is allowed to take through TxVSN in a semester?**

A student is able to take 2 semester courses per semester. For example, during the spring semester a student may take a Government course and an Economics course. A student could not take English 2 A&B and Biology A&B, as this would equal 4 semesters of coursework.

### **What grade levels are served by TxVSN?**

Currently grades 9 – 12 are served by TxVSN for students using allotment funds. Eighth grade students may take fee-based courses through TxVSN.

### **What types of courses are offered through TxVSN?**

TxVSN offers foundation and elective courses, as well as dual credit courses.

### **Describe the content in TxVSN courses.**

Several courses follow an accelerated format (9 weeks in length), and others mirror the traditional school year semester schedule. A few of the Providers have all students begin and end their courses on set dates, while other Providers allow students to join the course after it has already begun. This type of information about TxVSN courses can be found in the TxVSN course catalog in the 'View Details' section of each course.

### **What districts and open-enrollment charter schools are currently participating in TxVSN?**

A list of the districts and open-enrollment charter schools who have completed the TxVSN district registration process and may currently have students enrolled in TxVSN courses may be located at <http://www.txvsn.org/SchoolsDistricts/ParticipatingReceivingDistricts.aspx>.

### **How can I find out if my student is prepared to take an online course?**

All districts and open enrollment charter school that have completed the TxVSN registration process will be given access to an account with READI Secondary at no cost to the district. It is highly suggested that districts and open enrollment charter schools use READI Secondary to assess whether students have the knowledge, aptitude, and skills that have been shown to support student success in an online learning environment. Some of the areas that READI assesses include: on screen reading rate and recall, persistence, typing speed and accuracy, procrastination, availability of time, and use of technology to name just a few.

### **Online learning myth: Online courses are much easier than face to face courses.**

In fact, students have reported that their online learning experiences have generally been a little more difficult and have taken a little bit longer to complete when compared to face to face courses.

There are quite a few myths about online learning that have been shared by the student population. If a student is interested in taking an online course, they should visit with their Counselor or TxVSN Site Coordinator prior to enrolling in the course. This is an excellent way to get a more realistic perspective about online learning and to make sure that online learning is the appropriate educational setting for a student.

For more information about online learning myths, follow this link:

<http://www.inacol.org/research/docs/Ten%20Myths%20About%20Virtual%20Schools.pdf>.