FAQs for families interested in more information about 100% Virtual (Distance) Learning with Chattooga County Schools

The decision to learn "virtually" is a big step at any time in a student's educational journey. The FAQs provided is a guide that has been developed to assist you with understanding the benefits and challenges of virtual learning. In addition, it has been designed to help answer questions you may have about grading, attendance, support, and enrollment.

What is a Learning Management System (LMS)?

This is the technology platform where assignments, activities and classroom announcements will be published during "hybrid" and "electronic" learning models. Chattooga County Schools will use Google Classroom as their Learning Management System. Updates or changes to the LMS will be communicated to families via social media and news media outlets.

What is the difference in "Virtual", "Hybrid", & "E-learning"?

Virtual learning is 100% distance learning: away from the school campus, with instruction provided by certified teachers at Pearson Connexus.

Hybrid learning is approximately 50% in-person learning and 50% distance learning, with instruction provided by a Chattooga County certified teacher. Hybrid is one option the school system may operate under if our community experiences a substantial COVID19 outbreak. The Learning Management System will be Google Classroom under *hybrid* learning.

E-learning is any teaching and learning that occur through an electronic platform. Most Chattooga County Schools are considered E-learning environments because instruction is partly face-to-face and partly technology based with classroom assignments, projects, etc. posted onto a Learning Management System; Google Classroom.

How much time will be spent for online learning?

A virtual learner can expect to spend at least as much time in an online course as they would in a face-to-face course.

The notion that virtual courses are easier is not true. They are more convenient, but still require the same dedication and attention as a face-to-face course.

What are the benefits of virtual learning?

Virtual learning provides freedom, allowing students to choose when and where they will complete assignments and activities. With the exception being any scheduled chats with the instructor or as a group.

- Work from home or anywhere if you have a high-speed internet connection
- Learn at your own pace and study at your convenience

But students will have the same kinds of deadlines and structured responsibilities of a face-to-face class. Flexibility and responsibility will have to be balanced. Like a face-to-face course, online courses require

assignments be completed by due dates, your attendance (via logins to your course), involvement in online discussions, and sometimes group collaboration. Many students will enjoy this learning platform.

What are the challenges of virtual learning?

Virtual learning is not easier than traditional classroom learning. Self-motivation, discipline, and a strong support system at home are required to succeed in distance learning courses. For some, distance learning will offer a continuation of teaching and learning. For others, it will provide a solution to flexibility needs and family challenges.

A successful experience in distance learning requires a basic background with technology. It is strongly recommended that students have ready access to a computer or laptop with a high-speed Internet access, such as DSL or cable broadband. Virtual learning will require students to download and access course materials.

Virtual learning success depends on preparation, motivation, dedication, planning and a support system. If you are interested in registering for virtual learning, please take the "Readiness Questionnaire" (the last page of the FAQ document). The results will provide you with some helpful information about your readiness for a successful virtual learning experience.

What equipment and technology will I need?

Online learners will need a computer, internet access, and possibly a webcam and headphone for communication.

- **Computer:** Online Learners will need reliable access to a desktop or laptop computer that has adequate memory and processing capabilities for large file downloads, video players, and synchronous meeting applications.

- **Internet Access:** Online courses use the web to deliver instruction at a distance. So, to learn in an online course smoothly, you need a high-speed Internet connection. This is especially important to the online learning experience.

If I need help with something, is help available?

Yes, online learners have the same support as face-to-face learners. Technology support will be available to assist hardware issues with school-issued devices. The online learning platform support service will be able to assist with software issues.

How do I enroll for virtual learning?

Families will work with their home school to become enrolled for virtual learning.

How many courses will I register for during a semester?

K-2 students will take 2 courses: ELA/Reading and Math

3-8 students will take 4 courses: ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies

9-12 students will take courses required to meet graduation requirements; therefore, families must work closely with Mrs. Barbara Wallace, high school counselor, and the administrative team at Chattooga High School to ensure virtual courses selected meet the requirements.

What is the cost to learn virtually?

Currently there is no cost to families. Chattooga County Schools will pay for the courses:

K-2 English/Reading and Math

3-8 English/Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies

9-12 Courses required to meet graduation requirements; all students must work with Mrs. Barbara Wallce, guidance counselor for Chattooga High School, to ensure courses meet credit requirements towards a graduation plan.

What if my child has an IEP, 504, or is an ELL student?

Pearson Connexus will provide services through virtual learning. Each student will work with the Chattooga County School System Special Education Department or their home school to coordinate that services are being provided. All questions can be answered by contacting the Special Education Department, 706-822-9902

Will I still be considered a student with Chattooga County Schools?

Yes, you will remain a part of the Chattooga County Schools family. Your teaching and learning will occur off-campus, but your grades, transcripts, and credits will be maintained with the school system. In addition, your participation in extra-curricular, organizations/clubs, and athletics will continue with the school system.

How will student attendance be recorded for virtual learners?

Pearson Connexus will have their own attendance policy to receive credit for online courses. However, through our partnership with Pearson Connexus each local school administrative team has access to students' academic progress, attendance, and grades through the online learning platform. If at any time a student becomes truant, the Chattooga County School System Truancy Treatment Team will be notified.

Who do I contact if I have questions about grades, transcripts, or high school credits?

Contact the counselor of your "home" school. (For example: If you would attend Leroy Massey for face-to-face learning you will contact Leroy Massey School)

Will I be allowed to participate in athletics, extracurricular and/or organizations, and clubs if I choose to learn virtually?

Yes, you are still considered a student with Chattooga County School System and local athletic guidelines will be followed along with guidelines for school-sponsored events, organizations, and clubs. Student transportation will have to be provided by parents to all events. All GHSA guidelines will be followed, where applicable.

What if I decide virtual learning is not for me?

All students will be required to commit to virtual learning for one semester. At the end of a semester a student may elect to re-enter for face-to-face learning. To receive credit, a passing score must be reported from Pearson Connexus.

Open enrollment for Virtual Learning for each student will be July 23rd - 29th to ensure a virtual seat. Extended enrollment for virtual learning on a case-by-case basis will be considered July 30th – September 1st by contacting your school principal.

Readiness Questionnaire:

- 1. How confident do you feel working with a computer; not limited to downloading, installing and using new software, emailing, and using the Internet?
- 2. Do you have reliable access to a high-speed, internet-ready computer?
- 3. Does your (your parents) typical day allow adequate time to dedicate to virtual learning?
- 4. Will family or friends be available to help young learners during the school day when challenging situations arise?
- 5. Are you prepared to spend multiple hours learning "online" daily?
- 6. Do you have a method to keep track of deadlines?
- 8. In what type of environment do you feel you learn best?

A) An independent environment with self-taught learning?
If you are this student virtual learning will likely be a success for you.

B) Student-centered, where you are on your own, but help is available?
If you are this student virtual learning may have challenges at times, but likely will be a success for you.

C) Teacher-directed, where all material is explained in detail?
If you are this student virtual learning will present challenges and may not be a best option for you.