



## Houston Virtual Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Is there an option for my child to learn at home this coming school year?

A. The District is offering parents an option to apply for Houston Virtual for the 2021-2022 school year for students in grades 3 -12.

Q. When and how may parents apply for Houston Virtual?

A. The application will be available on the district website, [www.hcbe.net](http://www.hcbe.net), from May 6 to May 13, 2021.

Q. If a parent prefers for their child to attend school in person, must they also apply?

A. Current students will automatically be enrolled for in-person instruction; no action is necessary. If, however, the parent prefers virtual instruction, an application is required so the District is informed of this preference.

Q. What is Houston Virtual?

A. Houston Virtual is a learning platform to deliver online courses to our students. Elementary students in grades 3-5 will receive instruction from their teacher through Google Classroom, i-Ready and Zoom. Middle and high school students in grades 6-12 will receive instruction through the APEX Learning program, Google Classroom and Zoom. All students will have an assigned teacher.

Q. Are there any special requirements to participate in Houston Virtual?

A. To participate in Houston Virtual distance learning, students must:

- commit to virtual learning for the entire 2021-2022 school year, which ends May 25, 2022;
- have internet access at home;
- be available for instruction during regular school hours;
- log-in and participate in the class to be counted as present for the day;
- meet all academic and attendance requirements;
- take district and state-mandated standardized test in-person; and
- be enrolled or eligible for enrollment in the Houston County School District.

Q. What is Google Classroom?

A. Google Classroom is a digital learning platform, which teachers will use to interact with their students online. Teachers use this tool to create classes, provide instruction, distribute assignments, give tests, send feedback, and see everything in one place. Video tutorials on Google Classroom are available on the [eLearning Resources webpage](#).

Q. What is Apex?

A. [Apex Learning](#) is the software used by middle and high school virtual students. The virtual courses are aligned to state standards and supported by professionally qualified teachers who interact with students by posting assignments, grading assignments, and messaging to distribute information and answer questions. Courses are offered in math, science, language arts, social studies, career and technical education, world languages, and electives.

Q. How do students access the virtual platforms?

A. Teachers will contact their students through their school email and other communication tools. Elementary students will logon to the school's Single Sign On (SSO) Portal and access the virtual platform during the weekdays to receive instruction, complete, turn in or upload assignments, and receive feedback and grades. Middle and high students will access Apex through the district link. Teachers will respond through email, phone calls, texts, and other communication tools such as ClassDojo and Edmodo.

Q. Once a student begins Houston Virtual, will he/she be required to remain in virtual learning for a certain amount of time?

A. Yes, students will remain enrolled in virtual learning for the entire 2021-2022 school year, which ends May 25, 2022.

Q. Will virtual students have the ability to meet with their teachers for assistance after school hours?

A. The availability of teacher support after hours will be based on the teacher's individual schedule, just as it is for on-campus school. High school students participating in Houston Virtual will be able to receive face-to-face support at the Houston County Career Academy Virtual Learning Lab, Monday through Thursday, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 pm.

Q. Will teachers have the ability to review the student's course submissions?

A. Yes, teachers will use the digital learning platform to review student work and offer feedback.

Q. Will Houston Virtual students be provided textbooks?

A. Virtual students will not be given textbooks. All assignments and support resources will be online.

Q. What is the plan for students to learn virtually and in the classroom at the same pace?

A. Students who attend school and those learning virtually will follow the same curriculum and pacing guides. Just as lessons vary by teacher from classroom to classroom and school to school, one can expect variances in virtual learning since students work at different levels. In addition, there will be some variance in pacing by nature of the delivery model, with virtual students learning through digital platforms.

Q. Will Houston Virtual students be held to the same attendance policy as on campus students vs. being allowed to miss as much as they want and then "catching up" at the end?

A. Houston Virtual students will be expected to attend virtual classes throughout the semester.

Q. How will attendance be taken for students in Houston Virtual?

A. Attendance will be taken by students logging in to Google Classroom, attending scheduled Zoom sessions, and completing work through Apex.

Q. If we send our child to school, but during the year decide we prefer virtual learning, are we able to switch to online learning?

A. No, decisions are for the entire 2021-2022 school year.

Q. Why is a student who is enrolled in Houston Virtual not permitted to participate in campus activities?

A. School activities and extracurriculars are for students who attend school on campus.

Q. I have two children in elementary school I'd like to enroll in Houston Virtual. Will they have to be on the computer from 8:30-3:30 like normal school time?

A. Elementary students will not be required to be on the computer the entire school day. Teachers will provide schedules for daily Google Classroom video conferencing lessons, and students will be provided assignments to work on when they are not attending video conferences. Students will be expected to attend daily video conference lessons and complete assigned work by due dates.

Q. Are Apex courses setup to reflect only the subjects and classes that the middle and high school students should take?

A. Yes. Students will be assigned a virtual schedule based on their course needs.

Q. Will students be provided with a course schedule with times they should be working on a particular subject?

A. Students will be given a course schedule of times to meet with their teachers for lessons and support. Students will also work on assignments independently at other times.

Q. Will students be provided a course syllabus that reflects the percentage of the assignments and exams?

A. Students will receive information about assignments and grading expectations during the first week of school.

Q. What electives and CTAE courses are offered for middle school through Houston Virtual?

A. Middle school students are offered the following electives and CTAE courses:

- Health
- Physical Education
- Business & Computer Science
- Information Technology

Q. What electives are offered for high school through Houston Virtual?

A. High school students are offered the following electives:

- Health/Personal Fitness
- Spanish 1 and 2
- Music Appreciation
- Art appreciation
- College and Career Prep
- Principles of Health Science
- Principles of Accounting 1-2
- Legal Environment of Business
- Principles of Information Tech
- Personal Finance.

Q. Will any foreign languages be offered virtually?

A. Yes, high school students will be offered Spanish 1 and 2.

Q. What about Advanced Placement (AP) classes for Houston Virtual?

A. No, high school students will not be offered AP classes through Houston Virtual.

Q. Will families arriving after the application window ends May 13, 2021, be able to apply for Houston Virtual?

A. During the enrollment process at Central Registration, families will have the option of Houston Virtual.

Q. Will the Houston Virtual teachers work for the district?

A. Houston Virtual teachers are professionally qualified educators employed by the Houston County School District.

Q. For Houston Virtual, would the teacher be from a student's zoned school?

A. Virtual teachers will be assigned classes based on the enrollment for the district by grade level and/or course. Teachers may or may not be from a student's zoned school.

Q. How do I apply for Houston Virtual?

A. Please visit our district website, [www.hcbe.net](http://www.hcbe.net), between May 6 and 13, 2021, to complete an online form using the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. Parents may also complete an online application at Central Registration or their child's school between May 6 and 13, 2021.

### ***Services for Students with Disabilities***

Q. Will my student who was referred to special education be scheduled for their evaluation?

A. Yes, educational evaluations will be done.

Q. If a student is enrolled in Houston Virtual, will support be provided for students who need special education, ELL, IEP services, speech, gifted instruction, etc.?

A. Yes, students accepted into Houston Virtual will receive their support services.

### ***Dual Enrollment***

Q. May students dual enrolled in college courses choose the virtual learning option?

A. Dual enrollment students may participate in Houston Virtual for courses they would take at their zoned high school. For their college courses, they would need to follow the guidelines provided by the college.

### ***Gifted and Talented Education (GTE)***

Q. Will students receive gifted services whether they are in class or virtual learning?

A. Our gifted eligible students will receive their gifted curriculum through their assigned teachers. Lessons will be aligned with state gifted standards.

Q. Will the assigned virtual teacher for gifted students teach the same as the on-campus teacher for all the gifted classes?

A. Gifted students will be taught the gifted curriculum through their assigned teachers. Lessons will be aligned with state gifted standards.

Q. How would the curriculum be designed for elementary and middle school gifted students?

A. Elementary gifted students will be assigned lessons based on state standards, gifted standards, and differentiation strategies. Middle school gifted students will be assigned lessons using the Apex digital learning program with differentiated lessons and enrichment components.

Q. What honors courses are offered through Houston Virtual?

A. The following honors courses are offered to our high school students:

- 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Literature
- 10<sup>th</sup> Grade Literature
- American Literature
- British Literature
- Biology
- Chemistry
- Physics
- Algebra I
- Geometry
- Algebra II
- World History
- U.S. History
- U.S. Government and Politics.

Q. If my child participates in Houston Virtual, may he/she participate in extracurriculars or on-campus activities?

A. School activities and extracurriculars are for students who physically attend school. Houston Virtual students will not be allowed to participate in school activities.

### ***Testing***

Q. Will virtual and on-campus students take the same state-mandated tests?

A. Yes, all students will be expected to take any state-mandated assessments, whether a virtual or on-campus student.

Q. How will students take the state-mandated tests?

A. District and state-mandated standardized tests will be taken in person.

### ***Grades Pre-K - 2***

Q. Is Houston Virtual available for students in grades Pre-K - 2? If not, is there another online option?

A. Our district's only option for students in grades Pre-K - 2 is in-person instruction at school. Parents who need Pre-K may want to check with other community organizations that offer Pre-K, to see if any are offering Pre-K online. Parents of students in grades K - 2 may want to consider [Georgia Cyber Academy](#).

## ***Communication***

Q. What communication tools will teachers use to stay in touch with students and parents?

A. Email and phone calls will be the most common forms of communication.

Q. How will we have parent-teacher conferences?

A. Parent-teacher conferences may be scheduled virtually using Google Meets or may be held by phone.

Q. How will parents access the most current information?

A. Visit the school and district websites for the most current information.

## ***Updating Parent Contact Information***

Q. If I'm not receiving the automated calls from the district, how do I update my contact information to receive calls in the future?

A. Please update your contact information in Infinite Campus (IC), following the directions on the [IC webpage](#). You must first have an account to access your student's record in the parent portal. If you need an account, directions are also provided for the first-time users.

IC is also used to register for Houston Virtual, so before registering your child for distance learning, please update your email address and phone numbers to include cell, work, and any other numbers. It is very important to verify your information to ensure that you receive announcements pertaining to Distance Learning.

## ***More Information and Support***

Q. Where can I find more information?

A. Please visit the Houston Virtual website at [www.houstonvirtual.net](http://www.houstonvirtual.net). One may also call the Houston Virtual helpline at 478-988-6145 or submit a question through the website at <https://www.houstonvirtual.net/contact.html>.