

EASTERN SHORE OF MARYLAND EDUCATIONAL CONSORTIUM
BLENDED VIRTUAL PROGRAM

Student Handbook
2022-2023



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BLENDED VIRTUAL PROGRAM

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the ESMEC Blended Virtual Program.....	3
Definitions	3
School of Record.....	3
Synchronous Instruction.....	3
Asynchronous Instruction	3
General Program Information.....	3
Enrollment	3
Orientation	4
School Calendar.....	4
Attendance.....	4
<i>Internet Connectivity-Related Absences</i>	4
Program Policies.....	5
Recording of Synchronous Classes	6
Academic Integrity	6
Academic Information	6
Grading	6
Assessments	7
Time Requirements	7
Student Service Learning Requirements	7
Progress Reporting	8
Supporting Special Populations	8
Additional Academic Support and Tutoring	8
Local School Support.....	8
Extracurricular Programs	8
Food Service.....	8
School Counseling.....	8
Technology Support	8
Local School Requirements.....	9
Schedules	10
Middle School Schedule (Grades 6-8)	10
High School Schedule (Grades 9-12).....	10
Advisory.....	10
Sample Schedules	10
Course Offerings by District.....	11
ESMEC BVP County Contacts	11

ABOUT THE ESMEC BLENDED VIRTUAL PROGRAM

The Blended Virtual Program is a collaboration with the Eastern Shore of Maryland Educational Consortium (ESMEC) to provide a blended virtual learning option for public school students in grades 6-12 living on Maryland's Eastern Shore. Participating counties include Caroline, Dorchester, Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico, and Worcester. Students in Cecil and Kent counties should contact their district for information on their virtual learning options. For more information on the ESMEC BVP, please visit www.easternshorevirtual.org.

Note: The information in this handbook may be subject to change in order to comply with any local or state requirements. It will be updated when any changes are made.

DEFINITIONS

School of Record

A student taking courses through the ESMEC BVP will be identified as a student of record for the school serving the attendance area that is inclusive of the student's physical address.

Synchronous Instruction

Remote learning that happens in real time with the interaction between the teacher and students and occurs in a virtual classroom setting.

Asynchronous Instruction

Independent learning time that happens apart from synchronous learning.

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Enrollment

The process to enroll in the ESMEC Blended Virtual Program (BVP) is as follows:

1. Students apply online at www.easternshorevirtual.org
2. Application Window: May 16 – June 5, 2022
3. The BVP Coordinator will direct students who apply to the local school system to verify registration and determine eligibility.
4. If the student is accepted to participate in the program, school counselors meet with students to review learning needs and select courses.
5. School Counselors complete the online course selection form by July 15th.
6. For the 2022-23 school year, student schedules will be sent to the school counselor and the student after August 15, 2022.
7. Student schedules are entered into the local school system's SIS by the school counselor.

Orientation

For the 2022-23 school year, participating BVP students and their families must attend a mandatory program orientation. These dates and times will be communicated to the accepted students and families by email.

School Calendar

Students participating in the ESMEC BVP program must agree to follow the [BVP Calendar](#), which may not match the local school system calendar. Due to the virtual nature of this program, inclement weather (snow, fog, etc.) or other local school closings, delays, or early dismissals will not apply to this program.

If the school district is closed but the BVP is in session on a given day, the student will be marked absent if they do not attend classes on that day.

Attendance

As applied to virtual learning, regular attendance and engagement in both synchronous and asynchronous instructional time is required. For synchronous instruction, students must log in to all live sessions (via Zoom) with their **camera on**. The student should be visible and engaged during instruction. Regular attendance is required to remain in the ESMEC BVP.

Each child who resides in Maryland and is five years old or older, and under 18 years old, shall attend a public school regularly during the entire school year, except as otherwise provided in Annotated Code of Maryland, Education article §7-103.

Days attending and absent are reported to the MSDE to the nearest half-day. Days attending and absent are reported as 1.0 for a full day of attendance, 0.5 for a half day of attendance, or 0.0 for a day absent. Local school systems have the option of recording and maintaining attendance and absences in smaller increments, but not in larger increments.

For more information on local attendance policies, including submitting a note to excuse your student from school, please contact your school of record.

Internet Connectivity-Related Absences

We recognize that there may be instances when internet connectivity may be unavailable due to circumstances outside of the student's control. In these instances, the students should make every effort to connect to their classes. A parent or guardian must contact the school and BVP teacher to inform them of the issue.

During live sessions, there is a phone number that students should keep accessible offline so that they can call in and listen to their class, even if they cannot log onto the computer or internet that day. They must notify the teacher that they are there so that they are not marked absent.

Note: Unstable internet and/or frequent outages that prevent a student from attending their BVP Classes may necessitate the student's switch back to in-person learning. Contact your local school system with any technology related questions or issues.

Program Policies

By participating in the ESMEC Blended Virtual Program, students and families must understand and agree to the following policies:

1. The student must be enrolled in a local public school in a school district participating in the BVP. The student may not be enrolled in another public school, a non-public school, or private school at the same time while participating in the BVP.
2. The student's school records will be shared with employees of the BVP as needed.
3. Families will ensure that the student will have reliable and consistent internet daily.
4. The local school district may require the student to return to in-person learning at any point due to poor attendance, poor grades, discipline problems, or other reason determined by the local school system.
5. Students are expected to leave their camera on during all synchronous instruction time unless the teacher asks the student to turn it off.
6. Participating students will follow the [BVP Calendar](#) and not the local school system's calendar.
7. Local school systems may have additional policies and procedures that must be followed to participate in this program.

BVP Virtual Student Practices

All students deserve a comfortable and safe space to learn and work. We ask families and students to ensure that:

- ✓ Students have access to reliable, high-speed internet during school hours
- ✓ Students are seated at a desk or table – beds and couches are not appropriate
- ✓ Students' cameras will remain on during ALL synchronous instruction (unless otherwise stated by the teacher)
- ✓ Students are dressed appropriately and meet in-person school dress codes. A solid color shirt is best. Pajamas and clothing that is revealing or has inappropriate pictures/slogans will not be permitted. If a teacher requests a student to turn off their camera for inappropriate attire, they may not be considered present for class that day.
- ✓ The student's background is a solid wall or is not distracting to other students in the class. This includes:
 - Television, music, videogames, and cell phones are off in the same room as learning and cannot be heard by the student during synchronous instruction
 - No posters, pictures, or other items in the background that may be considered distracting to other learners
 - Only the student should be on screen during class time – no other people should be visible in the background
- ✓ For students' physical and mental health, in between synchronous instruction time, students should eat healthy meals or snacks, use the restroom, take frequent breaks from screens (including TV, cell phone, and computer screens), and participate in light physical activity such as walks, yoga, or stretching.

Recording of Synchronous Classes

Synchronous class sessions will be recorded to be shared with students in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). These recordings will be made available at student request and will (1) allow absent students to view the lesson in its entirety and (2) provide instructional support to students needing to revisit the lesson for additional clarification or review of a topic.

These recordings:

- Will only be available to staff and students enrolled in that course at the time of recording.
- Will only be accessible through the secure Apex Learning platform and will not be released publicly through YouTube or any other public media sharing platform.
- Will be password protected so that students must obtain a password to view the session from their teachers.
- Will be deleted from the system within two weeks of the recording date and will not be maintained as educational records.

Please visit <https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/faq/faqs-photos-and-videos-under-ferpa> for more information of the use of video under FERPA.

ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Academic Integrity

Students will complete all assignments, projects, and tests without the assistance of another person or resource, unless permitted by the teacher. All work will be of their own origin and when not, students will cite the sources used. Failure to demonstrate academic integrity may result in removal from the BVP at the discretion of the local school system.

Grading

A letter grade will be given for all courses in which a student is enrolled. Grading will reflect the level of achievement of a student. Grades will be posted on a continuous grading system until the end of the semester or course, whichever ends first. Students will be given multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning in each quarter.

Marking period grades will be determined as follows:

A (90-100%) – Outstanding level of achievement

B (80-89%) – High level of achievement

C (70-79%) – Satisfactory level of achievement

D (60-69%) – Low level of achievement

E (59% or lower) – Failure (no credit awarded for high school credit bearing courses)

Percent scores are rounded to the nearest whole number. Therefore, if the number behind the decimal point is less than 5, the score is rounded down to the next whole number and if the number behind the decimal point is 5 or more, the score is rounded up to the next whole number. (Example 1: 89.49% rounds to 89; Example 2: 89.50% rounds to 90)

The local school system will recognize and accept all credits a student earned toward graduation in the BVP in accordance with COMAR and school policy and procedures. High school courses offered in middle school will appear on high school transcripts.

Assessments

The Federal and State accountability system requires all students in grades 3-8 to participate in an assessment for **English and Mathematics**. In addition, students also take an assessment in **science** and **social studies** during their 8th grade year.

Students enrolled in **Algebra I, English 10, American Government, and Biology** are required to participate in state mandated end of course assessments.

Students must meet the assessment requirements to earn a Maryland High School Diploma. These assessments ensure that graduates have mastered the basic skills needed to succeed after high school.

Students participating in the BVP will be required to attend school in-person for all required state assessments. Lack of participation in State testing may result in removal from the BVP.

Please discuss these requirements with your local school counselor.

Time Requirements

Students in the BVP will receive a minimum of 40% of their instruction in a live, synchronous format. The remainder will be through asynchronous lessons and activities. Students should be spending approximately 90 minutes per day per course on work for semester courses or 50-60 minutes per day per course on work for yearlong courses. Contact your local school for more information.

Student Service Learning Requirements

The Maryland State Board of Education stipulates that all students in Maryland public schools must complete student service requirements to earn a high school diploma. Most students complete the service requirement at the middle school level. Those students who do not, or who transfer into MD public schools from out-of-state or nonpublic schools, will be required to complete service learning.

See your local school counselor for more information on how to fulfill these requirements.

Progress Reporting

Families will receive an email with their student's course progress each week.

Weekly progress reports will also be sent to the school counselor, school administrator, and local county representative.

Supporting Special Populations

The BVP may be an appropriate program for students with an IEP, 504 plan, or ELL plan. The IEP or 504 team from the student's home school will meet to determine if appropriate services available through the BVP can be implemented meet the student's goals and objectives. If accepted, these students will receive support from a local certified special education teacher in addition to instruction from their core academic area teachers. Local special education teachers will have access to the course material in advance of student access so that appropriate accommodations or modifications can be made. English and math teachers will meet with the IEP team as needed to support student success.

Additional Academic Support and Tutoring

Students participating in the BVP will have access to live tutors from 8 am – 8 pm EST Monday through Friday.

LOCAL SCHOOL SUPPORT

Extracurricular Programs

Students participating in the ESMEC BVP are eligible to participate in certain extracurricular clubs, athletics, or other programs offered by the local school of record. Please contact your local school for more information.

Food Service

Any BVP students who qualify for the Free and Reduced Priced Meal Program are still eligible for this service. Please contact your school of record to arrange for food distribution.

School Counseling

Students participating in the BVP will have a Student Success Coordinator they will meet with one-on-one weekly. However, students or parents may also contact their local school for any additional counseling needs. Local school counselors will assist with scheduling to ensure students meet all graduation requirements.

Technology Support

Students' local school should provide all students with the necessary technology to participate in the BVP. If you have issues with your technology (computer, webcam, microphone, etc.) during the year, please contact your local school's Technology Help Desk for support.

Local School Requirements

In addition to following the ESMEC BVP policies and procedures, participating students and families must also agree to follow district policies and procedures. Please contact your local school or district coordinator for more information.

SCHEDULES

Middle School Schedule (Grades 6-8)

All core classes – Math, English, Social Studies, and Science – will be year-long. Students will complete one elective course each quarter.

The school day will run from 9:00 am – 3:40 pm. Students must be available to attend their synchronous classes during this time.

Middle school students may enroll in high school credit courses as approved by the local school.

High School Schedule (Grades 9-12)

All high school one-credit courses are taught on a semester block except for AP. Half credit courses are still for the entire semester, but they will meet for half of the time. AP courses are year-long to adequately prepare students for the AP exams in May.

The school day will run from 8:25 am – 2:45 pm. Students must be available to attend their synchronous classes during this time.

Elective courses may be limited by enrollment.

Advisory

All BVP students will be scheduled to meet with their Student Success Coordinator (SSC) for a minimum of 20 minutes per week. This will occur during the school day. These meetings are required and are very important for the student and the school.

During this time, the SSC will build a relationship with the student. They will support students academically, check in on their social/emotional wellbeing, and assist students as needed with time management, organizational skills, or other factors critical to student success.

Sample Schedules

Currently, ESMEC is awaiting final requirements from the Maryland State Department of Education. Once we have received this information, sample schedules will be posted on our website.

COURSE OFFERINGS BY DISTRICT

At this time, districts are finalizing their course offerings for the 22-23 school year. When complete, course offerings will be made available through our website www.easternshorevirtual.org/courses.

ESMEC BVP COUNTY CONTACTS

The ESMEC Blended Virtual Program is a multi-district collaboration to provide virtual learning to students across the shore, however, the local school systems make the majority of the decisions that affect the program in your district including enrollment, course offerings, and other program details.

If you have any questions about the ESMEC BVP, please contact your local school or your BVP County Representative, which can be found on our website: www.easternshorevirtual.org/contact.