

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual School Terms of Certificate

1. Name:

TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School (TECCA)

2. Board of trustees:

Jean Kenney
Liz Pape
Kirby Salerno
Peter Sanchioni

The board of trustees must include a minimum of five members. Members of the boards of trustees of Commonwealth of Massachusetts virtual schools may not be paid for attendance at board meetings but may receive reimbursement of reasonable expenses.

Note: The board of trustees must submit for the Commissioner’s approval a list of additional proposed board members who possess the needed skills and expertise to oversee the school, with a minimum of 5 total board members, and identify the board chair, no later than March 14, 2014. Further, all appointed and proposed trustees members of the board of trustees who also hold or held a position, whether paid or unpaid, with The Education Cooperative or its member school districts must request a written opinion from the State Ethics Commission. Upon receipt, such individuals must provide a copy of that opinion to the Department. For appointed trustees, that opinion must be requested no later than the close of business on March 14, 2014.

3. Term of certificate:

July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2017

4. Annual per pupil tuition rate:

\$6,700, with \$75 per pupil retained by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for administration of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts virtual schools program. The tuition for individual courses must be agreed upon between the virtual school and the sending districts. The virtual school may offer full time and individual courses to districts that are members of The Education Cooperative at a discount of no more than 50% of what other districts or schools are charged. The cost of special education services shall be calculated in accordance with 603 CMR 10.07(3), and shall be added to the per pupil tuition amount unless such services are provided in kind by the sending district.

5. Maximum enrollment and grade levels:

Students must be 5 by August 31st of the year of enrollment.

School Year	Grades	Enrollment
2014-2015	K-12	1000
2015-2016	K-12	1500
2016-2017	K-12	2000

6. Enrollment region:

Students who reside in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

7. Mission, purpose, and specialized focus:

The mission of the TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School is to provide a rigorous, effective virtual K–12 public school that provides students with multiple pathways to learn, communicate, collaborate and successfully compete for advancement in our global society whether they pursue college or career.

The school will serve primarily students in selected target groups, as indicated in the enrollment preferences.

8. Educational program, instructional methodology, and services for students:

The TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School will offer a rigorous, effective curriculum aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and utilize unique technology tools to help every student succeed, while also encouraging social growth. The school will use the following instructional methods:

- **Personalized learning plans** to tailor curriculum and instruction;
- **Learning Coach** (parent/guardian) who works in person with the student, monitors progress, and communicates with the teacher;
- **Computer and Internet connection** to enable learning anytime, anywhere;
- **Education management system** that provides access to the curriculum, schedules, and assignments; stores student data; and monitors student progress;
- **Real-time web conferences** with individual or groups of students using telephone, video, chat, electronic whiteboard, and shared web surfing;
- **Teacher contact** via telephone, email, or live web conference at least once every two weeks;
- **Asynchronous interactive tutorials** that employ graphics, audio and video;
- **Online and offline assessments** including ongoing informal assessments, telephone based curriculum assessments, and portfolio assignments;
- **Multi-tiered intervention approach** to provide targeted support for students who need it;

- **Threaded discussions** (at the high school level) to provide opportunities for collaboration and interaction; and
- **Online student orientation opportunities** such as videos and an online course to familiarize students with online learning.

The school will offer high school students a broad selection of courses, including diverse electives, to enable students to meet graduation requirements and prepare for college and a career. The school will offer mathematics, English language arts, science, history, foreign language, and arts courses, including Advanced Placement courses. All high school students will be offered courses sufficient to meet MassCore requirements, and the school's graduation requirement will meet or exceed Massachusetts graduation requirements. Students will also be provided with internship opportunities.

To assure students are fully engaged in learning, teachers will communicate regularly with parents/guardians via live synchronous sessions, email, and telephone conferences. Communications will occur as needed and at least once every two weeks or more with students, depending on the needs of the student.

The school will provide opportunities for students to develop socially including but not limited to:

- regular field trips and outings facilitated by school staff and parent volunteers;
- back-to-school and end-of-the-year events such as picnics or other activities like bowling leagues;
- clubs and activities through which students explore interests beyond the classroom;
- message boards to communicate with teachers, other students, and families; and
- school newsletters.

The school will offer Learning Academies in the following areas: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM); Arts; and Languages. These academies will offer at least four specialized courses. The STEM Academy will offer project-based learning, a variety of learning activities, personalized internships, early college learning experiences and professional development for instructors.

Note: Programs for special education and programs for English language learners are required by law; see condition to establish programs prior to opening and operate consistent with federal and state law. Additionally, no later than August 1, 2014, the school must submit annual goals that are specific and measurable for student achievement and college and career readiness including, but not limited to, the Department's Progress and Performance Index (PPI). Lastly, the school must complete alignment of its curriculum to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks no later than September 1, 2015.

9. Governance and by laws:

The board of trustees of the TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School will submit updated proposed bylaws for the Department's approval in accordance with the condition imposed on the school's certificate.

Note: No later than March 14, 2014, the school's board of trustees must submit bylaws to the Department for review and approval.

10. Proposed school year:

Late August or early September through June

11. Enrollment policy and preferences:

The TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School will provide an enrollment preference to:

1. Siblings of students currently attending the virtual school;
2. Students who reside in the districts that are members of The Education Cooperative;
3. Students with disabilities;
4. Students with medical needs requiring a home or hospital setting;
5. Students who have been expelled;
6. Students in institutionalized settings;
7. Students who are over-age for their grade;
8. Students who have or are at risk of dropping out;
9. Students who are pregnant or who have a child;
10. Students who feel bullied or who are out of school due to other safety concerns;
11. Students with unusual needs requiring a flexible schedule;
12. Students who seek academic work not available in their school;
13. Students in rural communities; and
14. Students who are gifted and talented.

If more applicants are received than the commonwealth virtual school can admit within its enrollment limit, the TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School will admit students with an enrollment preference in the order of priority listed above and then will conduct an admissions lottery using an impartial lottery process that is consistent with state guidelines and regulations. Students who do not receive an offer of admission will have their names placed in a wait pool.

Note: No later than April 1, 2014, the school will submit to the Department a draft enrollment policy, procedure, and application for review and approval. The school must receive the Department's approval prior to admitting any students.

12. The identity of third party software or curriculum vendor partnerships:

Educational courses and teaching services, including management software, learning materials, and technical support services will be provided by Connections Academy. Other operational services may be provided by The Education Cooperative.

13. Proposed contract with management/operational organization, including payments:

The board of trustees of the TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School will submit for the Department's approval a proposed contract in accordance with the condition imposed on the commonwealth virtual school's certificate.

Note: No later than April 1, 2014, the school's board of trustees will submit to the Department a draft contract for review and approval.

14. Demonstration of capacity to support and store all critical data in compliance with state and federal law:

The TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School will contract with Connections Academy, using its Connexus® Education Management System, for services to support and to store all critical data in compliance with state and federal law.

15. Adherence to assurances in the RFP:

The TEC Connections Academy Commonwealth Virtual School will adhere to all assurances agreed to on pages 19-20 of the Application Process and Request for Proposals for Commonwealth of Massachusetts Virtual Schools (RFP) for schools opening in 2014-2015. This includes, but is not limited to, compliance with any regulations governing Commonwealth of Massachusetts virtual schools.