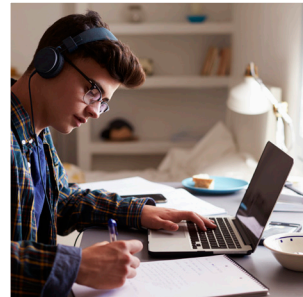
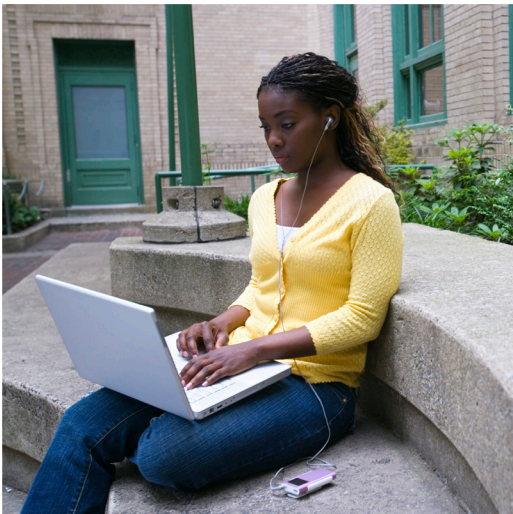


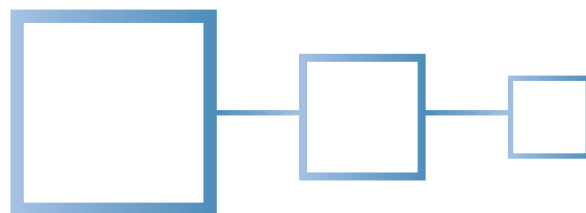
Virtual Learning

# BRIEFING REPORT

NOVEMBER 2017



Arlington  
Public  
Schools



# PROGRAM PROFILE

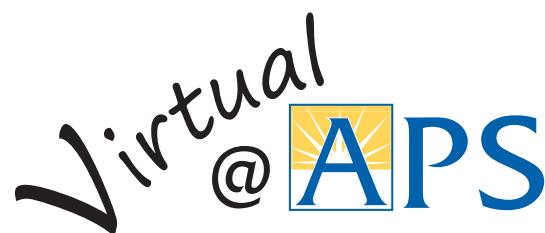
The Department of Teaching and Learning (DTL), in accordance with APS School Board Policy 20-3.200–Instructional Delivery Options, awards high school credit for a variety of pre-approved courses taken outside of the traditional face-to-face environment. These virtual learning opportunities meet the varied needs of all Arlington Public Schools students and their families. Non-traditional courses may be offered in a distance-learning, blended, or fully online format.

## DEFINITIONS

- **Distance Learning** is specifically designed to be carried out remotely using electronic communication. Students view live lessons and work synchronously to complete instructional activities.
- **Blended Learning** is a program in which a student learns in part through online learning with some element of student control over time, place, path, and/or pace, and in part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home.
- **Online Learning** is education in which content and instruction is delivered exclusively via the internet. Some online learning involves an online teacher—a real person who interacts with students, reviews assignments, and imparts instruction entirely over the internet. Online learning may be synchronous or asynchronous (communication separated by time, such as email or online discussion forums).

## MAJOR SERVICES PROVIDED

- Provide blended learning courses in the area of World Languages to serve students in all APS schools and programs.
- Design and deliver online courses through the Virtual@APS program.
- Manage the Virtual@APS site in the student information system.
- Review VDOE approved online course offerings to ensure course quality and alignment with APS curriculum.

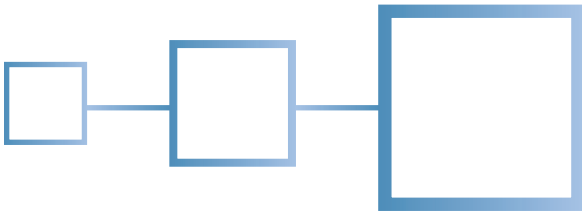


- Review and approve/deny virtual course requests from APS counselors on behalf of students and their families.
- Enroll students in VDOE approved courses provided by Virtual Virginia or VDOE approved Multidivision Online Providers (MOPs).

## ENROLLMENT PROCESS

In order to enroll in a virtual course, students begin the process through a conversation with their school counselor. The counselor provides guidance to the student and their family regarding the appropriateness of a virtual course for meeting diploma requirements, as well as the appropriateness of a virtual course to meet the student's academic needs. Once a decision has been reached to pursue a virtual option, the counselor and student devise a plan for how the virtual course will be completed (during the school day, independently, with support, etc.) and submit a request to the Director of Secondary Education via an online form.

Once received, the request is reviewed to determine whether there is a VDOE and APS approved provider for the requested course and who will be responsible for payment for the course. No tuition is charged for Virtual@APS or Virtual Virginia courses. APS families are required to pay tuition for a course that is provided by a Multidivision Online Provider (MOP) when the



course is in addition to a full schedule or the student and their family elects to take a course online rather than during the school day in a traditional classroom setting. Exceptions are made for students requesting virtual courses for documented medical reasons or those outlined in an IEP or 504 plan. Families are also responsible for tuition expenses for all virtual courses during the summer session regardless of the provider. Appeals of responsibility for payment decisions can be made to the Assistant Superintendent, Teaching & Learning.

After a request has been approved, a letter is sent to the family and the school which includes the approved course provider, the equivalent APS course and course code, the timeline for which the request is approved, enrollment information, responsibility for payment, and instructions for receiving the high school credit upon completion of the course.

### BRIGHT SPOTS

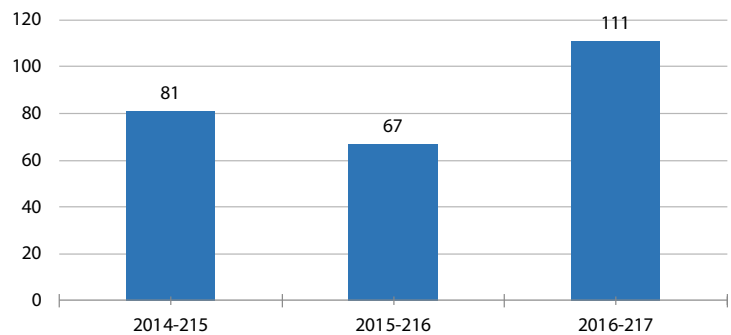
Beginning with the ninth grade class of 2013-14, all students seeking a high school diploma in the state of Virginia are required to complete one virtual course. In order to assist students in meeting this graduation requirement, Arlington Public Schools redesigned the curriculum for Economics & Personal Finance (EPF) into a blended format which includes virtual learning components. As completion of the EPF course is a standalone graduation requirement, this update to the curriculum ensures that every student completes the virtual course requirement while also meeting their EPF course requirement. The course is also offered as a fully online option which students can take during the school year as well as during Summer School.

Students enrolled in EPF are also provided the opportunity to sit for the WISE Financial Literacy Certification Test to earn a board-approved Career and Technical Education (CTE) Credential which is required for graduation with a Standard Diploma. In 2015-16, the statewide average pass rate on the WISE Financial Literacy Certification Test was 83.51%, as reported by VDOE, while APS students achieved a pass rate of 88.93%. The 2015-16 school year was the most recent statewide data available at the time of publication.

### DATA THAT PROVIDES INSIGHT

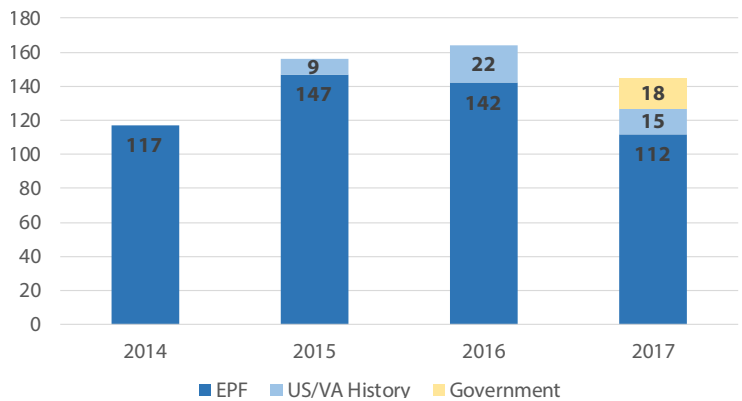
- In the 2016-17 school year, requests were approved for students to earn high school credit for thirty different course titles.
- Since the 2012-13 school year, APS students have totaled more than 1000 course enrollments in Virtual Virginia representing credit in 50 different course titles.
- APS has reduced expenditures on virtual courses, despite demand, through expanded use of the Virtual Virginia platform and development of APS online and blended learning courses. In 2015-16, expenditures for virtual courses were unusually high as world language instruction in Spanish and French at one school site was delivered via an online provider.

Approved Requests for Virtual Courses



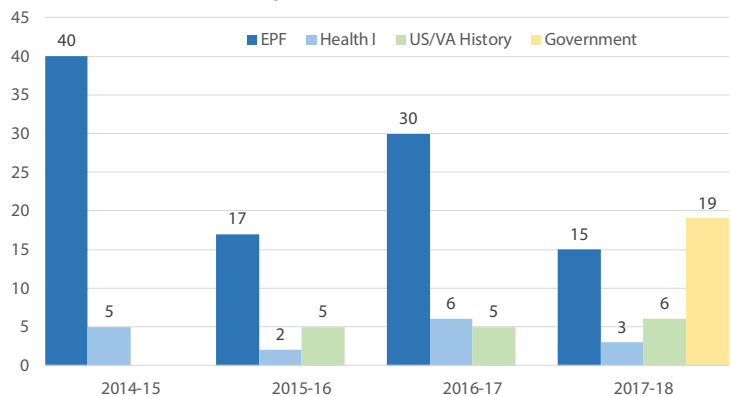
Requests do not include summer school virtual courses offered through the Summer School Catalog nor Virtual Virginia or Virtual@APS courses that are offered as part of the high school program of studies.

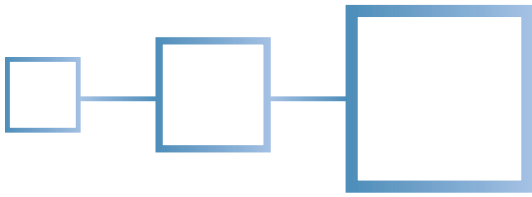
Virtual Course Enrollment (Summer New Work)



Since the summer of 2014, students have completed 582 online courses in EPF, US/VA History, and US/VA Government.

Course Enrollments in Virtual@APS Courses





# STUDENT PROFILE



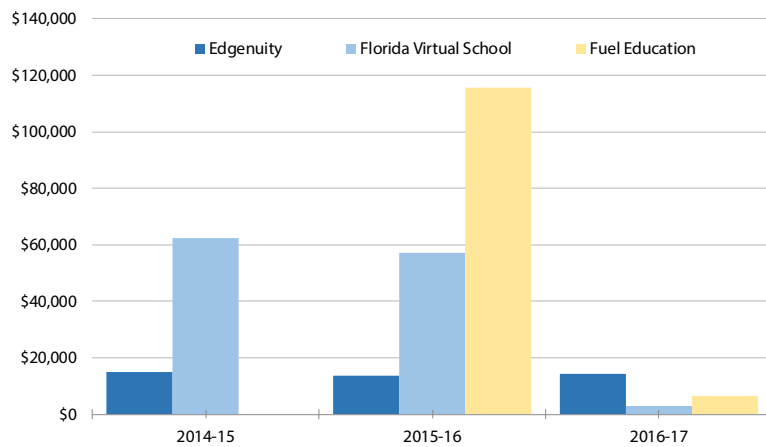
## CAROLINE EMANUEL

Washington-Lee, Class of 2019

Success in a virtual learning environment requires a specific skill set. It is essential that students and families, working in concert with teachers and academic counselors, carefully consider readiness for the structure of each virtual course prior to enrolling. Successful students are typically persistent, effective time managers, self-directed, mature, and have strong reading and writing skills.

Caroline Emanuel is a junior this year at Washington-Lee High School and is currently enrolled in United States & Virginia Government through the Virtual@APS program. Last year, as a sophomore, Caroline completed virtual courses in Economics & Personal Finance during the fall semester and United States & Virginia History in the spring semester. When considering her high school academic plan, Caroline realized that virtual courses offered her the opportunity to get ahead on some of her required courses for graduation, which provided greater scheduling flexibility for her more advanced coursework as an upperclassman. According to Caroline, online learning offered her a more personalized instructional experience that was focused on the big ideas in the course curriculum, with enough flexibility to explore resources of personal interest in greater depth, such as multimedia presentations and virtual field trips. Caroline also found her online classes empowering. She knew from the first day of each class the deliverables required for successful completion and then could plan how she wanted to manage the workload around other classes, extracurricular activities, and downtime.

APS Payments to Multidivision Online Providers



Course providers are carefully evaluated by APS curriculum supervisors and specialists to ensure that the course content meets our academic expectations. These providers include (but are not be limited to): Apex Learning, BYU Independent Study, Edgenuity, Edmentum, Florida Virtual School, Fuel Education.

## MOVING FORWARD

As the demand for virtual course offerings and flexible learning environments has increased, APS has taken proactive measures to continually provide for the academic needs and interests of our diverse community. In addition to accessing curriculum through third-party providers, APS, under the leadership of curriculum supervisors, has begun the process of developing our own virtual courses. Currently, APS delivers virtual courses developed by both the social studies and health and physical education departments. Additional courses will be created to meet these needs in all curricular areas.

APS recognizes that an increasing number of students and their families are interested in this instructional delivery method and that the Department of Teaching and Learning is responsible for ensuring that these students can access offerings to suit their interests. Virtual courses, in collaboration with traditional classroom settings, help prepare students for the opportunities and challenges of the global community. The Department of Teaching and Learning is eager to begin the deliberate and collaborative process of identifying needs and developing courses to effectively engage and challenge all students. Relevant virtual learning experiences should span the curricular spectrum. This is a valuable professional opportunity that can energize our educators to be creative and forward-thinking.