

## **Virtual School To Go Online in Massachusetts** by Dian Schaffhauser 03/03/14

Massachusetts will get its second virtual school when the [TEC Connections Academy \(TECCA\) Commonwealth Virtual School](#) opens in fall 2014. TECCA is sponsored by [The Education Cooperative](#) (TEC), which delivers services such as cooperative purchasing and professional development to state schools and districts.

The new public school was approved in February by the state's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. It will be operated by [Connections Academy](#), which already delivers courses to students in 24 other states.

K-12 students will take classes online working with educators who have been certified to teach in the state. They'll follow personalized daily lesson plans through Connexus, the company's education management system. Connexus provides functions to conduct lessons in real-time, track student progress, review and grade online assignments and assessments, and communicate with students and their families.

Student engagement in the home is expected to be monitored by a parent or another adult, called a "learning coach" in Connections Academy vernacular.

Students taking the virtual courses will be expected to take the same state assessments given to students at traditional schools.

The curriculum is aligned to the state's education frameworks as well as the Common Core standards. According to Connections Academy, the course catalog offers "hundreds" of classes, including 20 advanced placement courses, classes in multiple foreign languages, music and career technical education.

Currently, TECCA is seeking a location for a teaching and learning center and will be hiring a principal, teachers and administrators who will be based in Massachusetts. The school may enroll up to 2,000 students in grades K-12 through 2016-2017, the year it expects to reach full capacity.

"TECCA is another example of our state's commitment to the advancement of education. Massachusetts students can now choose an approach to learning that best meets their needs," said Elizabeth McGonagle, TEC's executive director. "And thanks to technology, virtual schools are really expanding what is possible."

TECCA is the second online school approved in the state. The first one, [Massachusetts Virtual Academy at Greenfield Commonwealth Virtual School](#), opened in 2013.

## About the Author

*Dian Schaffhauser is a writer who covers technology and business for a number of publications. Contact her at [dian@dischaffhauser.com](mailto:dian@dischaffhauser.com).*