

Craven County Schools
Craven Virtual Academy
Consolidation/Closure Summary

Presented to the Craven County Board of Education by
Dr. Matthew Cheeseman, Superintendent

Background

Craven Virtual Academy (CVA), located at 2000 MLK, Jr. Blvd. in New Bern, serves students in sixth grade through twelfth grade. Craven Virtual Academy was established for the 2021-2022 school year as an alternative learning environment to the traditional middle school and high school concept. Students are assigned to Craven Virtual Academy as provided in Board Policy 4150, School Assignment, attached as Exhibit A.

Craven Virtual Academy is recommended for closure as part of a potential future budget reduction, with students to be reassigned to their base school. Before closing Craven Virtual Academy, a thorough study must be completed per North Carolina General Statute § 115C-72, attached as Exhibit B. Statutory factors are addressed in this study.

Welfare of Students to be Affected by Proposed Closing

Enrollment Trends

CVA	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026
Actual ADM (PMR 7)	163 3rd - 12th	118 3rd - 12th	117 4th - 12th	121 5th - 12th	109 6th - 12th

Craven Virtual Academy currently serves two (2) out of district students, six (6) students from Grover C. Middle School, six (6) students from Havelock Middle School, four (4) students from H.J. MacDonald Middle School, two (2) students from Tucker Creek Middle School, six (6) students from West Craven Middle School, twenty three (23) students from Havelock High School, forty five (45) students from New Bern High School, and fifteen (15) students from West Craven High School. A total of thirteen (13) students (seniors) would be subtracted from the one hundred nine (109) students for the 2026-2027 school year. As part of the recommended closure of Craven Virtual Academy, students would be return to their traditional school based on address.

Geographic Conditions

Craven Virtual Academy does not require transportation. Students returning to their base traditional school would have the option to utilize the transportation services provided by Craven County Schools.

Anticipated Decrease in District Student Enrollment

In February 2026, a district enrollment analysis was conducted by ITRE out of Raleigh, North Carolina. The study projected Craven County Schools average daily membership to decrease to 10,949 students by school year 2035-2036. This represents a projected decrease in enrollment of 600 students from 2025-2026.

Change in State-Funded PRC 001 Allotments

There would be no change to state-funded PRC 001 because there are no positions assigned to this PRC.

Local Funding Requests

The Craven County Commissioners have been generous in providing local funding for Craven County Schools over the years, which the Board of Education (Board) appreciates. The closing of Craven Virtual Academy would have a minor impact on local funding. Currently, the only position funded locally is the school bookkeeper.

Cost of Renovating School Facility

There are currently no structural renovations required for Craven Virtual Academy, as it serves as a remote learning option for students. Craven Virtual Academy's "office" or home base for the principal and bookkeeper is on the campus of Grover C. Middle School.

Inconvenience or Hardship

If Craven Virtual Academy closes, it is expected to result not only in cost savings for Craven County Schools but also expected to directly benefit the affected students. Overall, students are expected to benefit academically and be afforded greater opportunity by way of additional access to traditional programs and special area teachers at their traditional base school.

Craven County Schools can continue to provide alternative learning opportunities through a school-based, asynchronous model using Edmentum Courseware. This approach aligns with CCS Board Policy 3470/4350 – Alternative Learning Programs, Exhibit C, ensuring structured support, accountability, and appropriate placement for students in non-traditional settings.

Program Structure

School-Based Alternative Learning (On-Site)

- Students remain enrolled at their zoned school or approved reassignment school
- Alternative learning will occur on-site
- Placement and continuation in the program will follow guidelines outlined in CCS Policy 3470/4305, including administrative review and progress monitoring

School-Level Roles & Responsibilities

Consistent with CCS Policy 3470/4305, each school is responsible for the implementation and oversight of alternative learning for its assigned students. School administration will designate staff to:

- Monitor student progress, pacing, and engagement within the platform
- Maintain regular communication with students and parents/guardians
- Provide academic support and ensure timely interventions
- Enter and manage grades in accordance with district policies
- Document student participation and performance as part of the ongoing program review

Organization of the School System

The school system has five traditional middle schools and three traditional high schools that could accommodate Craven Virtual Academy students if the academy closes.

Renovation or Consolidation

The recommendation to close Craven Virtual Academy is based on both fiscal reasons and state accountability measures. Craven Virtual Academy operates as a true virtual, off-site learning environment. Therefore, renovation does not apply to this school. The projected cost savings for closing Craven Virtual Academy are \$563,000 in state funds and \$24,000.00 in local funds. Local funds would be a recurring savings each year moving forward. Consolidation with existing traditional middle and high schools would not negatively impact student success.

Exhibit A:

Policy Code: 4150 School Assignment and Reassignment

A. Assignment Areas

The superintendent shall recommend to the board school assignment areas for the schools in the system.

The assignment areas will be developed in accordance with applicable legal requirements, the need to serve all school-age children who live in the school system, and the effective use of each school facility. Assignments must be made in a non-discriminatory manner.

The superintendent shall review periodically the assignment areas and submit recommendations for revisions to the board when necessary.

- Assignment of Students

The superintendent or designee shall assign students to particular schools in accordance with the following standards.

1. Students Admitted Based on Domicile

Except as otherwise provided in this policy, students admitted to the school system based on domicile will be assigned to the school of the appropriate grade span within the assignment area of the student's domicile (or residence location if the student is exempted from the domicile requirement, as described in policy [4120](#), Domicile or Residence Requirements).

2. Students Accepted for Discretionary Admission

Students who are accepted for discretionary admission under policy [4130](#), Discretionary Admission, will be assigned to a school that meets the best interest of the student and the orderly and efficient administration of the school system.

3. Homeless Students and Students in Foster Care

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this policy, the superintendent or designee shall (1) assign homeless students in a manner consistent with state and federal law and policy [4125](#), Homeless Students; and (2) assign students in foster care to their school of origin unless contrary to their best interest, as required by federal law.

4. Students Participating in the Address Confidentiality Program

Students who are participating in or whose parent is participating in the North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program established by [G.S. Chapter 15C](#) will be assigned on

the basis of their actual address, but such address will remain confidential in accordance with law and policy [4250/5075/7316](#), North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program.

5. Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities receiving services under an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 plan will be assigned to schools in accordance with this policy unless the superintendent or designee determines the student needs a different assignment to provide access to a program or service required under the IEP or Section 504 plan, as determined by the student's IEP or Section 504 team.

6. Administrative Assignment

The superintendent or designee may administratively assign a student to a school other than the one to which the student would otherwise be assigned under this policy when deemed in the best interest of the student and/or the effective administration of the schools, such as for reasons related to student safety, discipline, or programmatic issues, or when required by law.

7. Assignment to Alternative Program or School

Students will be assigned to an alternative education program or school in accordance with policy [3470/4305](#), Alternative Learning Programs/Schools.

8. Admission to Magnet Schools or Other Schools of Choice

Students may apply for admission to one of the school system's magnet schools or other schools of choice. Unless otherwise established by the board for specific programs, admission decisions for magnet schools will take into account the following criteria:

- a. maintaining a socioeconomic, geographic, and student achievement diversity that is reasonably reflective of the school system as a whole;
 - b. any program criteria that must be met by the student for admission to the particular school; and
 - c. enabling siblings to attend the same school.
- Procedure for Requesting Reassignment

Parents or guardians may request assignment to a school outside of their regular attendance area for the following school year by completing a reassignment request form during the month of February. An untimely request for reassignment will be treated as a transfer request under Section D. On the reassignment request form, parents or guardians will need to explain their reason for requesting a reassignment.

The Director of Student Services will make a determination based upon the best interest of the child, the orderly and efficient administration of the public schools, the proper administration of the school to which assignment is requested, and the instruction, health, and safety of the pupils there enrolled. Input from school administration will also be taken into consideration. Requests for reassignment to schools with a projected enrollment that exceeds the capacity for that school will be denied.

A decision will be made and the parent will be notified by April 1st. If the parent is dissatisfied with the determination, the parent may appeal the decision in writing to the Superintendent within 5 business days.

If the reassignment request is denied by the Superintendent, a parent or guardian may appeal to the Board of Education within five days of receiving the notice of the disapproval. The board or a panel of the board will hear the appeal. If a panel hears the appeal, the panel's recommendation will be submitted to the full board for a final determination. At the hearing the board will consider and make a determination based upon the best interest of the child, the orderly and efficient administration of the public schools, the proper administration of the school to which reassignment is requested, and the instruction, health, and safety of the pupils there enrolled. The board will promptly render a decision, and notice of the decision will be given to the applicant by mail, telephone, telefax, e-mail, or any other method reasonably designed to achieve notice.

Families who move into the Craven County Schools' district after the deadline for assignments will have 5 days from the date of enrollment to request a school reassignment. Opportunities for appeal will also be given for requests that are denied.

Students approved for reassignment after the student's initial 9th grade year shall be ineligible for athletic participation for 365 days. (ref. NCHSAA 1.2.12 Transfer Rule)

- Transfer of Students During the School Year

1. Change of Residence

Students whose legal residence changes from one school assignment area to another within the school system during the same school year and who wish to finish out that school year in the same school must complete a request for reassignment. If the request to remain in the first school in order to complete the school year is granted, the student will be assigned to the school according to the area in which they live at the beginning of the next school year. Students whose legal residence has changed but who choose to complete the school year at their first school will be responsible for their own transportation to school.

2. Unsafe School Choice Transfer under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Transfers for students who are victims of violent criminal offenses at school or for students attending persistently dangerous schools as defined by State Board of Education policy will be made pursuant to policy [4152](#), Unsafe School Choice Transfer.

3. Transfer of Homeless Students

Students who become homeless between academic years or during an academic year may request to remain at the school of origin for the duration of their homelessness or may request to be enrolled in any public school that other students living in the same attendance area are eligible to attend. Any decision about the transfer or reassignment of a homeless student will be consistent with legal requirements and based on the student's best interest. (See policy [4125](#), Homeless Students.)

4. Transfer of Students in Foster Care

Students who are assigned to foster care between academic years or during an academic year will remain in their school of origin unless remaining in the school of origin is not in the best interest of the student. The best interest of the student will be decided based on all relevant factors, including consideration of the appropriateness of the educational setting and proximity to the school in which the child is enrolled at the time of placement in foster care.

5. Other Transfers

The superintendent shall consider student requests for transfer to another school during the school year based upon space availability, the needs of the child, the effect on the school to which transfer is requested, principal recommendations, and other criteria established by the superintendent.

- Conditions for Reassignment or Transfer

The following conditions apply in regard to any reassignments or transfers made in accordance with Sections C and D of this policy.

1. The parent or guardian is responsible for transportation (except for reassignments or transfers of homeless students or students in foster care based on the student's best interest, for which the system will provide transportation in a manner consistent with legal requirements and policy [4125](#)).
2. The transfer or reassignment is valid for no more than one school year (except for (a) unsafe school choice transfers, for which the length of assignment will be consistent with legal requirements and policy [4152](#); (b) homeless student transfers or reassignments for which the length of assignment will be consistent with legal requirements and policy [4125](#); and (c) transfers or reassignment of students in foster care, for which the length of assignment will be consistent with legal requirements).
3. Any transfer or reassignment request that is approved based upon false or misleading information will be declared void and will be rescinded.
4. Students and parents must abide by all of the rules and regulations of the school, including but not limited to, maintaining satisfactory academic performance, on-time attendance, and good behavior. Students accepted for discretionary admission must be in good standing from their base school.

Failure to maintain the standards referenced above can result in the student being re-enrolled in their base school.

Principals will contact parents in writing if the student is in jeopardy of being re-enrolled in their base school at least one time prior to sending the student back to their base school. After this initial contact, the principal may recommend to the Superintendent or designee that the student return to the base school.

5. Under no circumstances should acceptance of reassignment request be assumed. Notification from the Superintendent's office will be made by formal letter to the parent or legal guardian.

Legal References: McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, [42 U.S.C. 11431](#) *et seq.*; Elementary and Secondary Education Act, [20 U.S.C. 6301](#) *et seq.*; *Non-Regulatory Guidance: Ensuring*

Educational Stability and Success for Students in Foster Care, U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (November 2024), available at <https://www.ed.gov/media/document/non-regulatory-guidance-ensuring-educational-stability-and-success-students-foster-care-november-15-2024-108448.pdf>; *Non-Regulatory Guidance on Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program*, U.S. Department of Education (July 2016), available at <https://www.ed.gov/sites/ed/files/2020/07/160240ehcyguidanceupdated082718.pdf>; *Unsafe School Choice Option Non-Regulatory Guidance*, U.S. Department of Education (May 2004), available at <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED494736.pdf>; G.S. 15C-8; 115C-36, -47(68), -366, -367, -369; State Board of Education Policy [SSCH-006](#)

Cross References: Alternative Learning Programs (policy [3470/4305](#)), Domicile or Residence Requirements (policy [4120](#)), Homeless Students (policy [4125](#)), Discretionary Admission (policy [4130](#)), Unsafe School Choice Transfer (policy [4152](#)), North Carolina Address Confidentiality Program (policy [4250/5075/7316](#))

Adopted: May 16, 2013

Revised: March 20, 2014; October 25, 2018; January 18, 2022; January 18, 2024; February 15, 2024; February 18, 2025; November 20, 2025

Exhibit B

North Carolina General Statute § 115C-72: Consolidation of districts and discontinuance of schools

(a) Local boards of education shall have the power and authority to close or consolidate schools located in the same district, and with the approval of the State Board of Education, to consolidate school districts or other school areas over which the board has full control, whenever and wherever in its judgment the closing or consolidation will better serve the educational interest of the local school administrative unit or any part of it.

In determining whether two or more public schools shall be consolidated, or in determining whether or not a school shall be closed and the pupils transferred therefrom, local boards of education of the several counties shall observe and be bound by the following rules:

(1) In any question involving the closing or consolidation of any public school, the local board of education of the school administrative unit in which such school is located shall cause a thorough study of such school to be made, having in mind primarily the welfare of the students to be affected by a proposed closing or consolidation and including in such study, among other factors, geographic conditions, anticipated increase or decrease in school enrollment, the inconvenience or hardship that might result to the pupils to be affected by such closing or consolidation, the cost of providing additional school facilities in the event of such closing or consolidation, and such other factors as the board shall consider germane. Before the entry of any order of closing or consolidation, the local board of education shall provide for a public hearing in regard to such proposed closing or consolidation, at which hearing the public shall be afforded an opportunity to express their views. Upon the basis of the study so made and after such hearing, said board may, in the exercise of its discretion, approve the closing or consolidation proposed.

(2) The provisions of this section shall not deprive any local board of education of the authority to assign or enroll any and all pupils in schools in accordance with the provisions of G.S. 115C-366(b) and 115C-367 to 115C-370.

(b) This section does not govern merger of a city school administrative unit with another school administrative unit. Such merger is governed by G.S. 115C-67. (1955, c. 1372, art. 8, s. 3; 1981, c. 423, s. 1; 1983, c. 308; c. 752; 2009-570, s. 27.)

Exhibit C

Policy Code: 3470/4305 Alternative Learning Programs

A. Purposes

The Craven County Board of Education is committed to the goal of providing a safe and orderly learning environment in each school. The educational program, school student behavior management plans, school improvement plans, and numerous other strategies identified in board policy, are intended to create such an environment and to help each student be a successful and contributing member of the school community. As used in this policy and context, an alternative learning program or school may serve as the site to: (1) deliver educational services required by [G.S. 115C-390.9](#) or [-390.10](#) to a student who is serving a long-term or 365-day suspension; (2) provide concentrated support for students at risk of academic failure; and/or (3) deliver educational and other services to students who are or may be disruptive to a safe and orderly learning environment in the regular educational setting.

B. Standards for Alternative Learning Programs

Prior to implementing a new alternative learning program, the board will develop a program proposal that is consistent with the State Board of Education standards for alternative learning programs. The board then will submit the proposal to the State Board for its review. After the proposal has been reviewed by the State Board, the board will consider any recommendations from the State Board to modify the proposal before implementing the alternative learning program.

The board will review on a regular basis whether the school system's alternative learning programs comply with State Board standards.

C. Transfer to Alternative Learning Programs

1. Basis for Transfer

Students generally are assigned to a school based on attendance area. However, as provided by law, the board may assign any student to a school outside of his or her attendance area in order for the student to attend a specialized school or for any other reason the board, in its sole discretion, deems sufficient. In all cases, the assignment or transfer of a student with a disability will comply with applicable federal and/or state requirements for students with disabilities.

Students may be transferred to an alternative learning program on a voluntary or involuntary basis. The transfer process is provided below.

- a. the student's parent or guardian and the principal agree, and a multi-disciplinary team agrees, that the transfer would be in the best interest of the student and the efficient administration of the public schools;

- b. the student has been recommended for long-term suspension or expulsion;
- c. the student poses a significant disruption to the educational environment in the regular educational setting due to continuing social/behavioral problems;
- d. the student is at risk of dropping out or not meeting standards for promotion due to academic, developmental, and/or behavioral problems, and resources in addition to or different from those available in the regular educational setting are needed to address the issue;
- e. the student is a clear threat to the safety of other students or personnel; or
- f. the student has been charged with a felony or with any crime that allegedly endangered the safety of others, and it is reasonably foreseeable that the student's continued presence will significantly disrupt the regular educational environment.

The board encourages parental involvement in decisions regarding the child's education and in identifying effective options for addressing concerns regarding the child's behavior or academic performance.

2. Responsibilities of Personnel at Referring School

In addition to any other procedures required by this policy, prior to referring a student to an alternative learning program, the principal of the referring school must:

- a. document the procedures that were used to identify the student as being at risk of academic failure or as being disruptive or disorderly;
- b. provide the reasons for referring the student to an alternative learning program; and
- c. provide to the alternative learning program all relevant student records, including anecdotal information.

3. Referral

- a. Students who are recommended for long-term suspension or expulsion and who receive due process through the disciplinary process for violations of the Code of Student Conduct do not require additional referral procedures prior to transfer.
- b. Prior to a transfer in circumstances where a student is experiencing academic or developmental difficulties or continuing social/behavioral problems, the principal or school-based committee of the referring school shall document the student's behavior and academic performance and efforts to assist the student in the regular educational environment. School administrators are encouraged to meet with the student's parents or guardians to try to reach a consensus on how to address the student's difficulties at school.

c. In all cases where a basis for transfer exists, other than where the student has received due process pursuant to a recommendation for long-term suspension or expulsion, the principal must refer the student to a multi-disciplinary team to determine whether the student should be transferred to an alternative program. The principal must provide in writing: (1) an explanation of the student's behavior or academic performance that is at issue; (2) documentation or a summary of the documentation of the efforts to assist the student in the student's regular educational setting, if applicable; and (3) documentation of the circumstances that support the referral. A copy of the referral and other documentation must be provided to the parent or guardian by certified mail or in person.

The multi-disciplinary team shall consist of the student's parent or guardian and at least three school system employees who are informed about the student's needs. The team shall meet to consider the principal's referral and determine whether the student will be assigned to an alternative school and shall perform all other duties assigned to it by State Board of Education policy. The student's parent or guardian shall be provided written notice of the time, place, and date of the meeting.

At the meeting, the multi-disciplinary team shall determine whether the student will be transferred to the alternative school. The student's parent or guardian shall be provided written notice of the team's decision, as well as notice of the parent or guardian's appeal and due process rights. If the student's parent or guardian attended the team meeting, such notice shall be provided at the end of the meeting. If the student's parent or guardian did not attend the meeting, such notice shall be provided by certified mail within one business day of the meeting. If the multi-disciplinary team approves the transfer, the principal of the regular educational setting and the principal of the alternative program shall make all necessary arrangements.

4. Responsibilities of School Personnel at the Alternative Learning Program

Once a student is placed in an alternative learning program, the appropriate school personnel of the program must meet to review the student's records and any other documentation forwarded by the referring school. Based on these records and any input provided by the parent or guardian concerning the student's needs, the personnel at the alternative program shall determine the support services and intervention strategies that are recommended for the student.

If a student who is subject to [G.S. 14-208.18](#) is assigned to an alternative program, the student must be supervised by school personnel at all times.

5. Assignment of Student with Disabilities to Alternative Programs

Students who receive services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) are entitled to all of the processes and protections pursuant to the IDEA. All additional requirements specific to the assignment of students with disabilities to an alternative program established by State Board of Education policy shall be observed.

D. Appeals Process

If the student's transfer is the result of an IEP team decision for a student with a disability, parents or guardians who are dissatisfied with the decision must comply with the due process procedures set forth in *Procedures Governing Policies and Services for Children with Disabilities*, as adopted by the State Board of Education.

In all other cases, within three business days of receiving written notice of the decision to assign the student to an alternative program, the parent or guardian may appeal the decision in writing to the superintendent, who shall review the documentation and render a decision within five business days, absent extraordinary circumstances that require additional response time. Parents and guardians who are dissatisfied with the superintendent's decision may appeal to the board. The board will hear the appeal in closed session and will follow its procedures as provided in policy [2500](#), Hearings Before the Board. During the period of the appeal, the student may be transferred to the alternative learning program, except as prohibited by the IDEA.

E. Administrative Assignments

1. Assignment During a Long-Term or 365-Day Suspension

Any student who receives a long-term or 365-day suspension must be offered alternative education services unless the superintendent provides a significant or important reason for declining to offer such services. Alternative education services include, but are not limited to, the alternative programs established in this policy in accordance with [G.S. 115C-105.47A](#).

2. Assignment of Student Sex Offenders

The board may decide, pursuant to [G.S. 115C-390.11\(a\)\(2\)](#), to assign a student who is subject to [G.S. 14-208.18](#) to an alternative learning program.

F. Transition from Alternative Learning Programs

In most instances, the goal of the alternative learning program is to return the student to the regular educational setting with the skills necessary to succeed in that environment as soon as practicable. The personnel of the alternative learning program and those of the regular educational setting shall work together to help create a successful transition for the student.

If the student is not or will not be returned to the regular educational setting, the alternative learning program will assist in the student's transition to other educational settings, including other programs offered by the school system or a community college or vocational school.

For students identified as eligible under the IDEA, the student's IEP team shall make all transition decisions that would result in a change in placement.

G. Assignment of Professional Personnel to Alternative Learning Programs

When assigning professional personnel to an alternative learning program, the superintendent shall consider the experience and evaluation ratings of the professional employee who may be assigned to the program. As school system resources allow, the superintendent shall strive to avoid assigning to an alternative program less experienced professional personnel or professional personnel who have received unfavorable evaluations. Additionally, all school personnel at alternative learning programs

should receive training so that students enrolled in such programs receive appropriate educational services.

H. Evaluation of Alternative Learning Programs

1. State Accountability

The board will determine annually how each alternative program will participate in the State Alternative Schools' Accountability Model. The superintendent shall provide for this information to be reported to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction by August 1 of each year.

2. Information to be Reported to the Board of Education

Each year, the board will evaluate each alternative learning program based upon reports provided by the superintendent and any other information the board wishes to consider.

Legal References: [G.S. 14-208.18](#); [115C-47](#)(32a), [-105.27](#), [-105.47A](#), [-105.48](#), [-276\(r\)](#), [-288](#), [-367](#), [-369](#), [-390.7](#), [-390.9](#), [-390.10](#), [-390.11](#); [16 N.C.A.C. 6G .0314](#); State Board of Education Policies [ACCT-038](#), [ALTP-002](#), [DROP-001](#), [EXCP-000](#); *Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities*, as amended (Public Schools of N.C.); *Policies and Procedures for Alternative Learning Programs and Schools* (NC Dept. of Public Instruction), available at <https://www.dpi.nc.gov/students-families/enhanced-opportunities/alternative-learning-programs#development,-implementation,-and-operations>

Cross References: Parental Involvement (policy [1310/4002](#)), Hearings Before the Board (policy [2500](#)), School Improvement Plan (policy [3430](#)), Conflict Resolution (policy [3431](#)), Student Sex Offenders (policy [4260](#)), School Plan for Management of Student Behavior (policy [4302](#)), Student Discipline Records (policy [4345](#)), Long-Term Suspension, 365-Day Suspension, Expulsion (policy [4353](#)), Assignments/Reassignments/Transfers (policy [7440](#))

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